

MANUSCRIPT 99

Regulae grammaticae et rhetoricae. An anonymous treatise on Latin grammar and rhetoric. With: Ovid, De remedio amoris (fols. 157-66).

Italy (in Latin)

Ca. 1450

This grammatical treatise is a codex of considerable interest, not only because of its contents, but also because of its finely decorated initials, its pen-and-ink drawings, and its lavish use of red and blue ink for purposes of ornament and emphasis. The initials are not (properly speaking) "illuminated," although there was some use of a rather feeble gold-colored ink, nor are they illustrated, but consist of an elaborate use of tracery, with some floral or leaf designs intermixed, and done in red, blue, purple, and yellow ink. They can be found on fols. 12, 27, 31, 40, 43, 44, 49, 53, 58, 61, 63, 66, 79, 81, 82r., 82v., 88, 90, and 96 (according to the old foliation), with over 20 examples in all. There are no more decorated initials after fol. 96; blank spaces were left for further initials on fols. 119, 126, 128, and 130, but they were not filled in. In addition to the decorated initials, there are hundreds of uncials done in red or blue.

There are about a dozen pen-and-ink drawings (fols. 21, 31, 41, 50, 60, 70, 90, 110, 120, 130, and 140) illustrating grammatical precepts, but done in a light-hearted vein, and sometimes conveying a fairly clear idea of medieval costumes (see fols. 110 and 130). Unfortunately a later owner of the codex, probably an over-zealous cleric, has deliberately blotted out some of the drawings, probably because he found them frivolous, or even indecent.

Unfortunately the first eleven leaves of the codex are missing, and, by the original foliation, the codex now begins on fol. 12. The missing leaves contained rules 1 and 2 of the grammar; and fol. 12 begins with rule 3. Fol. 12, nonetheless, is remarkably ornamented on the recto side, and possibly was intended as a fresh start, at least from the standpoint of appearance. Perhaps the same person who wrote the text inscribed the words "In individue trinitatis nomine amen" at the head of fol. 12. Curiously enough, the very general and elementary materials at the end of the text (fols. 145-56) may in part make up or compensate for the matters treated in the lost or discarded pages.

The contents of the codex run as follows:

Fols. 12- 15. Rule 3, on verbs.

" 15- 27. Rule 4, on nouns. (End of the section on "minor" Latin grammar, end of the "rules.")

- Fols. 27- 40. On degrees of comparison. (Each of the succeeding sections is called a "tractatum," but each stands alone, without a number.)
- " 40-42. On superlatives.
- " 42- 44. On particles.
- " 44- 49. On numbers.
- " 49- 53. On interrogatives.
- " 53- 58. On adverbs.
- " 58- 61. On words of relation.
- " 61- 63. On infinitives.
- " 63- 66. On verbs.
- " 66- 79. More on verbs.
- " 79- 80. On the kinds of verbs (but the entire section has been left blank, except for the initial statement about the contents of this section).
- " 81. On defective verbs (very brief).
- " 82. On predicative moods (very brief).
- " 82- 88. On participles.
- " 88- 90. On pronouns.
- " 90- 96. On conjunctions.
- " 96-118. On figures of speech. End of the rules of grammar.
- " 119-130. On the rules of rhetoric.
- " 130-144. On the art of writing letters. End of the grammar and rhetoric.
- " 145-156. Addenda: a general section on the parts of speech, with many interesting examples of conjugations and declensions.

All of the above materials are in the same hand. At the end of the codex there is a section in a later hand, in dull brown ink without rubrication or ornament, containing the text of Ovid's De remedio amoris, with marginal annotations and paragraph of introduction.

On the recto of every leaf the copyist wrote a few words in purple ink indicating the subjects treated in the various sections; these headings come to an end with fol. 118, at the conclusion of the "rules of grammar" proper. With the same ink, the copyist foliated the work from fol. xii to fol. lxxxii (81), in Roman numerals. The foliation ends at fol. 81. There is also a second foliation, in a much later hand, in black ink, that numbers fol. 12 as fol. 1 - and therefore the two foliations differ by 11 leaves. In the last half of the codex, on pages where sections begin or end, there is an additional foliation in square brackets and pencil (i.e., [157]), which continues the original foliation. Thus the last leaf of the codex is numbered as follows: "C^o55 [166]" (the C^o, of course, stands for 100).

Goodspeed, Descriptive catalogue, p. 123, suggest that the codex might have originated as early as the 14th century. This is highly improbable. According to Mr. Alan Stevenson, a specialist in calligraphy and paper study, the Lombardic uncials are characteristic of the mid-15th century. The

watermark - a very plain three mounts in a circle, surmounted by a cross - is of too common a type to date exactly, but it is very similar to watermark No. 1307 in Zonghi's Watermarks, which is dated Fabriano 1448. It seems reasonable to conclude that the codex was of North Italian origin, of about the year 1450 or 1460.

Folio, 30 x 22 cm.

155 fols. (foliated twice).

Red-brown calf binding, stamped in gold, with marbled endpapers. On the front and back covers are stamped in gold the arms of Cardinal Giannangelo Braschi (1717-1799), who became Pope Pius VI in 1775, and died as Napoleon's prisoner.

A fair copy in a single unidentified hand, with additions in a second hand. There is no index or table of contents, but most sections of the codex are preceded by a short list of contents.

Belonged to Cardinal Braschi (in the 1760's), and then to the Marquis of Taccone of Naples, who was treasurer to the kingdom of Naples late in the 18th century. Part of the Berlin Collection. See De Ricci, Census, I, 564.

21 February 1968
T. Bentley Duncan