

Egidius' 1484 *De Pulsibus*: The First Printed Book on the Pulse

From Cos' Hippocrates, Pergamon's Galen, Baghdad's al-Rhazi, and Kairouan's Israeli, medical wisdom was passed in Salerno, Italy to Egidius Corboliensis (c.1140–c.1224), who had been born in France as "Pierre-Gilles de Corbeil." Continuing as a Salernitan medical schoolmaster, Egidius composed 380 lines of Latin verse, his *De Pulsibus*, as a handwritten mnemonic for students learning Galenic pulsology. Not actually printed until 1484, this Paduan imprinting made extensive use of abbreviations, contractions, and symbols to preserve either verse (dactylic hexameter) or vellum (or, in this case, rag paper). Wasted pages could also be avoided in 1484 by forsaking the then recent invention of the title page for the classic colophon ("summit" or "culmination") of authorship wedged onto the bottom of the final page (*above*). In purple beneath the colophon is the stamp of the library which deaccessioned this book and unwittingly provided provenance for the Wood Library-Museum's copy of the "world's first printed book on the pulse." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.