

# Beyond Words

Illuminated Manuscripts in Boston Collections

Edited by Jeffrey F. Hamburger, William P. Stoneman,  
Anne-Marie Eze, Lisa Fagin Davis & Nancy Netzer

McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College

## 208. Juvenal, *Satirae* Boccardino il Vecchio (illuminator)

Florence, Italy, c. 1500  
Parchment, ff. 110, 123 x 87 (83 x 55) mm  
Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Typ 322  
David Lomellini, Genoa; Lathrop C. Harper, 1955; Thomas Marston, New Haven (Sotheby's, London, December 11, 1961, lot 192); sold by Quaritch, 1967; deposited by Philip Hofer, 1967, his bequest, 1984.



f. 1v

IN HIS SIXTEEN SATIRES, THE ROMAN POET AND RHETORICIAN Decimus Junius Juvenalis, known as Juvenal (55/60–c. 130 CE) described and harshly condemned the moral decadence of imperial Rome at the beginning of the second century. The poem was popular throughout the Middle Ages. It was, however, in the climate of fifteenth-century humanism that Juvenal's work was subject to renewed interest and diffusion.<sup>1</sup> The exquisite program of illumination in MS Typ 322 makes it an exceptional case in the tradition of the text. No other extant copy of the *Satires* produced in Tuscany in the fifteenth century presents such a rich and extensive decorative scheme.<sup>2</sup> Two different images of Juvenal are juxtaposed on book's double-page frontispiece, which is worn though still legible: one in the robes of a rhetorician addressing an audience (f. 1v), and the other as an author with book in hand in the initial of the incipit of the first satire (*Semper ego*, f. 2r). The following fifteen satires are illustrated by a series of scenes painted in the lower margin and framed along the top and left side by a bronze rinceaux border of acanthus leaves and flowers on a background of pale green, red, or blue, shaded by faint diagonal hatching lines. The miniatures depict the corresponding episodes of the satires and Juvenal's scathing moral admonishments in a vivid and lively manner. The

scenes are set in landscapes that fade into the distance or in simple domestic interiors, and unfold in one or two successive events.

The script, in *littera antiqua*, has been attributed to a Florentine scribe writing in the style of Sigismondo de' Sigismondi.<sup>3</sup> François Avril convincingly attributed the illuminations to Giovanni di Giuliano Boccardi, known as Boccardino il Vecchio of Florence (1460–1529).<sup>4</sup> Likely trained in the workshop of brothers Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni, Boccardino il Vecchio was a leading figure in the last period of Renaissance illumination in Florence, and one of the illuminators most involved from around 1485 in outfitting the library of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–92).<sup>5</sup>

The coat of arms (*coupé de gueules sur or*) on the frontispiece (f. 2r), which scholars have mistakenly associated with the Frescobaldi of Florence,<sup>6</sup> should instead be identified with that of the Lomellini, an important aristocratic family from Genoa.<sup>7</sup> The book's buyer was almost certainly the rich merchant David Lomellini (d. shortly before 1527), whose connections with Florence are well documented for the last decade of the fifteenth century onward. His name (*DAVIT*) is written in the *clipeus* pictured in the upper margin of the frontispiece and—with the letters arranged in various patterns—on two other pages of the manuscript (ff. 20v and 62v). David Lomellini's crest is found in other illuminated manuscripts produced in Florence, one of which was made in the same workshop of Boccardino il Vecchio.<sup>8</sup> Lomellini's small, portable manuscripts, containing classical texts, may have been commissioned during some of his many visits to the Tuscan city around 1500.<sup>9</sup> The Genoese bibliophile's artistic and cultural points of reference were clearly Florentine. In MS Typ 322, the Medicean motto *GLOVIS*, enclosed in a *clipeus*, appears in the upper margin of the page with the incipit of satire 5 (f. 25r).<sup>10</sup> We can add that the narrative arrangement of the satires and the setting of the *bas-de-page* scenes resemble those adopted in the famous Greek manuscript of Aesop's *Fables* in the New York Public Library, which was probably commissioned by Lorenzo il Magnifico for his son Piero (1472–1503) around 1480–85.<sup>11</sup>

The first pages of MS Typ 322 (ff. 1v–2r) include elements typical of Boccardino's work: cameos, jewels, masks, marble reliefs of battles between human-plant hybrid figures. The ornamental exuberance and use of a vivid hue of red vermillion for the border is also found in illuminations painted by the artist in a book of hours executed in 1502 in celebration of the marriage of Laudomia de' Medici and Francesco Salviati (London, BL, Yates Thompson MS. 30).<sup>12</sup>

Ada Labriola

- 1 Dotti, in Giovenale 2013, 7–29.
- 2 The Medici library inventory compiled in 1508–10 by Fabio Vigili, who was librarian in Rome to Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, son of Lorenzo il Magnifico, lists thirteen copies of Juvenal's *Satires*. Among these, the six that were illuminated in the fifteenth century have only simple white vine-stem decoration. For the list of these manuscripts now at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, see Rao 2012, nos. 327–28, 330–31, 339, and 549. The fifteenth century decorated manuscripts are: mss. Plut. 34.27, 34.32, 34.33, 34.35, 34.37, and 34.41.
- 3 Bond and Faye 1962, 77 no. 110 (“by a hand similar to that of Sigismondo de Sigismondus”); Wieck 1983b, 131–32 (“probably written by Sigismondus de Sigismondus”); Kristeller 1963–97, 5:236 (“script attributed to Sigismondo Sigismondi”). On Sigismondo de' Sigismondi, born in Carpi (Modena), documented in 1480 and died in 1525, see de la Mare 1985, 473–74, 534–36 no. 66. De la Mare does not count MS Typ 322 among the manuscripts written by Sigismondo.
- 4 Avril 1984, 367. The illuminations of MS Typ 322 were previously attributed to Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni. See Bond and Faye 1962, 77 no. 110; Wieck 1983b, 131–32.
- 5 Galizzi 2004b.
- 6 Bond and Faye 1962, 77, no. 110; Wieck 1983b, 131–32.
- 7 On the Lomellini coat of arms, see Spreti 1928–35, 4:140–42.
- 8 Berkeley, Bancroft Library, MS 142: Cicero, *Laelius, de amicitia*; Cato maior, *de senectute*; *Paradoxa*. The manuscript measures 130 x 88 mm. See Alidori Battaglia 2011.

Battaglia 2011.

- 9 Padua, Bibl. del Seminario vescovile, ms. 169: Cicero, *De officiis* (dated 1501). In the colophon the scribe Antonio Sinibaldi claims to have written the work at the request of “David Lomellis.” The illuminations are attributed to a follower of Attavante. The manuscript measures 137 x 93 mm. See Alidori Battaglia 2011.
- 10 “GLOVIS” alludes to the Medici theme of rebirth and of the continuity of the dynasty; and is also understood as an acronym of *Gloria, Laus, Onor, Virtus, Iustitia, Salus* (Glory, Praise, Honor, Virtue, Justice, Health). The motto was already used around 1485 in a group of manuscripts of classical authors created for Lorenzo de' Medici. See Cox-Rearick 1984, 27–31; Cummings 1991, 79–95; Dillon Bussi and Fantoni 1992, 138–39.
- 11 New York, NYPL, Spencer MS. 50. The illuminations in this manuscript are the work of a team of Florentine artists, apparently led by Mariano del Buono. See Labriola 2014, 475–91.
- 12 London, BL, Yates Thompson MS. 30, ff. 66v–67r, 117v–18r. Laudomia was the daughter of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici (cousin of Lorenzo il Magnifico). Other than Boccardino, the decoration of this manuscript is also attributable to the Florentine illuminators Attavante, Stefano Lunetti, and Mariano del Buono. See Garzelli 1985, 2:515, 662–72, figs. 853, 1058–69.

## 209. Ovid, *Heroides* Cristoforo Majorana (illuminator)

Naples, Italy, c. 1490–1500  
Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Typ 8  
Parchment, ff. 106, 166 x 93 (107–8 x 67) mm  
Richard Heber (Evans, London, February 10, 1836, lot 1027); Thomas Phillipps; purchased from William H. Robinson with the Hofer fund, January 1947.



f. 2v

OID'S (43 BCE–17 CE) *LETTERS OF HEROINES* ARE A COLLECTION of poems combining mythological sources, written in elegiac couplets in an epistolary form. They sing the love pains of nineteen women and heroines of the Greek and Roman antiquity, from Penelope to Sappho. The *Heroides* were largely imitated during the medieval and Renaissance periods and inspired such writers as Boccaccio and Octavien de Saint-Gelais.

This manuscript is among the most refined and sumptuous illuminated examples of the *Heroides* from the Italian Renaissance. It includes twenty-one epistles with corresponding full-page illustrations, except for the epistles 10 and 17, whose decoration was never executed. These miniatures either depict the protagonist in the act of writing a letter or illustrate the major events of the epistle. Their character of small-scale paintings is enhanced by *all'antica* frames decorated with classical mascarons, cornucopias, coupled dolphins, and trophies. The beginning of each epistle is further marked by an illuminated initial. In the first one, the initial is framed by a decoration with gold candelabra on multicolored grounds.

As pointed out by Tammaro De Marinis and confirmed by Roger Wieck, this manuscript was made for a member of the Aragonese royal family in Naples at the end of the fifteenth century and illustrated by Cristoforo Majorana, an illuminator long active for the celebrated Aragonese Kings Library.<sup>1</sup> The royal patronage can be inferred from the arms of the original owner (quartering Aragon), in part still visible under the over-painted coat of arms surmounted by the hat of an unidentified apostolic protonotary.

Majorana's work as illuminator is documented for the first time in 1472, likely at the beginning of his career and probably as a collaborator of Cola Rapicano, then the main illuminator working for the Aragonese court. Between 1480 and 1491, Majorana's name occurs several times in the payments made by the royal library.<sup>2</sup> His activity, however, can be traced after the end of the century, despite the lack of further documentation. Several illuminated manuscripts by his hand indicate that during the last decade of the fifteenth century he worked for courtier patrons such as Pascasio Diaz Garlon and for prominent bibliophiles such as Andrea Matteo III Acquaviva, the Duke of Atri. At the beginning of the sixteenth century he continued to work for the new Spanish conquerors of the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>3</sup>

Arguably, one reason behind Majorana's enduring success lies in the style he elaborated since the end of the 1470s, a reinterpretation of the antiquarian mode that coupled the Paduan-Roman *all'antica* vocabulary with a more archaic formal language acquired in the workshop of Cola Rapicano. In the first illustrated scene of this manuscript (f. 2v), Ulysses's wife Penelope is shown writing a letter in a large cross-vaulted hall, whose gray stones and building forms are typical of fifteenth-century Aragonese architecture in Naples, such as Castel Nuovo. In the foreground is the dog Argo, symbolizing Penelope's fidelity. On the right side, stand Laerte and Telemaco, Ulysses's father and son, dressed in antique-fashioned clothes but wearing fifteenth-century hats. The same mix of classical and contemporary elements can be seen in other scenes as well. In the illustrations to the epistles 18 and 19, for instance, the aediculae decorated with candelabra frame the skyline of recognizably modern cities, also echoing the patrons' life setting.

The illuminated scenes are notable for the ample landscapes encircling the characters or opening up through the buildings. The monumental figures, the vivid light reddening on the horizon, and the cast shadows, all suggest that the manuscript was painted during the last decade of the Quattrocento, in proximity to works such as the vesperal for the royal chapel (Valencia, UV, BH Ms. 391), documented by payments of the royal treasury on April 9, 1491.<sup>4</sup> The close proximity of the two manuscripts is further suggested by the abundance of gold and silver lightening and by the rich candelabra on a multicolored grounds.

Some documents of the royal treasury and several manuscripts that belonged to the Aragonese royal library prove the interest of the Neapol-

itan court for the classical texts of Latin writers. According to the receipts of the Aragonese royal treasury, on August 11, 1492 the illuminator Nardo Rapicano received 4 ducats from Alfonso, Duke of Calabria (the future Alfonso II) for “the price of gold and blue capital letters added to a book of his Lord the Duke, entitled works of Ovid Naso.”<sup>5</sup> Since the miniatures by Majorana were likely made around this time and the manuscript carried the quartering Aragon, it cannot be excluded that the present *Heroides* were among the works painted for the duke, whose coat of arms showed the quartering Aragon with the Cross of Jerusalem.

Teresa D’Urso

- 1 De Marinis 1969, 2:72; Wieck 1983b, 76, no. 37; Avril 1983, 367.
- 2 On Majorana, see De Marinis 1947–52, 1:150–56; Toscano 2004c; Sapienza 2006.
- 3 D’Urso 2014.
- 4 De Marinis 1947–52, 2:292–93, no. 770.
- 5 Ibid., 2:300, no. 849.

## 210. Sallust, De bello Catilinae; De bello Jugurthino Bartolomeo Sanvito (scribe and illuminator)

Rome, Italy, c. 1487–88  
Parchment, ff. 147, c. 138 x 89 (91 x 44–53) mm  
Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 17  
Robert Branthweit (?), seventeenth century; Lord Mostyn (Sotheby’s, London, July 13, 1920, lot 104); Quaritch; Chester Beatty (Sotheby’s, London, May 9, 1933, lot 61); Maggs; William K. Richardson, his bequest, 1951.



f. 51r

THIS MANUSCRIPT IS THE QUINTESSENTIAL ITALIAN humanistic book: it includes *The War with Catiline* and *The Jugurthine War* by the Roman politician and historian Sallust (c. 86–c. 35 BCE) copied in Rome by the famous Paduan scribe and illuminator Bartolomeo Sanvito (1433–1511)<sup>1</sup> for his friend and patron, the Venetian politician and humanist Bernardo Bembo (1433–1519).<sup>2</sup>

The texts relate events that occurred during the troubled century of difficult political transition in ancient Rome from an oligarchic republic to empire. Their author was a controversial figure himself: a provincial Sabine, Sallust was a *homo novus* in Roman politics and supported Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE) and his faction against the old senatorial aristocracy. He retired from politics and devoted himself to historiography after been expelled from the senate in 45/44 BCE on allegations of misconduct and plunder during his time as governor of Africa Nova.

*De bello Catilinae* recounts political upheaval at the time of Cicero’s consulship in 63 BCE, whereas *De bello Jugurthino* is a chronicle of the war against the Numidian prince Jugurtha in 111–105 BCE. Written in characteristic concise and plain prose, they are the earliest Roman historical texts to survive intact from antiquity in codices of the early Middle Ages and were most popular among medieval and Renaissance readers.<sup>3</sup>

Probably commissioned during Bembo’s embassy to Rome in 1487–88,<sup>4</sup> the manuscript shows Sanvito’s famous cursive humanistic script, colored capitals and illuminated faceted initials modeled on classical inscriptions, and displays Bembo’s arms, motto, and device, the winged horse Pegasus, symbol of wisdom and good repute (f. 51r; see also cat. no. 232).<sup>5</sup> Sanvito’s note in red in the margin of f. 50v is one of many *notabilia* drawing attention to important passages.<sup>6</sup> Bembo and his son, Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), also engaged with the texts and added marginal comments and *notabilia*.<sup>7</sup>

Bridging the gap between the classical and medieval past and the future, Sanvito’s innovative use of the cursive script and diminutive size in this and other deluxe copies of classical texts in Bembo’s library inspired the revolutionary Italic type and pocket-size design of Aldus Manutius’s *enchiridia* editions from 1501 onward (see cat. no. 249).<sup>8</sup>

Laura Nuvoloni

- 1 For Bartolomeo Sanvito, see de la Mare 2002, de la Mare and Nuvoloni 2009, and Nuvoloni 2016, all with further bibliography.
- 2 Bembo and Sanvito knew one another since Bembo’s time in Padua as a university student in the 1450s. Bembo mentioned Sanvito as “compatri mei” in his *Zibaldone*, now London, BL, Add. MS. 41068 A, f. 43v. For Bembo’s life and humanistic interests, see Giannetto 1985, with further bibliography.
- 3 The texts survive in more than 500 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts: see L. Reynolds 1983, 345n24, and Ramsey in Sallust 2013, xvii and lii.
- 4 For Bembo’s diplomatic mission to Rome in 1487–88, see Giannetto 1985, 47–48, 186–95.
- 5 Pegasus is mentioned in Bembo’s *Zibaldone* (note 2 above), f. 286v. By the 1480s Sanvito had produced five other manuscripts for Bembo, which included his notes, arms, motto, and/or device: Paulus Diaconus, *Epitome* to S. Pompeius Festus, *De significatu verborum*, Milan, Bibl. Ambros., ms. V 5 sup (arms); Bembo’s *Oratio Gratulatoria*, S. Lorenzo, R. Bibl. del Monasterio de El Escorial, Cod. f. IV. 11 (arms); Horace, *Opera*, Cambridge, UK, UL, MS Dd.xv.13, and Cambridge, UK, King’s Coll., MS 34 (arms, motto, device). The copy of Eusebius, *Chronici canones*, London, BL, Royal MS. 14 C.III, with Bembo’s arms, was probably commissioned as the same time as the Sallust. Two copies of Suetonius, *Vitae imperatorum*, Paris, BnF, ms. lat. 5814 (showing Pegasus on the opening leaf and datable to c. 1474), and Göttingen, SUB, Cod. Philol. 161 Cim (showing Pegasus on f. 139r and datable to c. 1478), may have also been connected with Bembo. See de la Mare and Nuvoloni 2009, cat. nos. 7, 24, 57, 64, 69, 82, 86, 87.
- 6 Sanvito’s *marginalia* include a quotation from Tacitus’s *Annals* as a gloss to the passage “humani corporis sanguinem vino permixtum in pateris circumtulisse” (*Bellum Catilinae*, 22.1) on f. 16r. The gloss was added at a later stage and possibly drawn from the unpublished commentary to the *Bellum Catilinae* by Pomponio Leto (1428–98), Roman humanist and founder of

the Academia Romana: see Ulery 2003, 24; Osmond 2010; Osmond 2011; Pade 2011.

- 7 Bernardo’s notes include his characteristic *maniculae* (pointing hands), intended to draw attention to specific text passages, and a reference to his own decision to retire from politics in 1493 (f. 3r–v); see Hankins 1989 for more on Bernardo’s notes. Pietro Bembo’s annotations consist of *notabilia* (see f. 4r).
- 8 The dimensions and slender proportions of the present manuscript (c. 138 x 89 mm) are comparable to those of Aldus’s first pocket-size editions: see Needham 1994, 131–35. In the dedicatory letter to Pietro Bembo in the *Virgil* of 1514 (f. a1v), Aldus recounts how he copied the format of his *enchiridia* from manuscripts in his father’s library: see Dionisotti and Orlandi 1975, 1:152, 2:310, 376–77; Giannetto 1985, 78.

## 211. Aelianus Tacticus, De instruendis aciebus; Onosander, De optimo imperatore Hubertus (scribe)

Florence, Italy, c. 1460–70  
Parchment, ff. 85, 287 x 216 (164–68 x 115–17) mm  
Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 16  
Count Anton Apponyi, Vienna and Pressbourg, until 1817; Count Louis Apponyi (Sotheby’s, London, November 10, 1892, lot 9); Quaritch; Robert Hoe; sold by Anderson/American Art Association (New York, January 8, 1912, lot 2417); William K. Richardson, his bequest, 1951.



f. 40r

THE PRESENT MANUSCRIPT CONTAINS LATIN VERSIONS OF two ancient Greek military tracts: *On Military Battle Arrangements* and *The General*. The translations were undertaken in Naples shortly after the middle of the fifteenth century, in the intellectual circle of the court of King Alfonso I of Aragon (r. 1442–58). Theodore Gaza (1408/10–76), a Greek humanist who moved to Naples in 1455, translated a manual on military tactics (*Taktiké theoria*) which had been composed by Aelianus Tacticus between 106 and 113/17 CE. Gaza titled his translation *De instruendis*

*aciebus* and dedicated it to one of the leading lights of Neapolitan cultural life, Antonio “Panormita” Beccadelli (1394–1471).<sup>1</sup> It was at Beccadelli’s behest, that in 1456 the learned Greek diplomat Nicolaus Secundinus (or Sagundinus, 1402–64) began translating the *Strategikós*, a treatise on the moral virtues of the ideal general written by Onosander in the mid-first century CE. Secundinus dedicated *De optimo imperatore* to the abovementioned Aragonese king.<sup>2</sup> Among manuscripts of the Latin versions of the two tracts, the sumptuously decorated MS Richardson 16 stands out for its exceptional elegance. The book was made in Florence.<sup>3</sup> Its *littera antiqua* script is attributed to “Hubertus,” a northern scribe active in Florence in the 1460s–70s.<sup>4</sup> The illuminations have been convincingly ascribed by François Avril to a Florentine master working between 1460 and 1470.<sup>5</sup>

On the page facing the frontispiece, a large *clipeus* encircles an inscription executed in gold capitals stating the contents of the volume: “In hoc codice continentur Helianus De instruendis aciebus et Onosander De optimo imperatore” (f. 1v). The *De optimo imperatore* (ff. 42r–83v) opens with a simple white vine-stem decoration. The work of Aelianus (ff. 2r–41v) includes a rich pictorial apparatus consisting of a historiated initial (f. 2r), a narrative scene (f. 5r), forty-six decorated initials, and thirty-one pages with diagrams executed in gold, silver, and colored ink (red, blue, green). Illustrated here is the *Outflanking and “Over-Fronting” an Enemy Formation* (f. 40r).<sup>6</sup> The necessity of illustrating the tract with explanatory figures or diagrams, which act as visual aids to the verbal descriptions of tactics, was stressed by Aelianus himself in the preface of his work. The figures, which refer, above all, to the formation of the Macedonian phalanx, were a fundamental aspect of the Greek manuscript tradition of the tract, and were, consequently, elaborated in fifteenth-century Latin manuscript versions. Humanist copies, like this one, were generally illustrated with simply drawn diagrams enclosing graphic symbols referring to the insignia of various military units.<sup>7</sup>

The dedication by Theodore Gaza to Panormita at the beginning of the manuscript (f. 2r), opens with a historiated initial (*Carmen illud*) with soldier dressed in armor holding a sword and shield. Painted in the lower margin is the so-called crown and lily coat of arms (*party per pale sable and rose, a crown d’or surmounted by a lily d’argent*). The owner of this emblem, who has yet to be identified, was probably Hungarian. The same crest appears in another sixteen manuscripts datable to around 1460–70, six of which passed, without doubt, through the library in Buda of the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus (r. 1458–90).<sup>8</sup> The majority of the books bearing the crown and lily arms were produced in Florence, likely within the workshop of the bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421–98).<sup>9</sup> Their production was the result of the presence of an important community of Hungarian humanists in Florence in the 1460s. Friend to these emigrés was the Florentine man-of-letters Bartolomeo della Fonte (1447–1513), also known as Fonzio, who copied some of our unidentified bibliophile’s manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> The Florentine manuscripts of the crown and lily group are decorated with white vine-stem; only two contain historiated initials: MS Richardson 16, and a copy of the *Third Decade* by Livy now in Verona, the frontispiece of which also includes an image of a soldier.<sup>11</sup> Although the illuminations of the two manuscripts cannot be attributed to the same hand, both masters exhibit affinities with the circle of Francesco di Antonio del Chierico (1433–84). The origins of their culture can be recognized in manuscripts assigned to Francesco di Antonio’s early career, such as the three-volume *Decades* of Livy for the library of Alfonso I in Naples for which the miniaturist received payment from Vespasiano da Bisticci in 1455.<sup>12</sup>

Ada Labriola

- 1 Dain 1946; Bianca 1999, 740–41; Sestili 2011, 11–18. Aelianus Tacticus had dedicated his work to the emperor Trajan (98–117 CE).
- 2 Dain 1930; Mastrodimitris 1989, 21–38; Caselli 2012, ix–xxx. Onosander’s treatise was dedicated to the Roman senator Quintus Veranius (d. 59 CE).
- 3 As was a manuscript with the same two Latin translations of the tracts in Fed-