



## Manuscripts of Nicholas of Cues

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# MANUSCRIPTS OF NICHOLAS OF CUES

By B. L. ULLMAN

CARDINAL NICHOLAS OF CUES (1401–64) is best known as churchman and philosopher, but he came into contact with the Renaissance movement while a student of law in Padua and made the personal acquaintance of a number of leading Italian humanists, especially at the Council of Bale.<sup>1</sup> Before that he had become famous, if not notorious, to all humanists by his discoveries and supposed discoveries of manuscripts of Latin authors. Great excitement was caused by the announcement made to the humanistic world in 1426 by the famous Guarino that Nicholas had found eight hundred very old manuscripts in Cologne. These were said to include the complete *De re publica* of Cicero, Pliny's history of the German wars, and a complete Gellius. The first turned out to be the well-known sixth book, *Somnium Scipionis*, the Pliny was the usual *Natural History*, and the Gellius was like all the others. Nicholas so far turned out to be as disappointing as his countryman who asserted that he had found a complete Livy. But Nicholas won his humanistic spurs when he produced a manuscript of Plautus containing twelve plays not previously known. By this find he took his place among the great discoverers of the age. He accumulated a large library, which he left to the 'hospital' (an old man's home) which he founded at Cues. Some 270 of them are still there.<sup>2</sup> To this number Sabbadini adds eleven now at Brussels, two in the Vatican, twenty-two in the British Museum.<sup>3</sup> In a valuable article, Lehmann<sup>4</sup> reports a total of twenty-five in this library; he overlooks Sababдини's account and states that the largest number previously mentioned was fifteen, given by Weinberger. It is my purpose to add eight more to the list and thus to bring the number up to thirty-three.

*Harl. 2497.* I have not myself seen this manuscript, but Miss Johnson<sup>5</sup> states that it was formerly the property of the hospital of St Nicholas of Cues. It is a fifteenth-century paper manuscript of Pliny's *Letters*, a work not now represented in the library of Cues.

*Harl. 2724.* The identification of this as a Cues manuscript depends on the statement in Wanley's diary:<sup>6</sup> 'quondam peculium Nicolai Cardinalis Cusani,' and again: 'Hic codex

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best general account of Nicholas is that by Edmond Vansteenberghe, *Le Cardinal Nicholas de Cues*, Paris, 1920. The best discussion of his books is in R. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV*, I (1905), pp. 109 ff., and II (1914), pp. 16 ff.

<sup>2</sup> This is the estimate of J. Marx, *Verzeichnis der Handschriften-Sammlung des Hospitals zu Cues*, Trier, 1905, p. vii. Not all of the 314 Cues manuscripts were in the library of the Cardinal: sixty-seven are certainly from that source.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, 26. The B.M. number 3478 is an error for 3487. In I, 112, n. 27, Sabbadini mentions *Harl. 2773*; thus he really refers to twenty-three.

<sup>4</sup> *Sitzungsber. Bayer. Akad. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Abt.*, 1930, 2, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> *Class. Phil.*, VII (1912), 70, n. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *B. M. Lansdowne MS. 772*, fol. 11, No. 63. Under date of 18 January, 1723/4 Wanley states that the manuscripts in the list just quoted were purchased, and that in each this date will be entered. This date is found in *Harl. 2724* and *2728* and confirms the identification of them with Nos. 63 and 71 in the list. These seem to be the only Cues items in the list; others are found in a list given under date of 24 August, 1723. This interesting diary of Humphrey Wanley, Harley's librarian, lists many of the books purchased by Lord Harley. It is, I understand, to be published, as it certainly deserves to be.

olim fuit peculium Nicolai Cardinalis Cusani.' There is no sign left now in the manuscript of Nicholas' ownership, but a strip 50 mm. high has been cut from the bottom of fol. 1, and this perhaps contained the ownership mark. There is, too, an erasure of some sort on fol. 1. The manuscript (136 fols, *saec.* xii) contains Horace (fols' 2<sup>r</sup>-130<sup>r</sup>) in the order *Carm.*, *A. P.*, *Epod.*, *C. S.*, *Epist.*, *Serm.* Fols 1<sup>v</sup>, 131<sup>v</sup> have definitions of Greek words; fol. 130<sup>r</sup> a life of Horace, fol. 130<sup>v</sup> names of the Furies, etc.; fols 132<sup>r</sup>-135<sup>v</sup> (different hand) life of Horace, etc. A gathering is missing after fol. 25. There is no Horace in the present Cues library.

*Harl. 2728.* This too owes its identification as a Cues manuscript to Wanley's diary (No. 71): 'olim peculium Nicolai Cardinalis Cusani.' There is now no trace of this ownership; perhaps it has been carefully erased. The manuscript (152 fols, *saec.* x/xi) contains Lucan with a commentary, written in several hands, with some old characteristics, such as the *rt* ligature. There is no Lucan now in the Cues library. A note in Wanley's diary for 17 June, 1723, shows that Bentley borrowed this manuscript and returned it on June 22.

*Harl. 2738.* On the bottom of fol. 1<sup>r</sup>: 'liber hospitalis sancti Nicolai prope Cusam.' Fols 49, *saec.* xiii. Fols 1 and 49 contain examples of logic; fols 2<sup>r</sup>-48<sup>v</sup> contain Ovid's *Fasti*. On fol. 48<sup>v</sup> appears the note: 'Fulco de Corbeia debet 1 s pro ordine t. Liber Iohannis.' Nicholas refers to Ovid's *Fasti* (Vansteenbergh, p. 238). There is no Ovid now in the Cues library.

*Harl. 4241.* At the bottom of flyleaf 2: 'liber hospitalis sancti Nicolai prope Cusam Treverensis diocesis d(ono?) Car(dinalis?)'. The last word is abbreviated *Car*<sup>l</sup>. Parchment manuscript of the fifteenth century in a German imitation of Italian humanistic script (88 fols). Contains Latin translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. There are three copies of this work in the present Cues library (182, 183, 184).

*Harl. 5098.* On fol. 1: 'liber hospitalis sancti Nicolai prope Cusam.' Thirteenth century French script (70 fols). Contains *Theorica pantegni*, translated by Constantinus Africanus. This work occurs in Cues MS. 310.

*Harl. 5588.* Lehmann includes this manuscript in the list which he quotes from Weinberger but does not give it in his own list.<sup>1</sup> It is a paper manuscript of the thirteenth century containing *N.T.*, *Acts* and *Epistles*, in Greek. It contains (according to the catalog) the library entry: 'Liber hospitalis de Cusa Treverensis diocesis R<sup>mi</sup>.'

*Add. 19952.* On fol. 1: 'Iste liber est domini Nicolai de Cusa.' To this was added in different ink but apparently by the same hand: 'dyocesis Treverensis qui postea factus est cardinalis tituli sancti Petri ad vincula Rome.' Apparently the same hand wrote some Latin-German glosses on this page: 'Afflatorium dicitur eyn blaesbalg, id est follis. Labrum dicitur eyne wanne ad purgandum.' On fol. 1<sup>v</sup>: 'Liber magistri Theodori de Xancis cancellarii Leodiensis.' A note on a flyleaf (by Madden) indicates that the manuscript was purchased of Dr. Henry Wolff 12 August, 1854. Paper manuscript written in 1445 (not 1472 as in catalog) containing Marco Polo's *De condicionibus et consuetudinibus orientalium regionum* translated into Latin by Franciscus Pipinus of Bologna (fols 2<sup>r</sup>-84<sup>v</sup>), *noticia de Machometo . . . Alcoran . . . a fratre G. Anconitani conventus* to the Archdeacon of Liège (fols 85<sup>r</sup>-98<sup>v</sup>), *Tractatus de Talmut* (fols 99<sup>r</sup>-111<sup>r</sup>). On fol. 84<sup>v</sup> is the subscription: 'Ffinitum per me Iohannem de Cusa (not "Cusera," as in catalog) anno 1445, ipso die Silvestri que est ultima Decembris hora vesperarum V Confluentie.' For this scribe see Cues MSS 12 and 58 as described by Marx. The rest of the manuscript is in a different hand.

It may be that this manuscript never was in the hospital at Cues (it lacks the usual library mark) and that it was given to Theodore of Xanten by Nicholas, for the former was a contemporary of Nicholas and became rector of an institute founded by the cardinal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sabbadini, *op. cit.*, II, 26, n. 132, also mentions it.

<sup>2</sup> Vansteenbergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 459-460.

I add a few corrections and supplements to Lehmann's notes.

*Harl. 1347.* The first part of this fifteenth century manuscript contains Traversari's translation of Diogenes Laertius. This ends on fol. 205<sup>v</sup>. Lehmann fails to note that the hand and the subject matter change completely on fol. 206. The following pages to fol. 296 are ruled for double columns, but only the left columns are written in. On fol. 296 is the subscription: 'Ex archetypo reverendi patris domini Petri Balbi episcopi Iohannes Andreas episcopus Acciensis descripsit in castroplaebis dicionis Perusinae fideliter VIII. mensis Decembris MCCCCLXII.' Lehmann and Vansteenbergh<sup>1</sup> wrongly assume that this subscription refers to the Diogenes. Instead it refers to the unidentified sermons on fols 206-296.<sup>2</sup> Of these I have been able to identify only one: on fol. 275<sup>v</sup> a sermon is attributed to John Chrysostom. This is one of the *spuria* given by Migne, *Patr. Gr.* III, p. 813, though in a different Latin version. It would seem that all the sermons are translations from the Greek and that the right-hand columns on each page were left blank for the Greek text.

*Harl. 3698.* The subscription is not quite accurately given by Lehmann:

Expletus est liber. Benedictus deus in secula seculorum. Dum possum dicere 'hoc opo (*sic for opo* = opus) exegi quod nec ionis (*sic for Iovis*) ira nec ignes nec ferrum nec edax poterit abolere vetustas.' Fuit scriptus iste liber anno incarnationis domini MCCCIII die sancte Agathe virginis. Hunc qui scribebat Henricus (*in erasure*) nomen habebat de Almaniam studio medicine vacans (*sic*) vacans in preclari (*sic*) studio Montis Pestulani (*sic*) socius bonus et fidelis. Deo gracias. Amen

The errors in the subscription show that it was copied from another manuscript. The date 1304 is clearly the date of composition of the work.<sup>3</sup> Lehmann notes that the first part of the subscription (to *virginis*) occurs also in Cues 304.

*Harl. 3745.* At the end (fol. 190<sup>v</sup>): 'Iste liber pertinet magistro Petro Rodmullir' (*sic*, not 'Rodmiller'). The last three words were deleted and the following added: 'Nicolaus de Cusa qui emit a magistro fabrice in Lorch istum et alios plures libros in medicina et in artibus que fuerunt illius magistri Petri Rodmullir plebani ibidem pro 80 (*sic*) florenis Rinensibus 1449' (Lehmann omits the date). Lehmann points out that Cues MSS 294, 307, 308 belonged to the same Rodmullir. They are all medical treatises.

*Harl. 5402.* A date has been added on fol. 104<sup>v</sup>: '1421 mense septembris.'

*Harl. 5792.* This manuscript is called French by Lehmann, Italian or French by Lowe (*Codices Latini Antiquiores* II [1935], No. 203). The former dates it 'saec. VII ex.,' the latter 'saec. VII-VIII.' My notes call it 'VII?'. Lowe fails to mention the presence of the pseudo-Ciceronian *Synonyma* (fols 260<sup>r</sup>-272<sup>r</sup>). The best description of this celebrated manuscript is still that given by Goetz in *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* II (1888), p. xx ff., though there are a few minor errors.

A list of all the Cues manuscripts thus far brought to light in the British Museum follows: *Harl. 1347, 2497, 2620, 2637, 2672, 2674, 2724, 2728, 2738, 2773, 3063, 3092, 3261, 3487, 3698, 3702, 3710, 3729, 3734, 3744, 3745, 3748, 3757, 3934, 3992, 4241, 5098, 5402, 5576, 5588, 5692, 5792, Add. 19952.* This is a total of thirty-three, as against Lehmann's twenty-five. Though all come from the Cues library (except possibly *Add. 19952*), some may not have belonged to Nicholas. We can be sure of *Harl. 1347, 2724, 2728, 3063, 3092, 3261, 3702, 3710, 3745, 5692, Add. 19952*, and we have no reason for rejecting any of the rest.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 274, n. 4, p. 438.

<sup>2</sup> Lehmann refers to these in the phrase 'einige Homilien' without indicating where they appear in the manuscript.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Destrez, *La Pecia* (Paris, 1935), p. 95, who indicates that the work was begun by Bernard in 1303 and finished soon after.

Well over three hundred of the Cardinal's manuscripts are known, but he must have had a much larger library. Sabbadini observes that of fifteen manuscripts of Nicholas mentioned in contemporary letters, only three have been identified. Of the many Greek manuscripts which Nicholas acquired at Constantinople and elsewhere, only seven have been located. Vansteenbergh points out that Nicholas left many of his books with friends at Ferrara and that these disappeared.<sup>1</sup> Hardly any of his classical Latin manuscripts are left at Cues. Of the thirty-three Cues manuscripts in the British Museum at least seven can be called classical. Obviously the classical manuscripts were particularly attractive to the buyers who came to Cues, and we may expect that others will turn up, especially in England. On the other hand, there may be more non-classical Cues manuscripts in Brussels. Most of those listed were discovered from Thomas' catalog of the classical Latin manuscripts in Brussels. Nearly all of these came to that library from the Bollandists. One would expect to find more non-classical manuscripts (especially, of course, lives of the saints) among the Brussels manuscripts which came from Cues via the Bollandists.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Some corrections in Sabbadini's list may be made as a result of a search through *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque royale de Belgique*, by J. van den Gheyn and others, Brussels (1901-1936, still incomplete). *MS. 9581-5* (Cat. 1372) is labeled (Cues?) by Thomas. The only Cues indication is a modern copy of fols 168-170 of the *Interrogatio domni Caroli, ex manuscripto Cusano vetustissimo*. This work occurs earlier in the manuscript. A new item is 7882 (Cat. 3188), *Vitae Sanctorum* (saec. xi), which once belonged to Joh. Breddendych. *MS. 3897-3919* (Cat. 3095) was given to the hospital by Io. Incus (not Iucus, as in catalog) in the sixteenth century and therefore did not belong to Nicholas. The same donor gave Cues 13 and 110 (see Marx). The catalog gives no indication of Cues origin for 8873-8878 (Cat. 3218).

*Strassburg 84* (lat. 81), containing Gerson, Bonaventura, etc., belonged to Nicholas in early youth (R. Klibansky in *Sitzungsber. Heidelberg. Akad. Wiss.*, xix [1928/29], 5, pp. 14, 28). Several manuscripts of Nicholas' own works possessed by him are known (aside from those still at Cues): Josef Koch (*Sitzungsber. Heidelberg. Akad. Wiss.* 1936/37, 2, pp. 11-13) mentions *Vat. lat. 1244, 1245* (sermons with corrections by Nicholas). In *Nicolai de Cusa opera omnia v* (1937, ed. L. Baur), xv, the claim that the manuscript of Nicholas' works in the Crerar Library, Chicago (37571), is an autograph is disputed on the ground that its readings indicate that it was copied from the printed edition of 1488.