

Cambridge: Trinity College, MS.B.14.47Surigone, *De Institutionibus Boni Viri*Oxford?, s.xv^{med}

I Parchment (thick, English style), 154 × 116mm. iii (paper) + 58 + i (paper). Pencil foliation: 1-58.

II i⁶ ii-iii⁸ ix¹⁰ wanting 7 (after fol.28) v⁸ vi⁸ last removed (after fol.46) vii⁸ viii⁴. Vertical catchwords in bottom right corner.

III 96 × 66mm. 14 lines. Ruled with occasional signs of full pricking.

IV Written throughout by one scribe in a competent *lettera antica*; presumably the hand of the author. Notable features include the **a** which is formed with a single loop; the **m** with its uneven minims and no serifs. There is often ligature between **e** and the following letter. The **oe** diphthong frequently appears while **ae** is marked by a light subscript. The scribe avoids using the ampersand. Text is written in black ink with titles and marginal notes (pointing out classical references) rubricated.

V There are two full borders at fol.1 & 15; each chapter begins with a two-line initial of gold on red and blue. The borders are similar to, but not the same as, those in **Aberystwyth: National Library, MS.Peniarth 336A** & **Dublin: Trinity College, MS.438**; one notable difference is that here the sprigs are long and straight rather than the curved sprigs of these other two manuscripts. However, the generic similarity might suggest that these illuminations came from the same workshop and date from about the same period. Each of the borders leaves space for a coat-of-arms at the bottom centre; neither is filled in, except for a rough drawing of a ragged staff at fol.15.

VI Copious marginalia in a late sixteenth century hand improving the author's prose, sometimes adding Greek phrases (eg. fol.42^v, 46).

VII Plain leather binding (s.xvii?), rebacked.

2^o fo.: argumentum quoddam...
[fol.16] iudicem in animam...

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fol.1-57: **Stefano Surigone, *De Institutionibus Boni Viri***

tit.: Ad {reverendum patrem dominum / d. Richardum Dene priorem de / Malverne} per poetam lau/reatum Stephanum Surigonum / de Institutionibus boni viri / libellus foeliciter incipit / PROLOGUS

pref.: Versabantur nostris in manibus diebus proximis ... [fol.14^v] parvo volumini modus inponatur. / Institutionum boni viri prohemium explicit foeliciter.

tit. lib.: [fol.15] Institutionum boni viri De summi / veri dei cultu capitulum incipit.

lib.: Erit inprimis igitur creator omnium deus ... promerita comparetur immortalitas. / Institutionum boni viri libellus foeliciter explicit.

Unprinted. This is the unique copy of this work.

The work is divided into twenty chapters.

fol.57^v-58: blank, except for scribbles

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This manuscript is the sole surviving evidence of Surigone's humanist activities in

England. He arrived in England at some point in the 1450s and is known to have spent

some time teaching in Oxford. Both the illuminations in this codex and the text itself

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(which is indebted to works which he surely found in the university library) suggests that this manuscript was produced in Oxford. Perhaps it was as a way of supplementing his income that he sought a patron away from the university - indeed one who may not have been an Oxford graduate.

Richard Dene seems a curious choice for a dedicatee, mainly because we know so little about him: he does not appear in either *BRUO* or *BRUC*. He was elected as prior of Great Malvern in 1457 [*Victoria County History Worcester*, ii (London, 1906) p.143], a post he must have held for about three decades. In 1484, he was given dispensation to hold the priory of Lenton (Nott.s) *in commendam*, and in patent rolls of 1482 and 1486 he is referred to as merely prior of Lenton; perhaps, then, he retired there, though remaining titular prior of Malvern [*CPL*, 1471-84, p.192; *CPatR*, 1476-85, p.253; *CPatR*, 1485-1494, p.138; see also *CCloseR*, 1476-85, no.649]. The last mention of Dene may be a 1490/1 papal dispensation for pluralism [*CPL*, 1484-92, no.1351]. This gives a rather broad period for the production of Surigone's treatise but the codicological evidence of the manuscript suggests a narrower timespan: the illuminated borders are in a style familiar in Oxford manuscripts of the 1450s. Perhaps this work was produced soon after Dene's appointment.

At the end of his preface, Surigone offers to write longer works if this tract meets with its dedicatee's approval (fol.14^v). Perhaps Surigone did not receive the encouragement he desired as there is no evidence for his writing another treatise of this kind: this, though, may be a reflection of our ignorance, for, if Surigone followed a policy of only producing one copy of a treatise, the chances of another tract surviving like this one would surely be low. However that may be, this manuscript was not completely forgotten: the dense sixteenth century annotations augmenting and emending the text demonstrate that at least one reader showed a lively (if patronising) interest in the work.

There are several signs of later provenance: at fol.57^v-58^r, the name Thomas Hatton is repeatedly written in a sixteenth century hand. Another sixteenth century hand writes at the top of fol.2, 41 & 41^v the name 'Emmanuel.' A seventeenth century owner, George Warburton has written his name at the bottom of fol.1. A book-plate at the front flyleaf records that this manuscript was a gift to Trinity by John Laughton, sometime the college librarian. For other gifts from him (including one dated 1670) see the James catalogue.

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M.R.James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1902) no.330; R.Weiss, "Humanism at Oxford", *TLS*, 9 January 1937, p.28; *id.*, "New light on humanism in England", *JWCI*, xiv (1951) pp.21–33 at p.21. On Surigone generally, see Weiss, pp.138–9; c.vii pp.240-2 above.