

Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, MS.Peniarth 336APetrarch, *secretum*; Ps-Plato latinus, *Axiochus***Oxford, 1451-1453**

I Thickish parchment (skin-skin, hair-hair), much of it rewashed with hair side fairly smooth; variable size with average of 159 × 116 mm; iv (first marbled flyleaf; rest paper) + 114 + viii (all paper except last which is, again, marbled flyleaf) fol.; modern pencil foliation: 1–122 crossing out previous pencil pagination.

II i¹⁶ with 1 & 5 removed (before fol.1 & between fol.3 & 4) ii–vi¹⁶ vii¹⁶ + four singletons after last (as fol.111-114); horizontal catchwords and folio signatures for the first few quires only.

III Writing space variable, average is 101 × 69 mm; average of 23 long lines; single border ruled with no signs of pricking.

IV A different scribe wrote each of the two items. The first scribe writes a changeable French-influenced gothic hand, with pointed letters. The scribe tends to employ a double-looped **b**, **d** & **l**; at its most formal the top horizontal stroke on the capital **F** and on the long **s** have two serifs. This hand is identifiable with that of the main part of **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438** (fol.41–5, 48^v–136). The second hand is less pointed, again gothic with French influence. To a greater extent than the first hand (cf. fol. 89^v), this scribe has a penchant for florid ascenders on the top line. The **h** and **b** are straight-backed, while the **p** and **t** are curved.

V There is a full border at fol.104^v and three-quarters borders at fol.2^v, 23 & 56. They employ gold, blue, pink, green and orange, with a little yellow; though more accomplished, they appear to be by the same illuminator as **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**.

VI There are several hands which write marginalia, concentrated in [1]. One contemporary hand corrects the text (eg. fol.10, 22, 26^v, 55^v etc), while a sixteenth century recusant reader, with a morbid interest in death, writes in a humanist-influenced hand several notes early in the text (fol.11^v, 12, 13^v, 14, 16^v-17), at fol.15 writing a Greek word and, at fol.15^v, noting *Sanctissimus ille martyr Iohannes Fissierus Episcopus Roffensis suos admonere solitus ut omnis meditatio colloquia essent de morte Effigiem mortis prae oculis habere nonnihil ferat*. There are also marginal additions in red, probably by the scribe (fol. 24^v, 29^v, 30); also, throughout the text, flags in red and black as well as lines drawn down the margin, like those in **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**. There are also more irregular signs of readership, four or five adding one word or a nota mark once in the Petrarch. In the second item, there is a series of marginal notes by the scribe; there are also a series of lines and flags drawn in the margin, which do not appear to be scribal.

VII Early twentieth century dark purple leather; at fol.116 & 117, the original boards are kept.

2^o fo.: [fol.1] minutis interrogatiunculis...

[fol.2] Tu michi dux...

* * *

[1] fol.1-104: **Francesco Petrarca, *Secretum*** [incomplete]

pref.: || minutis interrogatiunculis me quoque ut ... [fol.2^v] ille me primum verbis aggressus est.

dial.: Quid agis homuncio. quid sompnias quid expectas ... [fol.104] sileat mundus et fortuna non obstrepat. / Explicit Franciscus poeta Laureatus de secreto conflictu querelarum suarum.

The full text is edited by A. Buffano (Turin, 1975), without reference to this copy.

The first leaf of the preface is missing, presumably removed for its illuminated border. The remaining text begins at p.24 of the Buffano edition.

The explicit is in the same hand as the following title, probably that of the second scribe.

[2] fol.104-114: **Ps-Plato latinus, *Axiochus*** (**Cincius Romanus**, with altered preface)

Extract from D. Rundle, 'Of Republics and Tyrants: aspects of quattrocento humanist writings and 312 their reception in England, c. 1400 – c. 1460' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1997)

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tit. pref.: Incipit prefacio ad Reverendum in christo patrem / & dominum Reginaldum Harfordensem Episcopum / de opere subsequenti

pref.: [fol.104^v] Magna profecto & exquisita diligencia adhibetur ... [fol.105^v] ad ipsum Socratem gravissime deputantem accedamus.

tit.: Socrates de morte contempnenda / latinus ex greco factus ab Cincio / Romano Incipit feliciter.

dial.: |Socrates| CUM EX ATHENIS decederem ad herculis gimnasium ... unde vocatus huc progressus. / Telos finis

The preface is edited in M.Lehnerdt, "Cencio und Agapito de' Rustici", *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteraturgeschichte*, n.f. xiv (1900) pp.149–172 at pp.163–164 [reprinted in Bertalot, *Studien* ii pp.134–135].

The preface, as the title suggests, is slightly altered. In the main, the changes are the same as those which occur in **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**. However, in two cases, phrases are erased and written over to make the letter suitable for its new addressee: so *strenuissime comes*, which in the Dublin codex replaced the words *reverendissime pater*, is (ironically) removed to read instead *reverende in christo pater*.

* * *

Our understanding of this manuscript is greatly increased by recognising its connection with the volume John Manyngam had made for John Tiptoft, **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**. The same illuminator worked on both manuscripts; Manyngam's main scribe wrote the first article, and item [2] here (written in a hand not seen in the other manuscript) was copied directly from there (item (12)). This, then, is an Oxford manuscript, probably connected with Manyngam himself. Like the manuscript for Tiptoft, it was compiled in the early 1450s; Reginald Boulers, previously abbot of Gloucester, was bishop of Hereford for only three years: the papal provision was dated 14 August 1450 and he was translated to Lincoln on 7 February 1453. However, his appointment was politically sensitive: Boulers had played a part in the French negotiations and in the unrest of 1450 was a target for discontent [I.Harvey, *Jack Cade's rebellion* (Oxford, 1991) pp.34, 64, 66, 128], to the point of surrendering himself to York [P.Johnson, *Duke Richard of York* (Oxford, 1988) pp.83-4] and being put on trial for treason in the Parliament of 1450/1, at which point he was still called by his title of abbot of Gloucester [*RP 1439-1468*, p.216]. He was

secretly consecrated as bishop of Hereford on 14 February 1451 and began to act as

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bishop soon after that; he was finally installed publically at Hereford on 2 August [*Registrum Boulers* {Canterbury & York Society 25} (London, 1919) pp.2-3, 11]. So, this manuscript must date from February 1451 at the very earliest, and was written no later than the first month or so of 1453. Within this period, the most likely year of production is 1451, when Manyingham was still the registrar of Oxford University.

As with **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**, there is no need to assume that Manyingham had this codex copied directly from manuscripts given to Oxford by Humfrey. In the case of item [2] it would seem most likely that this copy is transcribed (and emended) from the version in the Dublin manuscript. For item [1], there was a copy in the university collection [Sammut, p.79 {no.223}] but the work had also gained a wider popularity, being copied for example by Theoderic Werken for Richard Bole, perhaps in London, in 1450 (now Oxford: Balliol College, MS.127, fol.5-66).

It may seem curious that Manyingham should seek to ingratiate himself to a man whom he is unlikely to have known personally (their time in Oxford does not appear to have overlapped) and who was so recently in political trouble. It may be, however, that Manyingham prepared this manuscript on behalf of the university in an attempt to gain the favour of this alumnus who had recently been raised to the episcopacy. The university's register suggests that two issues concerned Oxford in this period: on the one hand, the loss of land which could follow from an Act of Resumption and, on the other, the wish to secure Humfrey of Gloucester's books [*Ep. Acad.*, pp.288-98]. Perhaps this approach to Boulers was an attempt by the institution to gain his support in one or both of these issues. If this is the case, there is something paradoxical (but not necessarily inappropriate) about the texts chosen which could be taken as advising

retreat from the world and a willingness to accept inevitable death with equanimity.

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There are several signs of provenance. First, there is an erased note in the scribe's hand at fol.66^v but it is irretrievable under UV. At fol.67, an erased note in English includes the *ex libris* of Robert ap John ap William. Finally, the name John Jones appears in gold at fol.100^v and reappears in less ornate black at fol.114^v. Mann suggests this is John Jones of Ysceifog, Flintshire, several of whose manuscripts reached the Peniarth collection.

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Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth, 1943) p.2; Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought*, ii (Rome, 1985) p.163; Mann, no.3 (erroneously suggesting item [2] is also in Oxford: Balliol, MS.131, but that actually includes the version by Rinuccio Aretino); *Iter*, iv, p.5; *DHL*, p.97; Hankins, cat.A, no.1.

On Boulers, see *BRUO*.