

PSEUDO-AUGUSTINUS, *Soliloquium animae ad Deum; Liber de contemplatione Domini (Manuale); Liber de spiritu et anima; Confessio beati Augustini ad Deum; De bona voluntate*
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Italy, Veneto (Padua or Friuli?), c. 1450-1460

102 ff., complete, in regular quires of 10, preceded and followed by a modern vellum flyleaf (collation: i9 [10-1, first leaf of quire likely cancelled], ii-x10, xi3), vertical catchwords, written in a very elegant formal upright humanistic bookhand, in brown ink on up to 27 long lines (justification 135 x 70 mm), ruled in dry point, prickings still visible, rubrics in pale red ink (some traced in Roman capitals), some capitals set off to the left in the margin, 2-line high painted initials in alternating red and blue, THREE ILLUMINATED INITIALS, 7- to 8-lines high (ff. 1, 52, 68) painted in pink or blue, with blue interlace (or strapwork) highlighted in white tracery on highly burnished and delicately tooled and patterned polylobed gold grounds with borders of burnished grounds traced in black, some marginal contemporary corrections. Contemporary reddish-brown goatskin over wooden boards, tooled in blind and gilt, upper cover paneled with outer border of gilt S-tools, inner frame filled with plaited knotwork and circular punches (blind-tooled), central compartment with eight-pointed star-form knotwork ornament with punch-gilt roundels alla fiorentina, frames and outline of star-form lined with a single gilt filet, back cover paneled in a similar design with central compartment with circular roundel filled with knotwork and punch-gilt roundels, two gilt star tools above and below the central circular compartment, frames and outer lining of roundel lined with a single gilt filet, back sewn on 4 raised bands with blind-tooled saltire pattern in compartments, edges gilt with lettering in bicolored ink: "Soliloquia / Contemplationis / De spiritu et anima" [Presumably bound where the manuscript was copied and illuminated, in a northern Italian binding ("Modo fiorentino" described in Hobson, 1989, pp. 18-19, no. 11 and 12, pp. 28-29, no. 22 and 23) presenting tooling with knotwork and designs of Islamic inspiration: see comparisons in Tammara da Marinis, *La legatura artistica*, II, no. 1451 and 1452 (Ferrara) and no. 1510-1511 (Venice), also, a binding presenting similar boards reproduced in Casarsa, 1991, pl. LX] (Original boards preserved, rebaked, discreet repairs to boards, traces of clasps removed with restoration, slight flaking to the gold in painted initials). Dimensions 238 x 150 mm.

Magnificent illuminated humanist manuscript of the major works of Pseudo-Augustine, including the *Soliloquies*, the last of which "On Good Will" evidently existing in only one other manuscript. The identifiable scribe, the fine strapwork initials, the contemporary Venetian binding, and the excellent condition, coupled with the sterling provenance, contribute to the interest of the present copy.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and illuminated in Italy, likely Padua. The script presents similarities with the scribe identified as Battista da Cingoli who copied a number of manuscripts between 1449 and 1461 for Guarnerio d'Artegna now belonging to the Biblioteca Guarneriana di San Daniele del Friuli. The manuscripts copied for Guarnerio d'Artegna all present very similar colorful strapwork painted initials on tooled gold grounds. See Illustration below.

2. An erased note (later 15th c. hand?) on f. 101v can be deciphered under ultraviolet light as follows: "Post discessum meum sit libellus iste Cassandre predilecte filie mee per me sibi domo relictus / Munera paterni monumentum et pignus amor / Sim memor ispe tui sis memor ipse mei" [After my departing, this book should go to my dearest daughter

Cassandra to whom I have left my home / Gifts of paternal memory (?) and token of love / I will be your memory, so that you may be mine]. Another note was erased entirely on f. 1 that might have revealed an early owner.

3. Ambroise Firmin-Didot (1790-1876), Paris, with leather oval bookplate pasted on upper pastedown: "A la Bible d'or--Bibliotheca Ambrosii Firmini Didoti." The manuscript was described in his sale, dated 1882, no. 30; *Catalogue illustré des livres précieux, manuscrits et imprimés faisant partie de la bibliothèque de M. Ambroise Firmin-Didot* (1882), pp. 49-50. On the family Firmin-Didot as collectors see A. Jammes, *Les Didot. Trois siècles de typographie et de bibliophilie*, 1698-1998, Paris, 1998, in particular: "Les manuscrits de la collection d'Ambroise Firmin-Didot," pp. 91-103.

TEXT

ff. I-IV, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Soliloquiorum animae ad Deum*, Table of chapters, rubric in Roman capitals, *Incipiunt capitula soliloquiorum Augustini animae ad deum*;

ff. 1-50v, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Soliloquiorum animae ad Deum*, rubric, *Incipit liber soliloquiorum beati Augustini animae ad deum de ineffabili dulcedine omnipotentis dei*; incipit: "Cognoscam te domine cognitor meus..."; explicit, "[...] omnis elementa sit deo beati Augustini anime ad deum amen deo gratias";

Oberleitner (1969), pp. 166-169, provides a list of 116 manuscripts in Italy alone; edition in Migne, PL 40, 863-898. Preceding the Confessions, the canonical *Soliloquia* is a comparatively early text of Augustine, containing a discussion of wisdom and of the immortality of truth, and has been described as "the first extended discussion of faith and reason following his conversion." However, in the later Middle Ages, Augustine's original text of the *Soliloquia* ("Soliloquies on God and the immortality of the soul") had been virtually forgotten. In its place a Pseudo-Augustinian and mystical *Soliloquia*, composed in the thirteenth century, enjoyed tremendous popularity, largely inspired by twelfth-century authors, especially Hugh of Saint-Victor's *De arrha animae*, and there is marked influence of the Confessions of Saint Augustine. Like Johannes of Fecamp's *Confessio theologica*, the text is composed as a confession. Of all the apocryphal Augustine texts, this one enjoyed the greatest success in Italy and in France (see G. Esnos, "Les traductions médiévales françaises et italiennes des *Soliloques* attribués à Saint Augustin," in *Ecole française de Rome. Mélanges d'archéologie et d'Histoire* 79 (1967), pp. 299-366).

ff. 50v-51, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Liber de contemplatione Domini* (or *Manuale*), Table of chapters, rubric, *Incipiunt capitula contemplationis beati Augustini*;

f. 51v, blank;

ff. 52-65, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Liber de contemplatione Domini* (or *Manuale*), rubric, *Incipit liber contemplationis beati Augustini de spe habenda in Christo. Capitula .i.*; incipit, "Quoniam in medio laqueorum positi..."; explicit, "[...] caritate in deo manus et deus meo. Amen"; closing rubric, *Explicit contemplatio beati Augustini deo gratias*;

Oberleitner (1969), pp. 114-116, provides a list of 64 manuscripts in Italy alone; edition in PL 40, 951-968. The *Manuale* is actually the result of a compilation of texts from John of Fécamp, St. Bernard, Hugues of Saint-Victor, and Anselm (see Blumenkranz, 1954, p. 1010).

ff. 65v-66, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Liber de spiritu et anima*, Table of chapters, rubric, *Incipiunt capitula libelli Augustini de cognitione sui ipsius*;

f. 66v, blank;

ff. 67v-99v, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Liber de spiritu et anima*, rubric, *Incipit libellus Augustini de cognitione sui ipsius. Prologus*; incipit, "Quoniam dictum est mihi ut me ipsum cognoscam..."; explicit, "[...] ut quicquid supra id est aliud non sit quam ratio. Et hec est ipsa anima"; closing rubric, *Amen. Augustini de cognitione sui ipsius libellus explicit feliciter. Deo gratias. Amen*;

Oberleitner (1969), pp. 172-174, provides a list of 69 manuscripts in Italy alone; edition in PL 40, 779-832. This work actually assembles a number of excerpts of Augustine, but also of Gennadius, Cassiodorus, Bede, Hugh of Saint-Victor, St. Bernard and Isaac de l'Etoile (see A. Wilmart, 1932, p. 175; Blumenkranz, 1954, p. 1010; see also L. Norpoth, *Der Pseudo-Augustinische Traktat: De spiritu et anima*, Philosophische Dissertation, Munich, 1924, Cologne, 1971).

ff. 100-101, Pseudo-Augustinus [Alcuin?], *Confessio beati Augustini ad Deum*, rubric, *Confessio beati Augustini ad deum*; incipit, "Audi domine deus meus confiteor crimina et delicta mea..."; explicit, "[...] equis honor par Gloria in secula seculorum. Amen," rubric, *Deo gratias. Amen*;

Oberleitner (1969), p. 403, signals two manuscripts, Roma, BN centr. 351; Vaticano, BAV, Reg. lat. 468. In Principio database records this text in Vaticano, BAV, Reg. lat. 62, ff. 36v-37v. On this third manuscript see A. Wilmart, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae ... Codices Regimenses latini I, codices 1-250* (1937).

ff. 101-101v, Pseudo-Augustinus, *De bona voluntate*, rubric, *Augustini de bona voluntate. Incipit*; incipit, "Eice o homo quod malum est ut quod bonum est..."; explicit, "[...] ibi permansuri in eternum. Amen"; rubric, *Deo gratias. Amen*;

In Principio database records only one manuscript: Vatican, BAV, Reg. lat. 62, f. 37v; see also Oberleitner (1970), p. 334. We have not identified any published edition of this opuscle.

The present manuscript contains a fifteenth-century anthology of works all falsely attributed to Augustine, but considered entirely canonical at the time, often because of the highly personal first-person discourse, close to that used by Augustine in his *Confessions*. The Pseudo-Augustinian corpus has been studied by Blumenkranz (1954) and Stegmüller (1951, vol. 2, pp. 144-147), and E. Portalié gives a list of Augustinian apocrypha (*Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, I, col. 2306-2310) based on the texts published in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, in particular in vol. 40. There is also a list of Augustinian apocrypha in F. Cavallera, *Dict. de Spiritualité*, I, col. 1130-1135. The rubrics in this manuscript all clearly consider the works to be Augustine's.

ILLUSTRATION

This manuscript is typical of the elegantly decorated classical and patristic works copied in the Quattrocento in the Veneto for private humanist use, of which a number of exemplars have survived (see e.g., Mariani Canova in Cadei, 2002, pp. 114-115). The present manuscript contains finely executed strapwork Paduan-type initials, traced *all'antiqua*, in use in the 1450s (see Barile, 1993, pp. 53-116; Mariani Canova, 1999, p. 254). The initials present striking

similarities with those in a series of manuscripts mostly copied by the scribe Battista da Cingoli for Guarnerio d'Artegna, canon and priest of San Daniele (Friuli), in particular Guarner. 26, Guarner. 47, Guarner. 81, 82, and 85 (on the scribe, see Casarsa, 1991, pp. 28-31; and for the initials, see pls. XIX, LII, LXXII, LXXIII and LXXXV). It is likely that the present manuscript was copied in this same milieu, close to the scribe who worked extensively for the Friulian patron.

The style of the strapwork initials also compares closely with Padua, Bibl. Seminario Vescovile, Cod. 327, dated Padua, 460-1470, with arms of the family Speroni degli Alvarotti (see Donello, 1998, no. 158; Mariani Canova, 1997, p. 164, fig. 14; and esp. Mariani Canova in Cadei, 2002, no. 26, pp. 114-15, "Veneto 1460").

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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<http://www.augustinus.it/index2.htm>

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