

Seville: Biblioteca Colombina, MS.5/1/20

Del Monte, *De Vitiorum inter se Differentia*

England, 1438–40

I Fairly thick parchment (skin-skin), 240 × 163mm. Fol.: ii (1 paper, 1 parchment) + 79 + i (paper). Pencil foliation: 1–80, including fly-leaf, so this foliation is one higher than actual. **NB.: actual foliation used in this description.**

II i–v¹⁰, vi¹⁰ (lacking first before fol.51), vi–viii¹⁰. Horizontal catchwords at bottom centre within a pattern of dots and pen-strokes; no quire signatures.

III 139 × 101mm. 25 long lines. No pricking; faint signs of border ruling.

IV One tall, sloping italic hand throughout, identifiable as del Monte's [see D.Quaglioni, *Pietro del Monte a Roma* (Rome, 1984) pl.I-V; another manuscript in the Colombina in his hand is MS.7/4/20 {Decembrio, *epistulae*}; see also **CUL, MS.Gg.i.34 (i)**]. Del Monte attempts in this manuscript to make his script closer to a bookhand than in other codices written by him; the aspect is less pointed and more rounded than usual but note the characteristic long s and the x with its descender to the left. At a later date, the author edited the text, erasing words and adding phrases (eg. fol.20, 30^v, 33^v, 48, 55, 53, 57, 77^v).

V There are initials and half-borders in an English preface at the start of the preface and each book (except lib.III, the first page of which is missing) at fol.1, 3, 27^v; they consist of blue and pink on gold with green, pink and blue leaves. They are perhaps by the border artist who worked with the Master of Duke Humfrey's Psalms [see K.L.Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts* (London, 1996) pl.320 & ii, pp.239-41; for similar borders, see Pächt & Alexander, iii, no.997 & Alexander & Temple, no.509].

VI There are no marginalia except for the copious annotations of the author (probably written on two different occasions: note the slight difference of script at, eg., fol.48^v, 51); these notes consist mainly of name-references.

VII A Colombina binding of skin over paper.

2^o fo.: Delectaris...

* * *

fol.1–77^v: **Pietro del Monte, *De Vitiorum inter se Differentia*** (with preface)
{incomplete}

tit.: Ad Illustrissimum & Excellentissimum principem H / ducem Gloucestrie Petri demonte Veneti Sedis / apostolice protonotarii de vitiorum inter se differentia / & comparatione Liber primus incipit feliciter.

pref.: Proemium. / Tuas eximias Laudes virtutesque permaximas ... [fol.3] simul colloquentes ac disputantes audiamus.

dial.: Cum Petrus emilianus pontifex vincentinus vir omnium iudicio ... [fol.77^v]
& osculata presulis dextera ^leti atque ilares abierunt.^ / DEO LAUS

Preface only edited (without reference to this copy) in Sammut, pp.151–3.

A folio is missing between fol.50 & 51, probably cut out for the miniature which would have appeared at the start of lib.III. The books divide: lib.I [fol.3-27^v], lib.II [fol.27^v-50^v], lib.III [fol.51-77^v].

fol.78–79: blank

* * *

This autograph copy of del Monte's dialogue was, as the parchment and illuminations demonstrate, constructed in England. However, it appears that it did not remain in

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

© David Rundle 1997

England but instead left with its author. The first proof of this is textual: at a later point, del Monte went through this copy emending the work. In most cases, the changes simply make the phrasing more polished or recondite, but in one instance (fol.55), he erases a section which employs a reference to Sardanapallus (taken from Poggio's *De Avaritia*) that he had already used elsewhere in the tract (fol.30). These emendations do not occur in the English copies of the dialogue (as is most easily demonstrated by comparing the final words in this copy with the close of the text in the English copies, on which see **Cambridge: Corpus, MS.472, London: Lambeth, MS.354 & Bod., MS.Auct. F.5.26**).

Moreover, there is internal and circumstantial evidence to suggest that this manuscript was in Italy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. There is a note at fol.79^v, written in a small humanist hand, which reads: *Ihus MMDX Die vero xxviiij septembris: Ego Andreas De Nigro q Domini Georgij [last nine letters illegible] / Multi sunt obligandi pauci vero offendendi: Nam memoria Beneficiorum fragilis est iniuriarum / vero tenax*. The circumstantial evidence is that there is a mid-fifteenth century Italian copy of this emended version of *De Vitiis Differentia* - BAV, MS.Vat.lat.1048 - which collation suggests was probably transcribed from this copy.

However, the manuscript did not settle in Italy for long. Hernando Colon, natural son of Columbus, courtier of Charles V and bibliophile, bought this on his travels around Europe, probably after 1530, as he does not record this manuscript in Registro B, which records his book purchases up to that date. The entry in Abecedario B suggests a similar conclusion: it is written at the end of the entry for Petrus de Monte in a different script.

Despite not circulating in England, this manuscript is of interest to us for the evidence it

provides of del Monte's attitude towards his dialogue. In the first place, the marginalia, Extract from D. Rundle, 'Of Republics and Tyrants: aspects of quattrocento humanist writings and their reception in England, c. 1400 – c. 1460' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1997)

directing the reader to classical references, could be said to encourage the ‘medieval’ practice of ‘florilecture’ [on which see c.vii p.266 above]. What is more, even though this work was plagiarised from Poggio, del Monte kept a copy of it and, indeed, took the effort to emend it. On the other hand, he does not appear to have attempted to circulate *De Vitiarum Differentia* widely in Italy (the Vatican manuscript appears to be the only Italian copy of the work). So, ‘his’ dialogue probably held for its author an ambivalent position: a work written with some sleight of hand for a barbarian prince, it could not have any great value in the home market but, equally, it was not something to disown.

* * *

Iter, iv, p.613b.

[Biblioteca Colombina] *Abecedarium B y Supplementum: edicion facsimil* (Madrid, 1992) col.1307.