

**RICHARD OF MEDIAVILLA (RICHARD OF MIDDLETON), Commentary on the Fourth Book of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard**  
**In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment**  
**Northeastern Italy, c. 1475-1500**

*i (paper) + 255 + i (paper) folios on parchment, usually very fine, in quire 20, ff. 195-200, the leaves are irregularly shaped with ragged outer margins because of defective parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top outer corner, recto (collation, i-xxiv<sup>10</sup> xxv<sup>4</sup> [-4, following f. 243, with loss of text] xxvi<sup>12</sup>), horizontal catchwords, lower, inner margins, leaf and quire signatures in the first half of the quire, bottom margin, with a letter designating the quire and an Arabic numeral, the leaf (some trimmed), ruled lightly in lead with full-length single vertical bounding lines inside, outside, and between the columns, horizontal rules are very light and usually indiscernible, and do not continue between the columns, prickings, top and bottom margins, (justification, 237-235 x 172-170 mm.), written below the top line in two columns of fifty-nine lines in an accomplished running humanistic script, running headlines in pale red, three-line initials, alternately red and blue with violet and red pen work respectively, f. 1 with an eleven-line initial of an urn or chalice, filled with flowers, on a gold ground, with borders in the upper and outer margins of gold ink scrolls interspersed with flowers and gold rayed disks, middle upper margin, a laurel wreath for a coat-of-arms, left blank, extending into a polished gold and green bar between the two columns with a three-dimensional ribbon wrapped around the bar; front endleaf, f. i, with a woodcut of the author, cut from a book, and pasted in (a modern addition); f. 1, bottom and outer margins replaced, some stains, top margin, but usually very white and clean, severely cockled. Bound in eighteenth-century vellum over pasteboard, spine with four slightly raised bands and head and tail bands (no longer attached to the covers), lettered in ink "Richardi/ de/ Mediavilla," the quires are no longer securely fastened in the binding, and middle quires especially are partially loose, covers are buckled. Dimensions 330 x 235 mm.*

This is a fine copy of an important scholastic commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* by the thirteenth-century Franciscan, Richard of Middleton. Despite the text's popularity during the Middle Ages, it has never been edited in a modern critical edition and only three copies are recorded in the United States. Copies of this text have rarely been available for sale in recent years (only twelve sales are listed in the Schoenberg Database, and all but two are before 1935).

## PROVENANCE

1. Written in northeastern Italy in the last quarter of the fifteenth century as indicated by the style of the script and illumination. The last text in the manuscript is an alphabetical index to the text that may have been created for a 1489 printed edition of the text; it was copied by another scribe, and although it is an addition to the manuscript, it is a very early one, and may always have accompanied the main text. No evidence of its medieval ownership are found in the manuscript, but the manuscript is of high quality and curiously lacking in any annotations, given the nature of the text, suggesting it was not a routine mendicant or student copy.

2. The manuscript was in England in 1955, when it was sold at the Sotheby's Sale, London, December 19, 1955, lot 47 (cf. Schoenberg Database, no. 4272).
3. Dealer's annotations include, inside front cover, in pencil, "A 2092," "8" and "C"; inside back cover, "MSS," "12/56," and "1456."
4. Harry and Virginia Walton Collection, Covington, Virginia, USA; Walton MS A-2092 (Faye and Bond, p. 523).

## TEXT

ff. 1-224, [Prologue] In nova signa et immuta mirabilia glorifica manum et brachium dextram ... et ad gloriam perducatur dominus Iesus Christus qui cum patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat per omnia secula seculorum. [f. 1, Distinctio 1], Samaritanus etc. In primo libro determinavit magister de deo quartum ad rationem sue naturalis perfectionis ... [f. 1v], Circa hanc distinctionem querendum est principaliter sex ... f. 9, [Distinctio 2] Circa hanc distinctionem querendum principaliter de duabus primo de sacramentis ... ad quod me et scriptorem meum et omnes scriptorum meorum ... Si quid autem dixi novum in hoc quarto vel in aliquot aliorum librorum ... essem humiliter retractum. *Explicit liber quartus super sententias editus a fratre Ricardo de mediavilla de ordine fratrum minorum* [ends top column a, f. 224; f. 224v, blank];

ff. 225-243v, [table of contents], incipit, "D. 1, Samaritanus etc. Vtrum sacramentum consistat in rebus et uerbis ... [rubric omitted, note to rubricator, D. 50] ... An melius intelligat separate quamdiu est coniuncta//";

Text ends imperfectly in the contents of the last Distinction.

ff. 244-255v, [top margin, "Jesus"] rubric, *Incipit tabulam secundam ordinem alphabeti omnium que in hoc quarto Ricardi super sententias traduntur procedens per distinctiones articulos et questiones ...*; incipit, "Abbas. An abbates possint excommunicare subditos suos potestate ordinaria. d. 18, ar. 4, q. 1 .... Vendere .... Vt vendere possit dominus .... .d, xxxvi, ar. <vii?>, q. ii. Venia.//";

Alphabetical index; ending imperfectly. This index, which is also found in another Italian manuscript of this text sold at textmanuscripts.com (archives, Reference number 236), was not included in the Venice 1475 edition, but was included at the beginning of the Venice, Dionysius Bertochus, 1489, and all subsequent editions, including the 1507-1509 edition of the complete commentary.

Richard of Middleton (Richardus de Mediavilla, or de Meneville), Commentary of the Fourth Book of Peter Lombard's Sentences); see Friedrich Stegmüller, *Repertorium commentariorum in sententias Petri Lombardi*, Würzburg, 1947, no. 722, vol. 1, pp. 349-354; there is no modern critical edition, but Book Four was printed a number of times in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (Venice, Christophorus Arnoldus, about 1474 or 1477, Hain-Copinger 10985, Goff M424; Venice, Christophorus Arnoldus, about 1476-8, Hain-Copinger 10984, Goff M 423; Venice, Dionysius Bertochus, 1489, Hain-Copinger 10986; Venice, Bonetus Locatellus, 1499, Hain Copinger 10987, Goff M426; and Lyons, Johannes Klein, 1504).

The entire four books were printed in Venice between 1507-1509 by Lazaro Soardi (*Sacratissima theologie vel doctoris eximii Richardi de Media Villa ordinis seraphici in primum sententiarum . . .* ) and in Brescia in 1591, see *Super quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, IV Vols., Brescia: M.A. Gonzaga, 1591 reprint Minerva: Frankfurt a.M., 1963.

Few details are known about the life of the author, the Franciscan friar, Richardus de Mediavallia (or de Meneville), or Richard of Middleton (fl. 1249-1302). He was born either in England or France and studied at the University of Paris, where he was part of the Franciscan commission investigating the works of Peter of John Olivi in 1283. He was a master at the Franciscan house of studies in Paris from 1284-1287 and served as the Provincial master of France in 1295. He later taught at the Franciscan studium in Naples, where he was the tutor of Louis of Anjou. He was the author of a number of works in addition to this Commentary, including biblical commentaries, sermons, *Questiones*, and three sets of Quodlibets. His work was valued through the fifteenth century; modern scholars note that his contributions to natural philosophy are particularly important. He died c. 1302.

Apart the Bible, there is no theological work more commented on than *The Sentences*, written in the mid-twelfth century by Peter Lombard. Every medieval theology student attended lectures on *The Sentences*, and most important medieval theologians left written commentaries on the text, ranging from Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, to William of Ockham and even Martin Luther. This manuscript is a commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences*, which discusses God, the Sacraments and the Four Last Things (Death, Last Judgment, Hell, and Heaven).

Richard of Middleton lectured on the *Sentences* between 1280-1281, although his *Commentary on the Sentences* probably dates slightly later, c. 1281-5. The commentary was a popular one, included in the 1304 stationer's list from the University of Paris (see H. Denifle, *Chartularium universitatis parisiensis*, Paris, 1881, vol. 2, p. 109, no. 642), and it survives in over one hundred manuscripts; see Stegmüller, *Repertorium*, listing ninety manuscripts, and the online catalogue, "Franciscan Authors," listing an additional fifteen. Most manuscript copies include a single book of the *Commentary*, and copies of the fourth book are the most common (thirty-four listed in Stegmüller and eight in "Franciscan Authors"). The popularity of the fourth book of the Commentary is also evident in its printing history. Only three manuscripts of the Commentary are recorded in collections in the United States (Washington, D. C, Holy Name College, MS 83, De Ricci, 483; Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS 383, De Ricci, p. 820, and Wellesley College, Pearsons Plimpton Collection, MS 808, De Ricci, p. 1075). The Schoenberg Database records only thirteen sales of manuscripts of this commentary, including this manuscript in 1955.

## ILLUMINATION

The manuscript begins with an impressive illuminated initial, surrounded by a border in the top and inner margins, with decoration between the columns. The bottom and outer margins are replacements, and it is likely that the illumination once included a full border. Overall, the leaf is faded and worn, and we can imagine it was once an even more impressive page. The decoration includes an eleven-line initial of a dark red urn or chalice, with three-dimensional highlights in brushed gold, filled with flowers and leaves, and flanked by pink and green floral motifs, on a gold

ground. The borders in the upper and outer margins consist of gold ink scrolls interspersed with blue, pink, and green flowers and leaves and gold rayed disks, middle upper margin, a green laurel wreath for a coat-of-arms, left blank, extending into a polished gold and green bar between the two columns with a three-dimensional ribbon wrapped around the bar.

Although certainly not identical, a border in similar style is found in British Library, MS Harley 4342, Italy, North East (Ferrara), dated 1456; see <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=22018> (Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, British Library).

A modern addition is the fifteenth- or sixteenth-century woodcut probably from the *Liber chronicarum* (the "Nuremberg Chronicle") of 1493, or a later copy, pasted on the front endleaf, depicting the author, shown half-length, and lettered "Richardus de media villa," image size 65 x 50 mm.

## LITERATURE

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Zavalloni, Roberto. *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des formes. Textes inédit et étude critique*, Louvain, Éditions de l'Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1951.


## ONLINE RESOURCES

"The Internet Guide to Master Peter Lombard,"

<http://www.franciscan-archive.org/lombardus/index.html>

Heijden, Maarten van der, and Bert Roest, "Franciscan Authors, 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century: A Catalogue in Progress," (Richardus de Mediavallia, with extensive bibliography):

<http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/>

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<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13045b.htm>

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