

Soissons, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 24

IOHANNES SARESBERIENSIS, *Policraticus* (*De nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum*).

XII^e siècle (vers 1160) ; Angleterre (Cantorbéry)

Provenance : Jean de Salisbury, évêque de Chartres (mort en 1180) ; chapitre de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres ; Laurent Surreau (†1479), chanoine de Rouen, qui l'offre à la cathédrale de Sens ; Jacques Cornuty (†1651), conseiller et médecin ordinaire du roi ; acheté en 1661 chez le libraire parisien Louis Gontier pour l'abbaye de Prémontré près de Laon.

Parchemin ; 346 f. ; 260 x 184 mm

Décor : ornement (quelques initiales de couleur ornées)

Reliure veau

Notes : le *Policraticus* de Soissons est l'exemplaire personnel de Jean de Salisbury ; il le légua avec environ 35 autres volumes au chapitre de la cathédrale de Chartres. C'est le ms. utilisé par Denis Foulechat pour sa traduction en français pour Charles V en 1372.

In the course of a study, as yet unpublished, concerning the books given by John of Salisbury to Chartres and the twelfth-century copies of the *Policraticus* in France, I have observed that the manuscript in the municipal library in Soissons, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 24, was not made in France at the end of the twelfth century, as stated by all previous authors, but in England, around 1160. The manuscript Soissons 24 is written and corrected by two main scribes (scribes 1 and 2), assisted by two other correcting hands (scribes 3 and 4). Scribe 3 is the main scribe in the Canterbury copy of John's works, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, ms. 46. Scribe 4 provides only a few corrections in the text and margins, some of which are significant. His hand appears to be that of the ex libris on folio 1, where the erased name appears to be *Ioh. Saresberiensis*; the S is fairly clear. It is probably scribe 4 (John) who carefully corrects the punctuation throughout the manuscript. The manuscript Soissons 24 is the copy of the *Policraticus* left by John to the Cathedral of Chartres.

The ex libris on folio 1 of Soissons 24 reads: *Liber iste est magistri [Ioh. Saresberiensis] quem qui furatus fuerit vel abstulerit vel fraudem fecerit quominus ipsum habeat aut titulum istum deleverit anathema sit*. The formulas are very close to those used by Abbot Simon at Saint Albans, as on his copy of John's works, London, British Library, ms. Royal 13 D IV: *Hunc librum fecit dominus Symon abbas sancto Albano. quem qui ei abstulerit aut fraudem commiserit. aut titulum deleverit vel corru(m)perit, anathema sit*, and it appears that John adopted Abbot Simon's formula when he had this manuscript made. It is also likely that the corrections in Royal 13 D IV were made by John himself.

The numerous corrections and 'accretions' in Soissons 24 allow a glimpse at the genetic evolution of the *Policraticus* between 1160 and 1170. The manuscript CCCC 46 appears to be the copy of John's works made at Canterbury for Thomas Becket alongside Soissons 24. The two manuscripts do not have the same style of illumination. Some initials in Soissons 24, notably the one on f. 26v, are close to those painted in books at Saint Albans.

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6.12.2013