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# *A Folio from the Somnium Viridarii*

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**Abstract:** The auction of a folio from an otherwise unidentified manuscript of the *Somnium Viridarii* coincides with a recent re-examination of the textual tradition, thus providing an opportunity to position the fragment within that tradition and to determine its philological value. The *Somnium Viridarii*, a dialogue on papal vs. royal power surviving in eight other manuscripts, was completed in 1376 by Évrart de Trémaugon and quickly translated into French for King Charles V as *Le songe du Vergier*, extant in at least 25 medieval witnesses. The critical edition of the section contained in the fragment from the oldest known manuscript reveals that the folio is independent from the complete codices and contains a text that is at least as clean as the best of those other copies.

**Keywords:** *Somnium Viridarii*, *Le songe du Vergier*, political thought, King Charles V, Évrart de Trémaugon

On 12 December 2022 Christie's sold at auction a leaf from a manuscript that their expert, Eugenio Donadoni, had dated to the last third of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Roberto Lambertini and I had recently published an analysis of the manuscript tradition with possible stemma for the text contained in the codex whence came the folio, the *Somnium Viridarii*, later translated into French as the *Le songe du Vergier*.<sup>2</sup> Following her two-volume critical edition of

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\* I thank the two anonymous referees for their helpful comments, Ziang Chen and Roberto Lambertini for trying to locate the source of the section of the *Somnium Viridarii* edited below, and William Duba.

<sup>1</sup> "The Collection of Marvin L. Colker", Christie's, online auction 21173, <https://onlineonly.christies.com/s/collection-marvin-l-colker/evrart-de-tremaugon-103/171575>.

<sup>2</sup> R. Lambertini and C. Schabel, "A New Source for the *Somnium Viridarii*: Pierre Ceffons's *Parvum Decretum*", *Mediaeval Studies* 83 (2021), 87–118, at 105–116.

the French version, which appeared in 1982, Marion Schnerb-Lièvre brought out a critical edition of the Latin text in two volumes in 1993–1995.<sup>3</sup> According to Donadoni's notice, the Christie's folio is from the “earliest surviving witness to the Latin version of the *Songe du Vergier* – the monumental treatise of political doctrine drawn up at the request of King Charles V of France,” which French version itself survives in at minimum 25 medieval manuscripts.

One can add to Donadoni's excellent online description of the leaf. There no longer seems to be any hesitation among scholars about the authorship of Évrart de Trémaugon.<sup>4</sup> Nor is there any doubt that the Latin text was the basis for the French translation,<sup>5</sup> because the Latin text is a compilation, often verbatim, from previous Latin works. The folio is described as decorated, on vellum, from France, the last third of the fourteenth century, but since the text itself was not completed until 26 May 1376, we can safely say that the leaf is from the last quarter of the century. Donadoni rightly reports that Schnerb-Lièvre knew of just seven manuscripts (and three early prints) in 1993–1995, but one can add that in 1998 Jürgen Miethke identified an eighth manuscript in Lisbon.<sup>6</sup> According to Schnerb-Lièvre and Miethke, none of the eight manuscripts known to contain more or less the complete text date to before 1400. While Schnerb-Lièvre dated her earliest manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 3522, to the fifteenth century, Donadoni declares that the Mazarine codex is “datable to the final years of the 14th century,” which, given his dating of the folio to the “final third [of the] 14th century,” is vague enough to call into question inadvertently

<sup>3</sup> *Somnium Viridarii*, ed. M. Schnerb-Lièvre, 2 vols. (*Sources d'histoire médiévale*), Paris 1993–1995; *Le Songe du Vergier*, édité d'après le manuscrit Royal 19 C IV de la British Library, ed. M. Schnerb-Lièvre, 2 vols. (*Sources d'histoire médiévale*), Paris 1982.

<sup>4</sup> The description elaborates: “Authorship is uncertain (it has been variously attributed to Philippe de Mézières and Charles de Louviers), but academic consensus has coalesced around Évrart de Trémaugon.”

<sup>5</sup> According to Donadoni, “The Latin version likely predicated and served as a model for the 1378 French edition (Charles V's own manuscript, now London, British Library, Royal 19 C IV).”

<sup>6</sup> J. Miethke, “Die Octo Quaestiones Wilhelms von Ockham in zwei unbeachteten Handschriften in Lissabon und Tübingen”, *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998), 291–305, at 297–298.

the assertion that “The present fragment is earlier than the Mazarine copy.” Images of both sides of the folio are supplied online, numbered “1” and “2,” but Christie’s has them reversed, verso–recto instead of recto–verso. Donadoni’s description itself has it right:

247 x 151mm. 44 lines in two columns, ruled space: 203 x 59mm., the text from Book I, cxxxvii–cxl, beginning ‘[...] Ade debeamus dampnari [...]’ and ending ‘ex antiqua c[on]suetudi[n]e’, initials and headers alternately in red or blue with blue or red penwork, rubrics in red, line-fillers in red and blue (one margin tightly cropped but not affecting text, some staining from use as a binding fragment).

According to Donadoni’s notice, the folio is “Colker MS 482; acquired in 1998 from Maggs.” One would like to know whether the manuscript whence the folio came was deliberately mutilated and, if so, under what circumstances. (The folio seems to have been folded widthwise, maybe twice.) Some of the other manuscripts of the *Somnium Viridarii* contain beautiful illuminations, and judging from the Christie’s folio, this manuscript may have been the most lavishly illustrated (see Figures 1 and 2). It is hard to believe that these illustrations were ever discarded. The philological value of the manuscript depends on its position in the tradition of the important work, for, in Donadoni’s words, “The *Somnium viridarii*, or *Songe du vergier*, is a monumental work of political doctrine structured as a dialogue between advocates of temporal and ecclesiastical power, represented by a knight, ‘miles’, and a cleric, ‘clericus.’”

For the time being, I will try to fit the text of the folio into the manuscript tradition and possible stemma. As part of the project to edit the *Opera Omnia* of the Cistercian Pierre Ceffons, a Parisian theologian whose known works date to ca. 1348–1354, I discovered that about 10,000 words of his political treatise entitled the *Parvum Decretum de potestate sancti Petri* were incorporated mostly verbatim into the *Somnium Viridarii*, making the *Parvum Decretum* one of the most important sources for the compilation. In preparing the critical edition of the *Parvum Decretum* with Roberto Lambertini,

while he focused on the sources that Pierre Ceffons employed and how those sources and Ceffons' own words passed into the *Somnium Viridarii*,<sup>7</sup> I decided to critically edit the pertinent passages in the *Somnium Viridarii* in order to determine the position of Évrart de Trémaugon's Ceffons manuscript in the *Parvum Decretum* tradition, if he did not have access to one of the four extant codices.

Marion Schnerb-Lièvre was primarily interested in the French *Le songe du Vergier*, which she edited first, and only secondarily in the Latin original, the *Somnium Viridarii*. Her aim in editing the *Somnium Viridarii* was to print the text that was closest to the French translation, which would not necessarily result in a reconstruction of the earliest Latin version, especially since she dated none of the surviving manuscripts to the fourteenth century. Without much discussion of her methodology in investigating the manuscript tradition, she chose to collate the three Parisian manuscripts, listed here with her dating:

*A* = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 3459A (1482)

*C* = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 3180C (16<sup>th</sup> century)

*M* = Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 3522 (early 15<sup>th</sup> century)

Schnerb-Lièvre also asserted that the other four manuscripts known to her mostly agreed with *C*. She chose *M* as her base manuscript, since she deemed it to have the text closest to the French translation. She only rarely reported the variants of *A* and *C*, mainly using them to correct *M*, and de facto she did not note all of *M*'s variants.

Although problems with Schnerb-Lièvre's goals, methodology, and execution had been pointed out,<sup>8</sup> my full collation of the eight witnesses for the 10,000 words coming from the *Parvum Decretum* revealed that her choice of *ACM* was a wise one: they come from three separate branches of the stemma; *A* and the inferior printed

<sup>7</sup> The first result was C. Schabel and R. Lambertini, "New Evidence for the Reception of the Michaelist Treatise *Allegationes de potestate imperiali* (1338–39): The *Parvum Decretum* of Pierre Ceffons and the *Somnium Viridarii*", *Picenum Seraphicum* 34 (2020), 173–178.

<sup>8</sup> See the review of H. Kaminsky, *Speculum* 71 (1996), 1015–1019.

editions belong to one; *M* belongs to another and the Lisbon manuscript likely derives from it; and *C* belongs to the same family as the remaining four witnesses, it being the best.<sup>9</sup>

My study of the extensive Ceffons section included all the pertinent segments of manuscripts and prints, but it is unlikely that the tradition shifts for the passage contained in the Christie's folio. Thus I have collated that folio, with the siglum *F* for "fragment," against *ACM* (*AC* online on Gallica, *M in situ*). The folio begins near the end of book I, chapter cxxxvii (page 177 of the edition), and ends near the start of chapter cxl (page 180). These chapters correspond to chapters CLIX–CLX and cxxxv–cxxxvi of *Le songe du Vergier*. Thus far no tacit source has yet been found for this section, although perhaps it was a fourteenth-century follower of Thomas Aquinas.

In the text below, I ignore the paragraphing and punctuation in the edition of Marion Schnerb-Lièvre, orthography has been standardized and classicized, scribal corrections except for *F*'s are not reported if they do not coincide with other variants, the difference between *igitur* and *ergo* is not noted, and minor variants (even in *M*, not noted by Schnerb-Lièvre) in abbreviated citations of legal texts and in the textual divisions are passed over. I have accepted the legal references as in Schnerb-Lièvre, but usually put them inside parentheses, in part because elsewhere these are often Évrart de Trémaugon's additions to his sources.

Schnerb-Lièvre recorded just 10 variants in this section for *ACM*, but a full apparatus of different readings in *ACM* would have included around 60, and the collation of *F* brings that total close to 70. *Ceteris paribus*, on the basis of chronology we might guess that *F* would be the best witness, followed by *M*, *A*, and *C*. This may be borne out in variants that are present in this fragment: *C* reads against *AFM* 21 times, *A* reads against *CFM* on 16 occasions, *M* goes against *ACF* 11 times, and *F* opposes *ACM* 8 times, although *F* shares a couple of errors with *A* or *C*. On this limited basis, *F* appears to represent another independent branch of the stemma, as good as *M*, the base manuscript for the existing critical edition. If more leaves

9 Lambertini and Schabel, "A New Source for the *Somnium Viridarii*", 115–118.

of the manuscript whence *F* came can be recovered, they would contribute to an improved edition of the *Somnium Viridarii*.

**Somnium Viridarii I, cc. 137–140**

<Quid sit minus malum in principe, vel quod habeat in se nimiam clementiam vel nimiam iustitiam quae declinet ad tyrannidem?>

[F ra] Adae debebamus dampnari, nec poteramus reparari nisi per nimiam Christi clementiam. Igitur clementia magis eligenda.

Miles, <capitulum> CXXXVIII: Contrarium videretur verius: quanto aliquid est melius, tanto magis expedit, [A 111v] quamvis excedat a suis terminis, tendens ad extremum, quam expedit illud quod non est de se ita bonum, si similiter declinet a suo gradu. Sed iustitia est huiusmodi, quia sine ea nullus potest secure in civitate remanere, et ipsa sublata de medio, omnia mala committuntur (in Aut. *Ut iudices sine quoquo suffragio, [§] Hoc quoque, et in prooemio Decretalium*); non sic de clementia. Ergo iustitia in suo debito gradu magis expedit quam clementia; ergo si excedat, ceteris paribus, magis expedit. 5  
10

Secundo, dicit Philosophus quod “iustitia docet [C 90r] regulam recte agibilium”; non sic de clementia; ergo. [Ed. 178] 15

Tertio, sicut bonum publicum praecellit bonum privatum (vii, q. I, c. *Scias*), sic legalis iustitia praecellit particulares virtutes, et hoc est quod dicit Philosophus, vi *Ethicorum*, quod “praeclarissima virtutum est iustitia.” Et hoc idem voluit canon cum dicit: “Summum in rebus est iustitia colere” (xii, q. II, c. *Cum devotissimam*). 20 Apparet igitur quod ista virtus quae est iustitia, dum est in debito gradu suo – non dico punctuali, sed habita consideratione personarum secundum gradum et gradum (*ff. De muniberis et honoribus, l. Ut gradatim; VIII, q. I, c. Licet*) – praecellat alias virtutes morales.

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3 debebamus] debemus M (+ Ed.) 4 christi clementiam] tr. A | igitur clementia magis eligenda] magis ergo eligenda etc. C 5 videretur] videtur C 9 secure in civitate remanere] in civitate secure manere M (+ Ed.) 10 ut] om. FM 11 decretalium] decretalis AF; decret' M 13 paribus] om. A 14 dicit] om. C 15 ergo] etc. add. AC 16 praecellit] excellit M (+ Ed.) 17 legalis] regalis C 19 cum dicit] om. A | summum] bonum add. C 20 iustitia] iustitiam C | colere] colore AF 23 et gradum] om. hom. C 24 praecellat] om. A; praecellit C | virtutes] virtute M

25 Sequitur quod si excedat ab illo gradu, considerando tamen culpam in puniendo, ut infra declarabo, quod debeat praecellere alias virtutes etiam a recto gradu deviantes – dico ceteris paribus, quia sic procedit [F rb] quaestio.

Quarto, per nimiam clementiam contemnitur commune bonum, ex cuius contemptu omnia mala oriuntur (sumpto generali argumento [*extra.*] *De constitutionibus, c. Nam concupiscentiam*), quia contemnitur iustitia. Ergo nimia iustitia est praferenda [A 112r] nimiae clementiae.

Hic attendendum quod clementia denotat quandam animi levitatem circa diminutionem poenarum. Unde ipsa dulcedo affectus inclinans hominem ad mitigationem pertinet ad clementiam et concernit actum interiorem hominis (*l. Respiciendum, ff. De poenis; XLV di., c. Disciplina*), et tunc convenit cum misericordia, et videntur quasi synonyma. Et talis clementia, quae est mixta cum iustitia, est 40 laudabilis, ut in iuribus allegatis.

Sed est alia clementia sine iustitia, et talis abusive loquendo dicitur clementia, quia omnino deviat a iustitia. Et talis reprobatur in iure (*l. Eleganter, § Idem. Labeo, ff. De dolo; l. Si hominem, [C 9ov] ff. Depositi*).

Praeterea, est reperire saevitiam, quae vocatur ‘feritas’ seu ‘ferocitas’ “a feris bestiis” que dicuntur saevae (*ff. De postulando, l. prima, § Bestias*). Hae enim ferae nocent hominibus et eorum cadaveribus pascuntur. Quibus non immerito comparantur saevi principes et iudices qui in poenis infligendis nullam ponderant culpam, sed solam delectationem in hominum cruciatu et tormentis, quia qui non facit decentia homini rationali non meretur dici homo, sed bestia (in *Aut. De monachis, in principio glosae [sup. v.] decentem*). [Ed. 179] Et hoc provenit eis ex quadam assuefactione seu corruptione naturae, sicut et aliae affectiones bestiales (*l. Nemo, C. De episcopali audiencia; [Aut.] Ut non luxurietur contra naturam, [F va] collatione VI*;

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30 ex] est F 34 hic] huic A 35 dulcedo] est add. C | affectus] effectus F  
 36 pertinet] pertinens C 41 sine] sive M (+ Ed.) | talis] est abusiva seu add. A  
 43 idem] quod C | labeo] habeo a.c. s.l. A; ?abeo C; habeo F 46 feris] feriis A |  
 postulando] penis C | prima] persona M 47 hae] hee codd.; hec Ed. 50 hominum] hominis C 51 sed] immo A 54 affectiones bestiales] effectiones bestias F

XII, q. I, c. *Omnis aetas*). Nam secundum quod dicit Philosophus, II *Ethicorum*: “Ex assuefactione nobis virtutes insunt.” Quod pulchre deducit Gregorius (c. *Dum sanctam, De paenitentia, di. II*), nam primo herba crescit, [A 112v] deinde spicam producit, postea stipulam et granum. Sic homo ex assuefactione gradatim efficitur virtuosus 60 et per contrariam assuefactionem mali redditur malus et vitiosus.

Sed opponitur clementiae secundo modo sumptae, quia est quodam modo bestialis in suo genere, sicut et ista, ut est supra deductum.

Est etiam crudelitas, “quae a ‘cruditate’ dicitur,” nam sicut ea 65 quae sunt bene decocta in genere suo consueverunt habere suavem saporem, cruda autem asperum et amarum, sic clementia permixta cum iustitia dulcis est et suavis, crudelitas, quia non est permixta cum clementia, cruda et aspera, ponderat tamen culpam puniendo, sed excessive et ultra modum. Et sic discrepat a saevitia, quae 70 non considerat culpam in puniendo. Et opponitur ista crudelitas clementiae primo modo sumptae tanquam asperum suavi, ut est probatum. Procedit ergo quaestio in clementia primo modo sumpta, dum excedit a suis terminis declinando ad secundam clementiam, quae bestialis est. Talis clementia sic excedens potest vocari ‘nimia 75 clementia’, ut in quaestione proposita.

Procedit ex alia parte in crudelitate, quae considerat culpam puniendo, excessive tamen. Et [C 91r] talis crudelitas etiam potest ‘nimia iustitia’ nuncupari.

Quibus praemissis pro evidentia terminorum, eligo illam partem: quod minus damnosum sit rei publicae quod princeps habeat nimiam iustitiam in se, et hoc [F vb] rationibus pro parte ista allegatis. 80

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58 sanctam] scientiam *codd.* (*sanctam Ed.*) 61 mali] *om. C* 65 cruditate] crudelitate *A* 66 consueverunt] *p.c. A; constituerunt F* | suavem] bonum *C* 67 asperum et amarum] asperam (+ *A*) amaram (*a.c. A*) *C* 68 cum] clementia *add. sed del. F* 69 puniendo] puniendo *C* 71 considerat] *a.c. A; ponderat p.c. s.l. A; ponderat M* 72 modo] *om. A* 73 primo] secundo *M* 74 secundam] secundum *F* 75 bestialis est] *tr. M (+ Ed.); et add. Ed.* 77 parte] iustitia *add. C* 78 etiam potest] potest *a.c. s.l. A; tr. AC* 80 terminorum] quaestionis *C* 82 ista] illa *A*

Non obstat lex *Imperialis* in contrarium allegata, quia ipsamet  
 85 videtur respondere et solvere. Verum enim est quod Christi sumus  
 imitatores in terris in quantum [A 113r] naturae nostrae fuit possi-  
 bile, ut ibi, non in omnibus, nam *iudicia Dei abyssus multa*, ut in  
 Psalmo. Nec tanta posset esse similitudo Creatoris ad creaturam  
 90 quin maior sit dissimilitudo notanda (c. *Damnamus, ultra medium,*  
*extra. De summa Trinitate; c. Gaudemus, [extra.] De divorciis*).

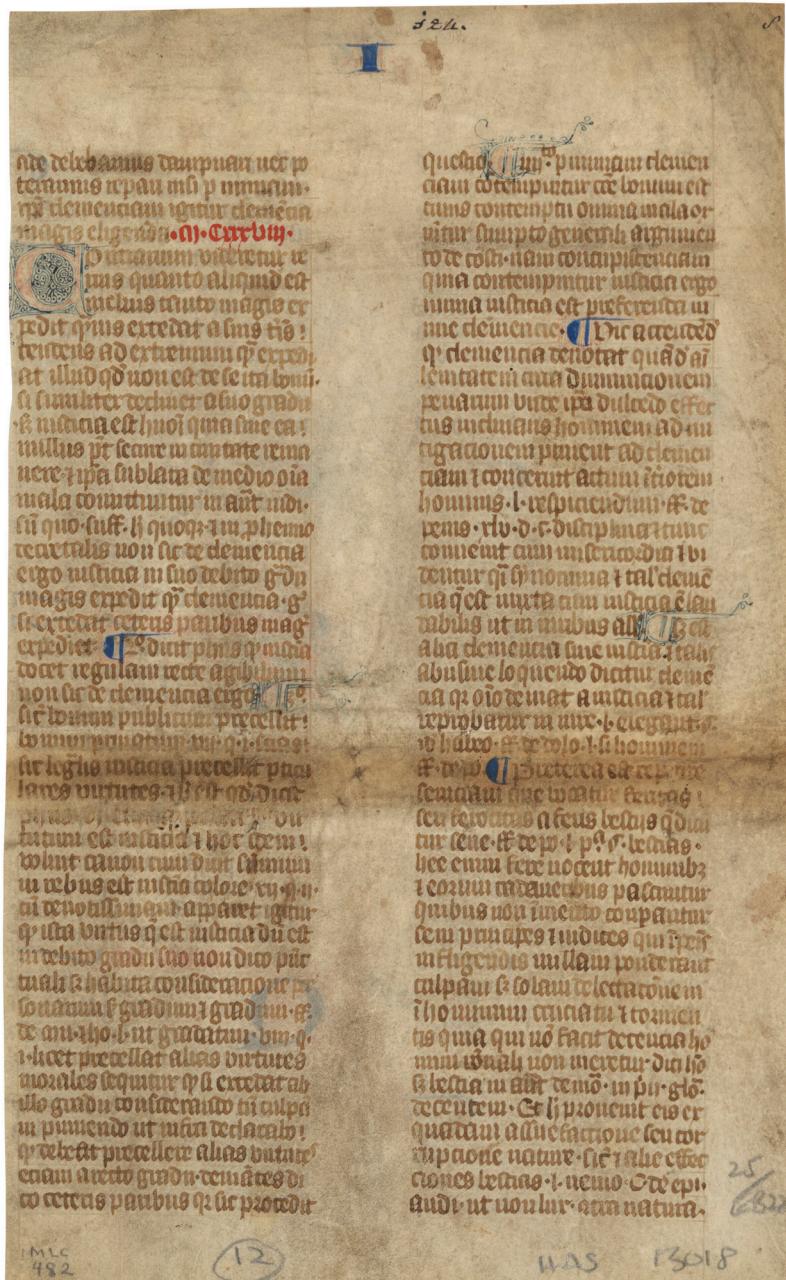
Et praeterea, illa Christi clementia potest intelligi de clementia  
 permixta cum iustitia, et hoc vult dicere Psalmista: *Virga tua et*  
*baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt*,” transumptive (XLV di., c. *Di-*  
*sciplina*). [Ed. 180]

95 Clericus, capitulum cxxxix: Rursum, reverende Miles, quia su-  
 perius visus fuistis regem Franciae modernum ab actibus tyrannicis  
 excusare, quaeso quo iure potest rex Franciae gabellas, impositiones,  
 et alia onera importabilia et subditis impossibilia, realia et etiam  
 personalia, imponere? Numquid iste est actus tyrannicus? Tenet  
 100 enim per hoc populum in servitute, cum potius eos deberet a iugo  
 servitutis erigere (c. *De officio prefecti pretorio Affrice, l. In nomine*  
*Domini*, ibi: “Fortissimos tyrannos eiecumus” etc. [M 30v]

Miles, capitulum CXL: Quia quaeritis quo iure rex Franciae possit  
 gabellas, impositiones, et alia onera extraordinaria subditis indicere,  
 105 respondeo per textum in capitulo *Super quibusdam, § Praeterea, ex-*  
*tra. De verborum significationibus*, ubi dicitur quod omnia pedagia,  
 guidagia, et salvaria sunt interdicta quae non apparent imperatorum  
 aut regum largitione concessa, vel ex antiqua [A 113v] consuetudine  
 [cessat F]

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84 lex] l. M (+ Ed.) | *imperialis*] om. C 86 imitato'res] imittato'res M (= imitato-  
 ris/imitationis) | *naturae nostrae*] tr. A | *fuit*] fiiii' C; fiiiiit F (funt) 87 *iudicia*  
*iustitia* Ed. | *ut<sup>2</sup>*] om. C 89 *quin*] quoniam F; quoniam a.c. M; quin p.c. M  
 (?); quam Ed. 96 *actibus*] artibus C 97 *quaeso*] quaero A 100 *deberet*] debent C 102 *fortissimos*] viros add. A | *eiecumus*] electimus AF | etc.] om. A  
 103 *capitulum*] om. AF 105 *quibusdam*] quibusdem F 107 *apparent*] appetat F

Figure 1: *Somnium Viridarii* Fragment, recto. ©Christie, Manson and Woods 2023

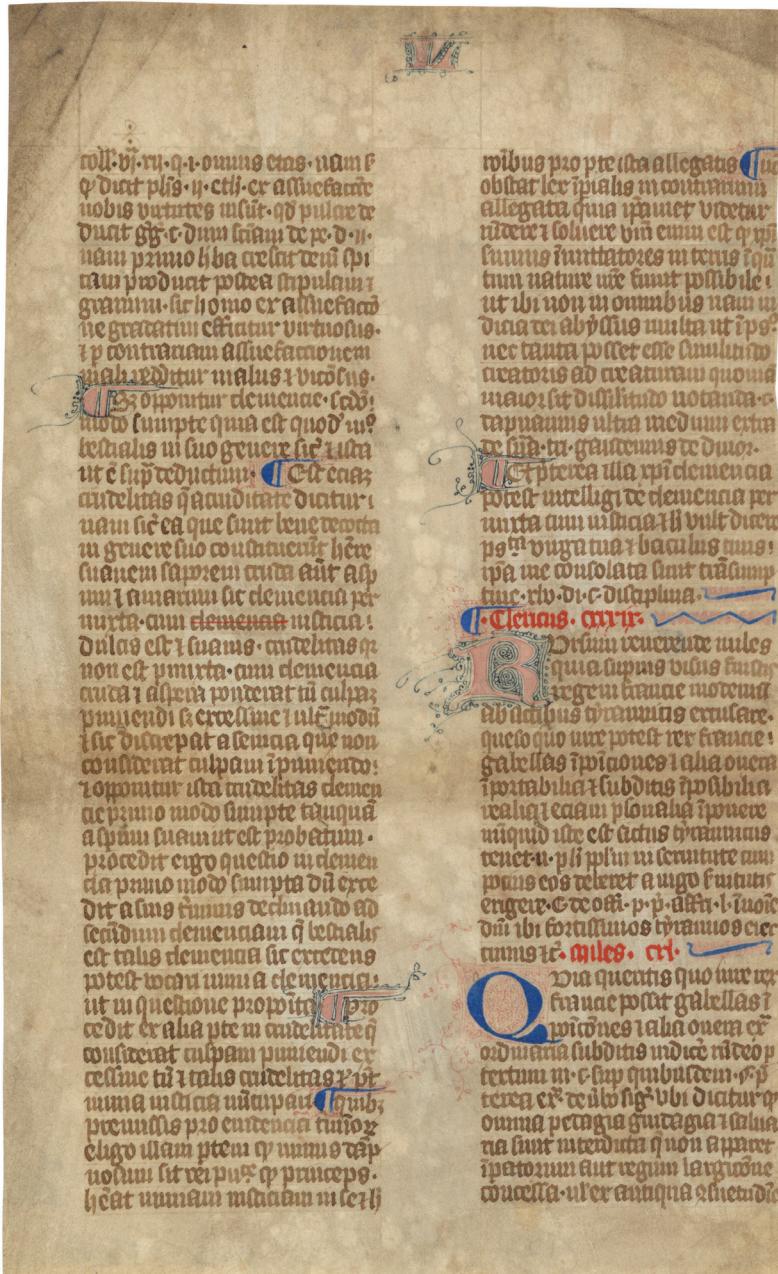


Figure 2: Somnium Viridarii Fragment, verso. ©Christie, Manson and Woods 2023