

PETER OF LIMOGES

*The Moral Treatise on the Eye*

*The Moral Treatise on the Eye* was a medieval bestseller. Composed by Peter of Limoges at the university in Paris between 1274/75 and 1289, the work was transmitted throughout Europe and is still extant in 219 manuscripts. Paris was the crossroads of vibrant intellectual exchange in Peter's time, and he played an important role in bringing together in his *Treatise* advances in both homiletics and science, adapting for use in the pulpit the new science of Perspectivist optics developed by Alhacen and adopted by Roger Bacon and John Pecham. Peter's *Treatise* helped legitimate the cultural utility of natural science by making it part of a theological process of allegorizing the revealed world. It also supplemented the tasks of homiletics with the duty of educating the Christian senses, making the study of vision part of what can be called a "voluntarist optics," one of the necessary steps in the formation of the will. Yet, in spite of its importance to homiletic discourse, the early development of science in the West, and the conceptualization of perspective in art, Peter's text has long been available only in Latin.

This volume makes *The Moral Treatise on the Eye* available for the first time in English. In fifteen chapters, the text moves from what can be established about the eye and vision on scientific grounds to the moral or spiritual interpretation of optics. The first section lays the foundation for the rest of the treatise by detailing the parts of the eye, the types of physical vision, the importance of intention for the completion of sight in the common nerve, the explanation of optical illusions, and the moral interpretation of twelve natural properties of eyes. In the second part, Peter develops sets of moral instruction using cultural conceptions surrounding the eyes. The final section is devoted to spiritual sight.

The volume also contains an introduction to Peter of Limoges, his intellectual interests, the sources of the *Treatise*, and its place in the theological and scientific developments of the late thirteenth century; a detailed index of the sources and analogues; and a bibliography.

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## Abbreviations

- CCCM Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- CCSL Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.
- CFS Cistercian Fathers Series. Kalamazoo, MI.
- CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna.
- FOTC The Fathers of the Church. Washington, DC.
- LCL Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA, and London.
- MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Hannover etc. Available at <http://www.dmgh.de/> (accessed August 1, 2011).
- MST Mediaeval Sources in Translation. Toronto.
- NPNF The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. 1: First Series: 14 vols. 2: Second Series: 14 vols. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886–1900. Rev. ed. for Internet Kevin Knight. Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/> (accessed August 1, 2011).
- P7* Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de Paris MS. lat. 16395.
- P8* Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de Paris MS. lat. 16396.
- PG Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 161 vols. Paris: Jacques-Paul Migne, 1857–1866.
- PL Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. 221 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1844–1898.
- Pr1* Peter of Limoges. *Tractatus moralis de oculo*. In *Johannis Pithsani archiepiscopi Canthuariensis ordinis fratrum minorum liber de oculo morali foeliciter incipit*. Augsburg: A. Sorg, 1475 [?].
- WSA The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Hyde Park, NY.
- \* An asterisk in the translation indicates an emendation of the Latin text or a significant variation between the text of *P7P8* and *Pr1*; see below, “Emended Readings and Significant Variations between *Pr1* and *P7P8*.”



Biblical books referred to in the footnotes are listed below. Abbreviations for other primary sources cited in the footnotes are found below in the “Index of Sources and Analogues.”

Gen	Genesis
Exod	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Judg	Judges
1Sam	1 Samuel
2Sam	2 Samuel
1Kgs	1 Kings
2Kgs	2 Kings
2Chr	2 Chronicles
Tob	Tobit
Jth	Judith
Esth	Esther
Job	Job
Ps	Psalms
Prov	Proverbs
Qoh	Qohelet [Ecclesiastes]
Cant	Canticles [Song of Songs]
Wis	Wisdom
Sir	Sirach [Ecclesiasticus]
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Bar	Baruch
Ezek	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniel
Hos	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Zech	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi
1Mac	1 Maccabees
2Mac	2 Maccabees
Matt	Matthew
Mark	Mark

Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom	Epistle to the Romans
1Cor	First Epistle to the Corinthians
2Cor	Second Epistle to the Corinthians
Gal	Epistle to the Galatians
Eph	Epistle to the Ephesians
Phil	Epistle to the Philippians
Col	Epistle to the Colossians
2Thess	Second Epistle to the Thessalonians
1Tim	First Epistle to Timothy
2Tim	Second Epistle to Timothy
Tit	Epistle to Titus
Heb	Epistle to Hebrews
Jas	Epistle of James
1Pet	First Epistle of Peter
2Pet	Second Epistle of Peter
1John	First Epistle of John
Rev	Revelation