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## Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago

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## RESEARCH NOTES

### RESOURCES FOR SCHOLARS: MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS IN TWO ILLINOIS LIBRARIES

Edited by Richard W. Clement<sup>1</sup>

JOSEPH REGENSTEIN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO<sup>2</sup>

Richard W. Clement

The University of Chicago began its collection of medieval manuscripts in its very first years.<sup>3</sup> In 1891 William Rainey Harper, the university's first president, purchased the entire stock of a Berlin antiquarian book firm, Calvary and Company. By this single act, the university's small library was increased by over 90,000 volumes, of which fifty-three were medieval manuscripts, mostly dating from the fifteenth century [6]. By 1912, as a result of the acquisition of the Hengstenberg, the Ide, and the American Bible Union collections, the university's medieval manuscripts numbered seventy-nine, composed mainly of theological works.

In its first few decades, the university greatly benefited from the generosity of several collectors. Frank W. Gunsaulus donated a number of manuscripts over the years, most notably Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum* (M-R 100) and Petrarch's *Sonnets* (M-R 706). Martin A. Ryerson was instrumental in supporting the Chaucer project of professors Manly

1. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.
2. I wish to thank Robert Rosenthal, Curator of Special Collections, and especially Maggie Fusco, Assistant Curator of Manuscripts, for offering me every assistance during my investigation.
3. The most comprehensive catalog of the university's medieval holdings is in [1] and [2]. An older but still valuable and exceptionally complete catalog is [3]. The history of the collections has been described in [4, pp. 12–18] and [5, pp. 340–49].

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and Rickert. In 1924 he purchased the Nicholas Bacon Collection of over 4,500 historical items originally from Suffolk to support the teaching of paleography and the training of assistants for what was hoped would be the definitive edition of the *Canterbury Tales* [7], and in 1929 he purchased for the university a manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* (M-R 564), one of the few such in the United States. Shirley Farr, though not a collector herself, established a fund in memory of her father for the purchase of manuscripts. A committee of faculty members made judicious use of this fund in the 1920s. Some of the more outstanding acquisitions were Boccaccio's *Teseide* (M-R 541) and his *Fiammetta* (M-R 540), Dante's *Divine Comedy* (M-R 544), Jacques de Cessoles's *Livre des échecs moralisés* (M-R 392), and a collection of sixty-eight fragments for paleographical study. In the 1920s and early 1930s the Alumni Committee on Manuscripts made possible the acquisition of a variety of codices, such as Roger of Waltham's *Compendium morale* (M-R 103), Justinian's *Novellae constitutiones* (M-R 423), and the Meaux Abbey fragments (M-R 654), significant as examples of early polyphonic music dating from the thirteenth century. At the end of the decade, professors Edgar J. Goodspeed and Harold R. Willoughby had the extreme good fortune to acquire fifteen Greek biblical manuscripts in the course of only two years, many of which are now among the oldest at Chicago [8, pp. 137-42; 9, pp. 65-68; 10, pp. 139-46]. The Greek New Testament has remained a focal point for collection development.

The overall collection has continued to grow over the past fifty-five years, though at a slower pace than in its first forty years. Manuscripts have continued to be both purchased and donated. Most significant among the more recent acquisitions are the William Blum Collection, donated in 1967 (consisting of seven liturgical books, mostly books of hours), and the Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Rosenthal Collection, acquired in 1982 (consisting of nearly 2,500 North Italian documents).

The medieval holdings of the Department of Special Collections are divided into several distinct collections. The largest is the one of codex manuscripts, which also encompasses several subcollections, such as the William Blum Collection, the Edgar J. Goodspeed Collection of New Testament Manuscripts, and the Wandel Collection of Manuscript Fragments for Paleographical Study (comprising seventy-five fragments dating from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries). Other distinct collections include the Sir Nicholas Bacon Collection of over 4,500 historical documents from Suffolk, dating from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, the Norfolk Collection of Miscellaneous Deeds, dating from 1409 to 1826, and the Tey Magna Manorial Court Rolls (from Essex), dating from 1391 to 1679.

### The Codex Manuscripts Collection

As its name implies, the Codex Manuscripts Collection is generally made up of manuscript codices or books, but it also contains fragments and rolls. The most coherent subcollection, and that which contains probably the most valuable medieval treasures of the university, is the Goodspeed Collection of New Testament Manuscripts, comprising forty-five medieval codices and fragments [11]. Here are the university's oldest manuscripts—for example, a Greek fragment of Saint John Chrysostom's *Homily on Matthew*, dating from the eleventh century (M-R 862), and a copy of the Greek *Lectionary* of Simeon Stylites from about the year 1100 (M-R 947). The collection consists of many twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts of the Greek New Testament and other liturgical texts. Complementing these central Greek biblical texts is a number of medieval and Renaissance Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew biblical manuscripts.

The remainder of the Codex Manuscripts Collection consists of a great variety of manuscripts. Most are late, and nearly half, unsurprisingly, are of a theological nature. For example, there are two manuscripts, one of the thirteenth century and the other of the fourteenth, of Peter Comester's *Historia scholastica* (M-R 120 and 121), a twelfth-century codex containing the *Miracles of the Virgin* and Julian of Toledo's *Prognosticon* (M-R 147), a collection of Augustine's treatises from the fourteenth century (M-R 110), Gregory's *Moralia* from the fifteenth century (M-R 59), Jerome on Isaiah, dated 1442 (M-R 25), the *Sermons* of Leo I, a particularly fine example of a humanistic "white vine-scroll" codex from the middle of the fifteenth century (M-R 30), and of course a good number of liturgical works and books of hours.

Chief among the liturgical codices are those in the William J. Blum Collection, bequeathed to the university in 1967. One, for example, is a very fine book of hours of the "Golden Scrolls" group produced in the South Netherlands in the second quarter of the fifteenth century (M-R 344). The illuminations produced by the artists of the "Golden Scrolls" group are provincial imitations and variations on the exemplars of the Parisian illuminators of the previous generation. Another outstanding book of hours from the Blum Collection is a Dutch version, in the Geert Groote translation, produced in Bruges in about 1480 by the anonymous artist known as the Master of Edward IV, so called because he produced a number of manuscripts for the exiled king during his stay in the Netherlands after 1470. This manuscript exhibits his typical use of a fluid technique, homely figural types, complex spatial groupings, and silvery soft tonalities (M-R 347). This collection also contains several

Renaissance books of hours that clearly illustrate both the continued popularity of these medieval books of devotion and their visual transformation by Renaissance sensibilities (M-R 343, 345, 348) [12]. Not all *horae* are in the Blum Collection. One fine book of hours in the Codex Manuscripts Collection, from about 1405 of Northeastern French origin (of Chalons-sur-Marne usage), exemplifies a delicate balance of text, ornament, and representation (M-R 26). From the Paris tradition comes the linear detailing, the borders of stylized ivy, the rhythmic drapery folds, and the elaborated tessellated backgrounds. From Flanders comes the more naturalistic tradition of incorporating scenes from nature and portraying figures in more natural terms.

There are about twenty humanistic works, all of the fifteenth century and most of Italian origin. Examples of these are Boccaccio's *Fiammetta* (M-R 540), his *Teseida* (M-R 541), his *Filocolo* (M-R 57), Dante's *Divine Comedy* (M-R 544), Petrarch's *Sonnets* (M-R 705), Valla's treatise on the Latin language (M-R 703), and Poggio Bracciolini on Valla (M-R 35). Perhaps the most interesting humanistic manuscripts at the university are three codices that belong to a group written in Florence around the turn of the fifteenth century. All exhibit protohumanistic features: spacious page format, blank space between lines, and regular proportions between tall and short letters. They show the humanistic forms of the letters *a*, *d*, and long *s*. These manuscripts belong to the period when such men as Petrarch and most especially Coluccio Salutati were searching for a new legible script. Salutati found this script, which he and his contemporaries believed to be that of the Romans and so identified as *littera antiqua*, in Caroline minuscule. However it was Salutati's young friend, Poggio Bracciolini, who really developed the humanistic minuscule in the first years of the century, and it was Niccolo Niccoli who promoted it during Bracciolini's long absence from Florence. Niccoli, of course, was the inventor of the humanistic cursive that we know today as italic. Salutati's *De seculo et religione* (M-R 187), which exemplifies these protohumanistic characteristics, was copied on parchment in Florence around 1400. Copied in the same center for Salutati is Boccaccio's *Genealogiae deorum* (M-R 100). The script of this codex is more compact and more Gothic than the previous codex. It has round *d*'s and *s*'s, a fusion of bows, and two columns of text. Giovanni Dominici's *Lucula noctis* (M-R 831) is apparently a dedication copy presented by its author in about 1405 to Salutati, to whom it was dedicated. The work was written to reprove those who read the pagan classical authors. Naturally, Salutati did not share this view. As B. L. Ullman has shown, Salutati used this particular manuscript in preparing a refutation of Dominici's position [13, item 27]. Salutati asserted that, by reading classical authors, one

could learn correct Latin. Indeed there are many marginal notes in Salutati's hand that correct Dominici's faulty Latin.

There are relatively few classical texts. In a manuscript of the works of Horace (M-R 27), a distinct hierarchy of scripts is exemplified. A humanistic cursive is used for the text, a humanistic minuscule for incipits, explicits, and titles, and Roman capitals for some opening lines and the first letters of verses. The marginal notations are in a current humanistic hand. Similarly, in a codex of Ovid's *Fasti* (M-R 494) dating from about 1470, the text is in a rapid humanistic cursive, and incipits and explicits are in Roman capitals. Likewise, the text of the *Satires* of Juvenal (M-R 29), written on parchment in Florence in 1441, is in a humanistic minuscule, the many marginal scholia in cursive.

There are several Latin and vernacular manuscripts of English provenance. One of the more interesting Latin codices is the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (M-R 697) dating from 1460. This paper codex of ninety-eight folios is written in a cursive Anglicana that shows some secretary influences. The explicit is written in textura. Interestingly, the explicit indicates that a Franciscan monk named Adam copied the book for a priest, Thomas Thurlaw, in 1377. Yet the evidence of the script and the watermark place it in the middle of the fifteenth century. Obviously, the original explicit was simply copied without change. On the front fly-leaf of the codex, a sixteenth-century Protestant has expanded the emblem of the Roman Republic, SPQR, to read *stultus populus quaerit Romam* ("a foolish people seeks Rome").

Perhaps the best-known English vernacular manuscript in Chicago is the university's copy of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (M-R 564), which dates from about 1450. This parchment manuscript appears to have been produced in the West Country, but has a Worcestershire provenance. It is written in a regular Anglicana script in faded yellowish-brown ink. There are no pictures, and the simple rubricated capitals have unfortunately been severely rubbed and smudged. The quire signatures begin with gathering *i*, and thus it seems that eight quires (presumably all of eight folios, as is the case throughout the codex) have been lost. The signatures progress regularly through the alphabet until, following *z*, there is the symbol for "and"; following that are five quires signed with arbitrary symbols, then the next with an abbreviated *amen*, and finally there begins a new alphabetical sequence with *b*. Here, unfortunately, the text breaks off and an unknown number of gatherings has been lost. According to Manly and Rickert, this manuscript is of some real textual significance; for example, in the Tale of Melebee it preserves a reading found in only one other manuscript [7, pp. 356–60].

The university possesses several other English manuscripts in addition

to the *Canterbury Tales*: John Lydgate's *The Fall of Princes* (M-R 565), a paper codex of 278 folios dating from about 1450; Lydgate's *The Life of Our Lady* (M-R 566), containing 108 parchment folios (but unfortunately imperfect at the beginning); a *Brut* (M-R 253) (chronicling the history of Britain up to 1374), a paper codex of 132 folios dating from about 1400; and another *Brut* (M-R 254) (this one taking British history up to 1445), a mixture of parchment and paper of 149 folios, dating from about 1450.

Several legal manuscripts are held in the Regenstein Library. One is the widely influential commentary on civil law, the *Consilia* (M-R 6) by Baldo degli Ubaldi, a civil law professor who died in 1406. This manuscript, a large-format folio paper codex, typifies Italian legal books of the first half of the century. Legal book scribes continued to use a distinctive cramped highly cursive script, which was formatted, typically, in two columns and was very different from humanistic spaciousness and proportion. Also typical was the use of paper rather than parchment in legal works. Another legal manuscript, though in this instance dealing with canon law, is a commentary on the *Decretales* of Pope Gregory IX (M-R 39). Like the *Consilia*, this is a large-format folio paper volume, containing sixteen quires of twelve folios each. It is formatted in double columns, and the typical legal cursive is used as the textual script. What is perhaps more unusual is its use of rustic capitals for the rubrics and lemmata. This usage undoubtedly reflects the contemporary humanist-inspired interest in ancient scripts. Finally, there are about thirty miscellaneous codices and documents in Italian, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Catalan.

### The Sir Nicholas Bacon Collection

The Sir Nicholas Bacon Collection is one of the most important and coherent of the discrete Chicago collections [14]. It comprises some 4,500 items, most of which were purchased in 1924 from the antiquarian book firm of Bernard Quaritch in London. This mass of material illustrates the history of the Bacon family in Suffolk from 1250 to 1700. Included are many manorial rolls, court rolls, deeds, letters, and state papers. Perhaps most significant are the chronologically complete manorial documents from Hinderclay and Redgrave in Suffolk, both associated with the great Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds. The scope and depth of the Bacon Collection have been illustrated by discoveries of quite rare and unexpected items within it. For example, in the 1950s, several holograph letters written by John Donne were found among the documents, and there is still much to be learned from this collection, which is

the only one of its kind in an American university. Though not formally associated with the Bacon Collection, the Norfolk Collection of Miscellaneous Deeds and the Tey Magna Court Rolls Collection are each composed of similar types of document, and each provides a valuable complement to it. The Norfolk Collection contains a series of miscellaneous deeds dating from 1409 to 1826; the Tey Magna Collection includes fifteen compotus rolls, dating from 1391 to 1679, from the manor of the same name in Essex.

#### The Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Rosenthal Collection

The Samuel R. and Marie-Louise Rosenthal Collection, consisting of 2,455 North Italian documents, was purchased from the well-known New York book dealer H. P. Kraus in 1982. Kraus had obtained the documents in one of the periodic Phillipps sales [15]. Most of the items (1,847) are of Veronese origin, but a sizable number (506) are from the Veneto. The dates of these range from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, but the bulk of them is concentrated in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth. Nearly all are notarial documents, formal records of legal transactions drawn up by public notaries. A small number comprises ducal and papal bulls: Venetian ducal bulls (1339–1596), Venetian ducal documents (eighteenth century), papal bulls from Cologne (sixteenth century), documents from Genoa (sixteenth century), and a number of similar Veronese documents, some from as early as the fourteenth century. Among the notarial documents are several complete family archives. Clearly this is an exceptionally important collection for historians of Verona and the Veneto in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

#### Other Collections of Medieval Interest

The university maintains one of the finest collections of secondary reference works available. The Manuscript Search Room, adjacent to the reading room in the special collections department, contains catalogs, manuals, facsimiles, and journals.

In addition to the medieval primary materials and the reference collection that supports their study, the special collections department houses a number of other collections of some interest to medievalists. Several of these consist primarily of photostats and photographs of manuscripts. For example, the Liebaert Collection (M-R 462) contains photographs of Latin manuscripts, and the Charles R. Baskerville Col-



lection includes a number of photostats of British manuscripts and printed books. The Chaucer Collection also contains many photostats (which were used in the Manly-Rickert edition of the *Canterbury Tales*); associated with this collection is the Chaucer Life Records Collection, which was assembled to illustrate Chaucer's life. The university archive also contains the papers of both John Manly and Edith Rickert; the papers of George Gordon Coulton, a Cambridge historian; the notebooks of Eleanor P. Hammon, a Chicago Middle English scholar; and the typescripts and collations for *La gran conquista de ultramar*, edited by George T. Northrup.

In less than a century, the University of Chicago has acquired one of the most notable collections of medieval codices, documents, and fragments in this country. Unlike many American institutions that have been the passive recipients of collections formed by the typical bibliophilic tastes of American collectors for the "book beautiful," the University of Chicago has formulated its own coherent scholarly goals for collection development and actively pursued them by continuing to make significant purchases and by encouraging appropriate donations.

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