AMBROSIUS
BISHOP OF MILAN

Ambrosius epus ad sorore sua Marcella
de virginitate

Bishop Ambrose to his sister Marcella, Of Virginity
Background Information

Ambrose of Milan dedicated *de virginibus* to his sister, Marcellina, who requested that he write the work in 377 CE.

Each book discusses a different component of virginity:
- Book One explains the virtues of virginity
- Book Two gives instruction to virgins
- Book Three instructs Marcellina on virginity

Ambrose repeated the subject matter in other works in this manuscript, specifically *de viduis* and *de virginitate*, and in his other works, including his translation of *de institutione virginis et S. Mariae virginitate perpetua ad Eusebium* (*Of the Instruction of Virgins and the Perpetual Virginity of Mary*, by Eusebius), *exhortatio virginitatis* (*Exhortation of Virginity*), and *de lapsu virginis consecratae* (*Of the Fall of the Consecrated Virgin*).

Contents

- By Ambrose of Milan
  - *de virginibus* - Of Virgins
    - Book One
      - ff. 1r1-8v5
    - Book Two
      - ff. 8r6-13v10
    - Book Three
      - ff. 13r11-17v31
  - *de virginitate* – On Virginity
    - Considered Book Four of *de virginibus*, written at a later date
      - ff. 17v32-32v31
  - *de viduis* – On Widows
    - ff. 32v35-44v4
  - *de Gedeon* – Of Gideon
    - Sermon 117
      - ff. 44v5-46r16

- Pseudo-Ambrose
  - *de quadragesima* – Of the Fortieth Day (of Lent)
    - Sermon (incomplete)
      - ff. 46r17-47r4


Fun Facts

- What a dashing fellow, that Saint Ambrose. I hear that the fresco above could be an actual portrait!
- For all you pilgrims, the altar above at the Basilica St. Ambrogio in Milan once enshrined the Saint himself. The left and right frames depict the life of Christ.
- To all my nerdy peeps, the center frame was a popular image in the medieval period. It shows Christ surrounded by four symbols of evangelists (eagle, bull, lion, man) and three apostles in each corner (twelve total).

References

- Figure 1: Sant’Ambrogio: Chapel of St. Victor: det.: St Ambrose. c470. Artstor, library.artstor.org/asset/ ARTSTOR_103_41822001125549.
- Figure 2: Altar frontal: Basilica S. Ambrogio. c807 - 834. Artstor, library.artstor.org/asset/AWSS35953_35953_31689184.