GREGORY THE GREAT, translated from the Latin into Italian by ZANOBI DA STRADA, *Moralia in Job, libri I-X* [Italian translation: *Morali di Santo Gregorio papa sopra il libro di Job, libri I-X*]
In Italian, illuminated manuscript on paper
Northeastern Italy, Veneto (Venice?), dated 1474

i (parchment) + 188 + i (parchment) folios on paper (with watermark close to Briquet no. 202, "Aigle": Florence, 1472, Rome, 1471, Venice, 1475), contemporary foliation in red Arabic numerals, center upper recto, 2-5, 7-8, 10-190, leaving the first blank leaf unnumbered, with gaps in foliation reflecting loss of leaves [cited here], more recent foliation after the loss of these leaves in brown ink, upper outer recto, 1-43 with two consecutive pages numbered 43, 44-79 with an unfoliated page between those foliated 45 and 46 (collation, i¹⁴ [structure uncertain, some leaves at the end of the quire may have been added; -1 through 3, cancelled with no loss of text; 4, unnumbered blank, -5, -10, -13, ff. 1, 6, and 9, all with loss of text] ii-x¹⁰ xi¹² [-3 or 4, -5, both cancelled with no loss of text] xii -xviii¹⁰ xix¹² [-11, -12, both cancelled with no loss of text]), vertical catchwords written in majuscule preceded by blue paraphs on the inner lower margin in quires i-xviii (the catchword at the end of quire xiv [f. 140v] does not match the opening of quire xv; the catchword concludes a sentence and f. 141 commences with the beginning of the next sentence), parchment reinforcement strips pasted in fold on the inner and outer bifolia of quires i and ii and on inner bifolia of quires iii-x, xii-xix, ruled in plummet with full-length vertical and horizontal bounding lines, prickings visible in upper, lower, and outer margins (justification, 222-224 x 161 mm.), text written above top line in brown ink in an Italian cursiva libraria script with some humanistic influence in two columns of 44-47 lines, guide letters for initials, red rubrics often preceded by blue paraphs, majuscules filled in yellow, Latin citations within the text written in majuscule, names of speakers within the Book of Job are sometimes written in the upper margin near their words in the text, one-line paraphs in red or blue, simple two-line in red or blue initials in table of contents, simple three- to four-line initials in red or blue mark chapter divisions within the text, followed by words written in majuscule, EIGHT ILLUMINATED INITIALS of seven lines, magenta with white penwork, terminating in swirls of green acanthus highlighted with yellow penwork and sometimes with magenta and blue acanthus highlighted in white, all on grounds of burnished gold, corrections to text and rubrications in scribe's hand and ink, on f. 77v the scribe has corrected an incorrectly painted initial, illuminated initial excised on f. 70v with loss of text on f. 70, offsets on the verso of the first unnumbered leaf, and ff. 2, 8v, and 10 suggest that the excised ff. 1 and 9 had substantial illuminated borders, on ff. 2-3v post-medieval flourished pen trials have been added in the lower margins, slight tears in the lower margin of f. 25 and upper margin of ff. 37 and 160, from f. 161 to the end there is a slight loss to the upper outer corner, slight waterstaining visible on the edges of some leaves. Recased (possibly when illuminated leaves were removed), using original binding materials of brown half leather over bevelled wooden boards with three double bands, remains of four straps nailed to the outside of the upper board, one each along top and bottom and two along the outer edge, half parchment pastedowns continuous with front and back flyleaves, cropped on the bottom and both sides, with writing on both sides in several fifteenth-century Italian cursive and semi-hybrida hands. Dimensions 328-332 x 230 mm.

This handsome, formal volume contains an Italian translation of one of the most important and widely copied texts of the Middle Ages, the *Moralia in Job* of Gregory the Great. Though forty copies of this translation survive, this volume is unusual insofar as it strays from the original Tuscan dialect, incorporating some Venetian dialectal forms. As such, it raises interesting questions regarding the transmission of this Italian text in the fifteenth century. All of the other copies are in European institutions. No other copies have been on the market in the last century.

PROVENANCE

1. A scribal colophon on f. 190v provides a date for this manuscript's completion and it also helps localize its production within Italy: "Scripto per mi zuane de zane zoielier condam p[er?] simon et chi li lezeranno priegi dio per lo scriptore. MCCCCLXXIIII" (Written by me, Zuane de Zane, jeweler, once for (?) Simon, and may whoever will read it pray to God for the writer. 1474). There is no Zuane de Zane on record elsewhere as a scribe (no matches appear in *Iter Italicum* or *Manoscritti Datati d'Italia*, nor is there an exact match in Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux des origines au xvi* siècle*, Fribourg, 1965-1982). The name itself is Venetian and this, alongside the evidence of the manuscript's watermark and decoration, suggests an origin in the region of Veneto and possibly in Venice specifically.

   The text's language also supports this localization. There are repeated instances of Venetian orthography throughout the manuscript, including the frequent spelling <x> for pronunciation [z], as in "paradixo" for *paradiso* on f. 50v or "caxa" for *casa* on f. 69; frequent use of "el" rather than "il" as masculine article, evident in many of the rubrics; and the degemination of geminate consonants, as in, for example, "speso" for *spesso* on f. 3v, "mezo" for *mezzo* on f. 4. The scribe also frequently substitutes variant verb forms, as in "avemo" for *abbiamo* on f. 94 and elsewhere. None of these practices are completely consistent; most likely, the scribe was not so much undertaking a really serious translation of the text from one dialect to another as he was opting for more familiar, Venetian forms as he copied.

   The cropped parchment leaves furnishing the front and back pastedowns and flyleaves within this manuscript can also be dated and localized. They contain documentary text copied in multiple hands. An informal examination of f. 1v suggests that the first of two hands records in notarial script and language the appointment of one Federico de la Latta as *podestà* of Modena in January of 1438 by Niccolò III d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara and a tribunal. On the same leaf the second hand has reiterated this appointment and recorded appointments to other offices as well. Further appointments later in the year are recorded in different hands on f. iir and the remaining space (ff. 1r and iiv) is filled by a calendar. Given the date, these may have accompanied the manuscript as flyleaves in its original binding or they may have been included in the later rebinding of the manuscript, in which case their provenance suggests that at the time this rebinding took place the volume was still in Northeastern Italy.

2. Private European Collection.

TEXT
[Description uses the contemporary foliation.]

ff. 2-3 [preceded by an unnumbered leaf, blank but ruled on the verso; beginning imperfectly], "//elleuamento di contemplactione. Alcuna fiata per istrumento de morallita o diuisa questa oppera in sei parti che chome uedrai se extende in trentacinque libri … cossi la fatica del mio studio sia fortificata da ciascuna. *Finita la epistolla de sancto Gregorio sopra il libro de moralli ad a leandro uescouo di sibilia*";

Missing original f. 1, with the beginning of the epistle to Leander.

ff. 3v-8v, *Comincia el prologo del libro de li morallj de sancto Gregorio papa sopra el libro de Job, Li qualli morallj se diuideno in libri XXXV, Kapitullo II,* incipit, "Speso si fa questione tra molti chi fusse il scriptore del libro del beato Job …";

Missing original f. 6, with text from the prologue.

ff. 8v-19, [Book one], *Cominciano li capitolli del primo libro de moralli de sancto gregorio papa sopra el libro de Job,* incipit, "Di la bonta de Job *Capitullo primo* …"; f. 8v, *Comincia il primo libro de fauente,* beginning imperfectly, "//la sollicictudine di questo secullo et la falacia di le richeze la fuogha …";

Missing original f. 9, with the beginning of Book One.

ff. 19-36, [Book two] *Comincia li chapitolli del secondo libro de li moralli de sancto gregorio sopra Job,* incipit, "Di la natura angellica *Capitullo primo* …; f. 19v, *Comincia el prologo del libro,* incipit, "La sancta scriptura e posta dinanzi agli ochi di la mente a guisa di uno spechio …";

ff. 36-50, [Book three], *Comin li chapitolli del terzo libro de moralli de sancto gregorio,* incipit, "Como il nimico Sathan perduta luna bataglia contra Job rimoue laltra *Primo* …"; f. 36, *Cominci el libro. Come lo nimicho sathan perduta luna bataglia contra Job rimoue laltra. Capitullo Primo,* incipit, "Lo beato Job dimandato …";

ff. 50-70, [Book four], *Cominciano li capitolli del libro quarto sopra Job,* incipit, "Como si dee intendere che lanima immortalle possa morire *Kapitollo Primo* …"; f. 50, *In comincia el proemio del libro,* incipit, "Quelo il quale considera sollo il texto …";

ff. 70-93v, [Book five], *Comincia li capitolli del libro quinto,* incipit, "Come gli sancti huomeni se turbano delle prosperita di questo mondo *Capitollo primo* …"; f. 70, *Comincia il libro, E prima il prollogo,* incipit, "[S]empre sono ocvlti li giudictij de dio …";

ff. 93v-110v, [Book six], *Comiminciano [sic] li capitolli del sexto libro,* incipit, "Degli aiutatori del diauollo *Primo* …"; f. 93v, *Comincia el sexto libro degli moralli de sancto gregorio papa. E prima el prollogo,* incipit, "Servata avemo infino a qui la verita …";

ff. 110v-126, [Book seven], *Cominciano li capitulli del libro setimo,* incipit, "De la stadiera *Capitollo primo* …"; f. 111, *Comincia il setimo libro de moralli de sancto gregorio papa sopra il Job,* incipit, "Noi vedemo che sono alquanti huomeni …";

ff. 126-150v, [Book eight], *Cominciano li capitolli del libro otauo,* incipit, "Del modo del combater di sancti *Capitullo primo* …"; f. 126v, *Comincia lotauo libro de moralli de sancto gregorio papa et prima el prologo,* incipit, "Gia havemo vedvto nello libro passato …";

ff. 150v-175, [Book nine], *Comincia li capitolli del libro nono,* incipit, "Di la usanza degli omeni rei e de giusti *Primo* …"; f. 150v, *Comincia il libro nono de li morallj de sancto gregorio papa sopra il Job, De la usanza degli omeni rei et giusti, Capitullo primo,* incipit, "Questa e lvsanza de le mente peruerse …";

ff. 175-190v, [Book ten], *Cominciano li capitolli del libro decimo,* incipit, "Similitudine del nostro Job al forte conbatere *Capitullo Primo* …"; f. 175v, *Comincia el libro decimo de i moralli de sancto Gregorio papa sopra il Job, Similitudine del nostro Job al forte conbatere, Capitullo Primo,* incipit, "Qvando el forte conbatere del forte conbatitore entra nel campo doue deno essere uedute le sue forze … quanto per questa diuisione ello prenda in se medeximo spactio di potere vno pocho respirare. *Amen.*

Finito el libro decimo de moralli de sancto gregorio papa sopra il Job. Scripto per mi zuane de zane zoielier condam [per?] simon et chi li lezerrano priegi dio per lo scriptore. MCCCCLXXIIII."

Zanobi da Strada began work on *Morali di Santo Gregorio papa sopra il libro di Job,* his translation of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job,* in 1351 and continued work on it until his death in 1361. He appears to have gotten as far as the nineteenth book of the *Moralia* when he died. Over fifty years later, Giovanni da San Miniato completed the translation in 1415. Giuseppe Porta published a modern critical edition in 2005, using six manuscripts, complementary volumes of what appears to have once been a complete seven-volume copy of the *Morali,* and the incunable version, and listing thirty-nine surviving manuscripts, all in European, mostly Italian, libraries. None of these manuscripts contain all thirty-five books of the *Morali,* though some were clearly copied as companion volumes. Neither Porta nor the earlier census of *Morali* manuscripts (Dufner, 1958), appear to have been aware of this manuscript. First printed in Florence in 1486 by Niccolò di Lorenzo della Magna (*Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* 11438); subsequently printed in Rome and Naples in the eighteenth century and in Verona in the nineteenth century.

This manuscript contains the first ten books of the *Morali di Santo Gregorio.* Each book is preceded by a table of contents listing the chapters contained within it, and the first book is preceded by a prefatory letter and prologue. There are no losses to the end of the manuscript, and it may have been the first volume of a complete copy of the *Morali;* alternatively, it may have been copied for a recipient chiefly interested in the first ten books. Textually it exhibits some variation from the Porta edition, most notably in its dialect. While other surviving manuscripts preserve the text in the Tuscan vernacular in which it was composed, this manuscript's text has been copied with some Venetian orthography and dialectal forms.

Gregory the Great (*c.* 540-604, *sedit* 590-604), an immensely influential Latin Father of the Western Church, was born in Rome to a wealthy family. In 574 he turned aside from his wealth and success, and retired to the monastery he founded in Rome. In 579 he was forced from his monastic retirement, and sent to Constantinople as the Pope's ambassador to the Byzantine court. In 590 Gregory himself was appointed pope. While pope, he completed the bulk of his writings, including his *Regula pastoralis, Dialogues,* many of his homilies, and his *Moralia in Job.*

The tension in Gregory's own life between his spiritual calling and his temporal responsibilities resonates powerfully within his *Moralia in Job,* which he began writing during his time in Constantinople. He continued work on it back in Rome and finally completed it in 595. He sent a copy of the finished text to Leander, along with the letter that is generally included as a preface to the text. Through careful literal, allegorical, and moral readings of the Book of Job, Gregory advances a philosophically and biblically grounded commentary that uncovers the text's inner meanings even as it advances a guide to living a good life as a Christian in the world.

Gregory's *Moralia* was one of the best known and most widely copied texts in the Middle Ages, surviving in a vast range of libraries. As demand for texts in the vernacular grew in the late Middle Ages, his works received attention from Italian translators (*volgarizzatori*) who had begun translating classical texts into Italian in the thirteenth century and were soon also translating sacred and devotional texts. By the middle of the fourteenth century, Gregory's *Dialogues* had already been translated by Domenico Cavalca, and his *Homilies* and *Regula pastoralis* would eventually be translated as well. The sophisticated exegetical content of the *Moralia* posed a challenge to would-be translators, but the combined efforts of its Italian translators, Zanobi da Strada and Giovanni da San Miniato, produced a complete translation quite faithful to the original Latin.

Zanobi da Strada (1312-1361) was a Latin poet, translator, and schoolmaster, as well as a Florentine humanist and friend and correspondent of Giovanni Boccaccio and Petrarch. He was born in 1312 to Giovanni Mazzuoli, a master of grammar in Florence whose pupils included Boccaccio. After his father's death in 1332, Zanobi took over his school. He began work on his translation of Gregory's *Moralia in Job* around 1351 at the request of his friend and protector, Niccolò Acciaiuoli, for whom Zanobi had recently begun to work as a secretary in Naples. His career was an illustrious one, and he was crowned poet laureate by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV in Pisa in 1355 (although Petrarch deemed him unworthy of the honor). He traveled to Monte Cassino in the same year, and while there made some important discoveries among the monastery's manuscripts, including works by Tacitus, Apuleius, and Varro. In addition to the *Morali*, left unfinished when he died, his earlier translation of Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, some small selections of his Latin poetry, and some of his letters still survive.

Giovanni da San Miniato (1360-1428) was born in Florence, where his father, originally from San Miniato, had worked as a notary and frequented the Florentine literary circle of Zanobi da Strada and Francesco Nelli. Giovanni fought as a soldier for Florence between 1390 and 1392, but subsequently decided to become a monk and entered the Camaldolese monastery of S. Maria degli Angeli in Florence in 1394. He held important positions in the monastery, becoming prior in 1422, and at the same time he produced a number of vernacular translations of spiritual texts. These include Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*, Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, as well as his completion of the *Morali* in 1415. Giovanni is particularly well known for his correspondence with humanist luminaries of the day, particularly his friend, Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati, and for his own avowedly anti-humanist attacks on secular literature.

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