

MANUSCRIPT 23

Monte Rocherii, Guido de, fl. 1333
[Manipulus curatorum.] In Latin. Colophon dated
11 September 1461. With Nicolaus, of Osimo
(d. 1453), "Utilissimo modo de confessare"
(fols. 1-12), in Italian with Latin phrases.
MS 23

Italy (in Latin)

1461

The much published "Manipulus curatorum officia sacerdotum secundum ordinem septem sacramentorum perbreuiter complectens" (to give it the most common of its various titles) is a well-known work, having gone through over seventy printed editions in the course of a century (1470-1570); but the identity of its author is wrapped in obscurity. The work is a handbook for the guidance of priests, with terse summaries of essential theology, of pastoral practice, and of the nature and use of the sacraments. In his preface the author supplied the only three clues to his identity: (1) he signed himself as "Guido de Monte Rocherii" (or Rotherii); (2) he dedicated the work to "Domino Raymundo, divina providentia Sanctae Sedis Valentinae Episcopo"; and (3) he added the notation "Scriptum Turolii, Anno 1333." Since 30 editions of the Manipulus curatorum were printed in France, some bibliographers have assumed that Guido was a Frenchman, that Raymond must have been bishop of Valence,

in France, and that Monte Rocherii may have been Mont Rocher, an unidentified locality in France. A few bibliographies refer to "Guy de Rocher"; and the English printer William Caxton, when he issued the work in English translation as the Doctrinal of sapyence (1489), called the author "Guy de Roye"--see Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, VII (London, 1904), 172-3.

The French identification, keyed essentially to the bishopric of Valence, becomes impossible as soon as the bibliographer learns that no one called Raymond was bishop of Valence during the 14th century. Moreover the French identification is convincingly refuted in Palau y Dulcet, Manual del Librero Hispano-Americano, X (Barcelona, 1957), 86, which identifies Raymond with Raimond Gastó, bishop of Valencia (Spain), and considers "Monte Rocherii" to be a Latinized form of the common Catalan name "Montroquer," and which speculates that "Turolii" refers to Teruel in Aragon. (The first two assumptions appear to be quite sound, but the third is perhaps more dubious, since Teruel is far from Valencia, in a different diocese and in a different kingdom.)

As early as 1470 the first printed version of the Manipulus curatorum appeared, under the caption title Tractat' prim' de sacramentis (see the British Museum Catalogue of printed books). The copyist of the Chicago MS noted carefully that he finished writing at the hora none (mid-afternoon) of 11 September 1461--which means

that the codex copy originated only nine years before the flood of printed copies began to come off German, French, and Italian presses. In various towns and regions the Manipulus, as an essential manual for most priests, was the first book to be printed--and the three-dozen-or-more 15th-century editions render the work of great interest to students of incunabula and bibliography. By the late 16th century the Manipulus was made obsolete by the new directives of the Council of Trent, and it fell into disuse. In Spain, in 1588, priests were forbidden to use it as a guide in their pastoral work.

The Chicago codex was written in an exceptionally clear hand, was obviously designed for practical purposes, and, with its marginal annotations and underlinings, shows signs of frequent use. Attached to the main part of the codex are a few preliminary leaves containing recommendations on methods of confession, written in North Italian vernacular and attributed to the Franciscan friar Nicolaus of Osimo (derived from his Quadriga spirituale?); and at the end there are a few leaves listing the formulas of absolution. Scrawled across the first page, in a 17th-century hand, are the words "Collg Mut Soc Jesu" [Collegio Mutinensis Societatis Jesu], and evidently the codex belonged to the Jesuit college at Modena ("Mutina" in Latin).

4^o, 22 x 15 cm.

123 leaves.

University of Chicago binding, boards.

The main text in a single unidentified hand, written in a fine, well-rounded, "humanist" minuscule, rubricated, and with many marginal notes, emphasis marks, etc., in other hands. Preliminary materials, table of contents, and appendix in various hands. The leaves of the main text are foliated from 1 to 104; a fuller and more correct foliation appears in red crayon at the bottom right-hand corner of every tenth leaf.

Purchased before 1910. See Goodspeed, p. 23; and De Ricci, Census, I, 556.

18 November 1967
T. Bentley Duncan