

Albertus de Eyb, *Margarita poetica*

fols. iii<sup>ra-va</sup>. Contemporary table of contents with folio references. The considerable number of blank pages at the start of the book must reflect uncertainty over how to accommodate the ‘Tabula siue Registrum’ of the printed edition that was the exemplar for this manuscript (see below). In the edition the *tabula*, which runs to thirty-four pages, is keyed to folio number and a capital letter, these letters running in alphabets down the outer margins. This *tabula*, and the prefatory note that explains the system of letter-marks, was not copied here, although the letter-marks themselves were.

1 (fols. 1r–408v) *Oratorum omnium Poetarum. Istoricorum ac Philosophorum eleganter | dicta per clarissimum virum Albertum de Eiib in vnum collecta feliciter incipiunt.* || Albertus de Eiib S. de N. Pii II || < > Secretarius. Reuerendissimo in Christo | Patri et domino domino Iohanni dei gracia episcopo Mo | nasteriensi Comiti Palatino Rheni ac Bauarie | duci illustrissimo Salutem. . . . ad tui laudem et gloriam sempiternam. Amen. (fol. 1v/9) *Eloquencie | et perfecte elocucionis precepta incipiunt.* || Bene esset vir illustrissime. | quod quoniam omnis eloquencie et perfecte elocucionis preceptio in tua sit mem | bra distributa. — virtus | ad verum nos trahat deus et gloriam sempiternam ad quam nos | perducatur qui viuit et regnat trinus et vnus per infinita secula Amen.

Albertus de Eyb, *Margarita poetica de arte dictandi et practicandi epistolas*: pr. Nürnberg 1472 (GW 9529), &c.; J. A. Hiller, Albrecht von Eyb, *Medieval Moralists* (Washington, DC, 1939/repr. New York 1970), 69–111.

There has been some confusion in the copying of the incipit, which should read ‘Albertus de Eiib S. D. N. Pii II Pon. Max. Secretarius’, etc. There is nothing in the printed edition to explain this misapprehension, which may therefore belong to a flaw in the actual exemplar. This is the normal incipit, rather than the variant noted by GW 9530 and BMC IV, 25. The manuscript has lost fols. 398–399, with corresponding loss of text from ‘suis: ecclesieque insignibus’ on sig. [H1<sup>r</sup>] of the edition to ‘sublime in tante’ on sig. [H3<sup>r</sup>].

¶ This text was copied from the edition printed at Rome by Ulrich Han in December 1475 (*Bod-inc* E083; GW 9530). The printer’s colophon was also copied, in red ink on a separately ruled panel, as follows (fol. 408v). While it is not uncommon that manuscripts were copied from contemporary printed books, to have the colophon copied alongside is more unusual. In BL MS Add. 63787, a *de luxe* copy of Heinrich Herpf’s *Speculum aureum decem praeceptorum* copied from Peter Schoeffer’s Mainz editio princeps of 1474 and given to St Stephen’s College at Westminster by 1494, the colophon was included but subsequently crossed out. It seems that the colophon’s inclusion represented an aspect of textual prestige.

*Summa Oratorum omnium Poetarum ac Philosophorum autorita | tes in vnum collecte per clarissimum virum Albertum de Eiib | vtriusque iuris Doctorem eximium que margarita poetica | dicitur : feliciter finem adepta est per ingeniosum virum Magistrum Vdalicum Gallum alias Han Alamanum ex Ingel | stat ciuem Doienensem : non calamo : ereove stilo : Sed noue ar | tis ac solerti industrie genere Rome impressa. Anno Incarna | tionis Dominice MCCCCLxxv. die vero xx. Mensis Decembris Anni | Iubilei Sedente Sixto diuina prouidencia papa .iiij. Ponti | fice maximo.*

Parchment. viii + 411 (*recte* 301). Medieval foliation in top right-hand corner, below the horizontal bounding-line but to the right of the vertical. The foliation leaps from 159 to 190; there is no loss of text, showing this to have been a simple slip by the foliator. This foliation is in a greyer ink by a different hand to the copyist’s and may have been Robert Mason’s. *Dimensions*: 386 × 254 mm,

written space 277–95 × 163–9 mm. *Collation*: fol. i is a singleton, 1<sup>2</sup> (fol. ii; 1 a stub, unfoliated) 2<sup>6</sup> (fols. iii–vii; wants 1) 3<sup>10</sup> (fols. viii–9) 4<sup>12</sup> (fols. 10–21) 5–17<sup>10</sup> (fols. 22–151) 18<sup>10</sup> (fols. 152–191; foliation jumps from 159 to 190) 19<sup>10</sup> (fols. 192–201) 20<sup>8</sup> (fols. 202–209) 21–30<sup>10</sup> (fols. 210–389) 31<sup>8</sup> (fols. 390–397) 32<sup>12</sup> (fols. 400–407; 1, 2, wanting, 11, 12 cancelled; the quire signatures and foliation require two leaves to have been lost at the front of the quire, but only one stub is showing; no loss of text at back of quire) 33<sup>2</sup> (fol. 408; 2 cancelled) 34<sup>4</sup> (fols. 409–411; 1 cancelled, back leaf formerly pastedown). Catchwords are boxed, positioned towards the gutter above the lowest bounding-line. Also quire signatures, given at the centre of the foot of the page, sometimes cropped (occasionally repeated in right-hand corner), for the first half of each quire, of usual alphanumeric form ‘a j’, a ij’, etc. Parchment is generally smooth and of good quality, but shows an often marked distinction in colour between hair- and flesh-sides. Arranged hair to hair, flesh to flesh, flesh-side uppermost except for quire 3. The second quire, carrying the table, is a later addition to the book; its parchment is shinier and less good. *Layout*: 46 long lines, finely ruled in ink. The page is frame-ruled, bounding-lines only, with no ruling for the text lines. Double horizontal bounding-lines to top and bottom of page and vertically to outer margin, with a single line about 23 mm inside the vertical and 18 mm below topline and about 30 mm above baseline to form the box for the text; all lines extend to the edge of the page. The rubricated colophon on fol. 408v (see above) has been supplied on a separately ruled panel (in imitation of the layout of the edition where it is supplied in a discrete panel with indented margins). The pages show inconspicuous prickings for only the bounding lines. The second quire, with the table, was supplied later, ruled in two columns of 47 lines, prickings visible at the right-hand edge.

*Script*: One scribe throughout, writing an English secretary hand. Hunt suggested that the scribe might have been the donor, Robert Mason, since the writing does ‘not look professional’. However, Mason’s hand was different, as witnessed by his *ex-dono* inscription, stated to be ‘manu propria’ (fol. viii<sup>v</sup>). Hunt’s opinion of the script is too hard; really, it is a smooth, neat and consistent hand, by a scribe who was used to a documentary mode. (The last page of writing, with the colophon, is reproduced by D. McKitterick, *Print, Manuscripts and the Search For Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge 2003), p. 49, fig. 6, with the comment that the colophon was written later by a different scribe perhaps as a joke. But it is in fact the same man. The decision to include the colophon was anyway made before the end of the main stint of writing, since the letter-size diminishes towards the end of the text so that the colophon could be accommodated on the same page.) A table was added on a separate quire at the front of the book by a different, but contemporary scribe—perhaps a New College man.

*Decoration*: A finely illuminated eleven-line initial A on fol. 1r, incorporating what appears to be a mitred staff in grey standing on a golden pavement—apparently a reference to the papal office held by Albertus—on a bed of fine red and gold brocade work. Border extensions at top and down the left-hand side begin with scrolling acanthus leaves in blue, rose, red, and green with modelling in white, giving way to spray-work of feathering with green-tinted lobes and gold balls. Otherwise, blue two-line lombards are used at the start of chapters, occasionally three-line, with confident red pen-work flourishing extending to considerable height in the margins. Subsidiary sense-units are indicated within the text by red paraphs. All the chapter rubrication was done by the main hand.

*Annotations*: A table of chapter headings (which misses the last one on fol. 403v) was added in a new quire at the front of the volume. Only a very few marginal notes, the most substantial of which are in Mason’s hand. His interest was in the virtuous life and the nature of paradise and last things. There are alphabets of letters in the margins against certain sections of the work. These were done by the main scribe and belong to the system of reference used by the ‘Tabula siue Registrum’ that stands at the front of the printed edition; it is an explanatory section of the work that was not, however, taken over here.

*Binding*: Normal New College binding of reversed calf over pasteboard. Three-line blind fillets to the edges crossing at the corners; otherwise plain. Sewn on eight split, alum-tawed thongs, raised at the spine. Strap stations are visible in the normal two positions at the fore-edge, but no scraps of cord remain. Upper board is quite extensively wormed. Edges washed in red. Beige endbands.

*Labels and marks*: Parchment fore-edge tag in usual position at top, ‘Eleganter Dicta Oratorum, Poetarum &c. collecta per Albertum de < > Episcopo (sic) [[ ]] secretarium. 307’. Printed spine-label ‘MS. New Coll. B 307’. On inside of front board the numbers ‘46’ (ink, on head turn-in), ‘307’ (ink) and again at top of fol. 1r, framed by later New College Library stamp. Use of the stamp in the book is quite restrained.

*Provenance:* Given to the college on 1 March '1479' (i.e. 1479/80) by Robert Mason, according to a note in his own hand: 'Liber collegii beate marie Wynton' in Oxon' ex dono Magistri Roberti mason' legum doctoris archdiaconi northumb' quondam socii eiusdem collegii cathenandus in communi libraria eiusdem anno ab incarnatione eiusdem domini nostri M CCCC lxxix primo marci manu propria' (fol. viii<sup>v</sup>). Also, at the top edge of fol. 411r, in another hand, 'Liber Collegii beate Marie Winton' in Oxon' ex donacione Magistri Roberti Mason' precentoris ecclesie Lincoln''. Robert Mason was admitted scholar of Winchester in 1433 and of New College in 1436, holding a fellowship from 1438 to 1454. He was BCL by 1444, notary public in 1447, and DCL by 1449. He resigned his fellowship when appointed archdeacon of Northumberland, and built a decent preferment in Yorkshire and Co. Durham and also in Lincoln, where he was a prebendal canon from 1478 and precentor from 1482 until his death in 1493 (*BRUO* 1240–41). The manuscript, copied from the Rome edition of December 1475, must have been Mason's commission. Since Mason's livings were North-country ones, opportunities for his being able to purchase another printed copy on the market would have been somewhat the less. That he annotated the book argues against its being made especially to be a gift, but it was in fact given to the College shortly afterwards.

*Secundo folio:* dedit psalmos. Ioseph

*Bibliography:* Coxe, p. 111; Alexander & Temple, no. 615; Hunt, p. 329; Watson, *Dated Oxford*, no. 860.

**Status: first draft**