

MANUSCRIPT 11

Calderini, Domizio, 1446-1478

Commentaria in Martialem

MS. 11

Italy (in Latin)

Ca. 1475-1490

This copy of Domizio Calderini's commentary on the text of Martial is an example of the revival of classical learning in 15th century Italy; the manuscript includes only Calderini's commentary, not Martial's text itself. Interest in Martial sprang anew in the Renaissance and his works were frequently recopied. But though his writings would have been readily understood by any educated Roman of the first century, this was not the case in the 15th century. Martial alludes frequently to unimportant acquaintances of his and uses rare or archaic Latin words, as well as words drawn from Greek. For his writings to be understood, it was necessary that they be explicated by scholars with a thorough grounding in ancient literature and history. Calderini's commentary explicates such obscure words and phrases for the average reader, often by quoting ancient authors--especially Pliny--as evidence for the correctness of his interpretation.

Domizio Calderini was born at Torri, in the province of Verona, probably in 1446. His name was originally Domenico, but he changed it to Domizio so that it would sound more classical. After studying at Verona and then Venice, he went to Rome, where he became professor of rhetoric at the university in 1470, and was later made a papal secretary under Sixtus IV. He wrote commentaries on Juvenal, Martial, Statius, and

Virgil, among others, as well as an account of the Venetian republic and other works. Calderini's promising career was cut short in 1478, when he died of the plague at Rome, aged 32 years.

Calderini's commentary on Martial was published on Sept. 1, 1473, the date of the dedication copy (Florence, Laur. 53.33) to Lorenzo de' Medici, and was first printed, at Rome, six months later; consequently, manuscript copies are not common (Kristeller, Iter Italicum, mentions only two). This copy is a moderately sumptuous one, but has suffered from mutilation: 5 quires (50 leaves) are missing at the beginning, 3 quires after f. 10, 1 quire after f. 20, 3 leaves each after ff. 21 and 23, probably 2 leaves after f. 118, and probably one quire at the end, for a total of 108 missing leaves; most of f. 90 has been roughly cut away, and the illuminated initials have been cut from f. 104. The missing leaves must have been lost long ago, to judge from the soiled condition of the present f. 1.

Commentary for the following epigrams are included in this codex:

III.40-IV.3	(ff.1-10 ^v)
V.78-VI.45	(ff. 11-20 ^v)
VII.5-VII.12	(ff. 21-21 ^v)
VII.27-VII.35	(ff. 22-23 ^v)
VII.53-XII.87	(ff. 24-118 ^v)
XIV.127-XIV.207	(ff. 119-127 ^v)
XIII.1-XIII.31	(ff. 128-132 ^v)

It will be noticed that books 13 and 14 are reversed, and that much of book 14 was not included in the manuscript, even when the missing leaves are accounted for. The commentary on XIV.207 merges without notice into that on XIII.1 (f. 127^v, line 29), suggesting that the exemplar from which this manuscript was copied was wrongly arranged.

Bibliographical note:

"Domizio Calderini," Dizionario biografico degli Italiani (Rome, 1973),
vol. 16, 597-605

Carlo Dionisotti, "Calderini, Poliziano e altri," Italia Medioevale e
Umanistica XI (1968), 151-185

John Dunston, "Studies in Domizio Calderini," Italia Medioevale e
Umanistica XI (1968), 71-150

G. Levi, Cenni intorno allavita e agli scritti di Domizio Calderini
(Padua, 1900)

Robert Weiss, "In memoriam Domitii Calderini," Italia Medioevale e
Umanistica III (1960), 309-321

Goodspeed, E. J. A Descriptive Catalog of Manuscripts in the University
of Chicago Library (Chicago, 1912).

DESCRIPTION. Folio, on parchment, written at Naples ca. 1475-1490 :
316 X 240 (234 X 152) mm. : collation, iv, 1-2¹⁰, 3⁴, 4-12¹⁰, 13⁸, 14¹⁰,
iv = 132 ff. + viii : 30 long lines ruled in dry point on the hair side :
flesh sides out : vertical catch-words. Modern quarter red morocco
binding.

2° folio: illic fiebant

Fol. 1 beg: ut nix sed non esse Chionem quia nigra est breaks off (f. 132^V)

De grege Vestino. idest ex ouibus uestinis:

SCRIPT. Written in a skilful but rapid humanistic minuscule. Features to
notice are: the blobs which begin many lower-case letters, the crook to
the right at the top of the ascenders, the long serifs on the descenders
of p and q, the hook-like f and long s, the barbell-like g, and the way
the words are bound together by the serifs; the capitals are mostly of
the monumental form, but carelessly done. The words from Martial which
Calderini comments on are written in red, by the same scribe that wrote
the text (some have been written in black by mistake); spaces were left
for Greek words which were never filled in.

DECORATION. The beginning of the commentary on each epigram is indicated by a 3-line burnished gold initial on a ground of blue, red, and/or green, with white or yellow line-work. There are over 700 of these initials in the manuscript. A few of these initials were inserted incorrectly (e.g., the T on f. 5 should really be a C; and the word following [C]ALLIDUS [capo, a mistake for caupo or copo] should have been written in red).

PROVENANCE. From the Marquis of Taccone Coll. (?), Naples; obtained from Calvary (1891).