

Loci communes (Theological commonplaces from the New Testament); NICCOLÒ
AURIFICIO DE BONFIGLI, *De dignitate vita et moribus clericorum*
In Latin and German, manuscript on paper
Austria, Hall in Tirol, c. 1525-1550, with additions from 1581

202 folios on paper, two lots of paper, ff. 1-7v and ff. 164-202v, with watermark, unidentified motif, darker and with foxing, ff. 8-163v, whiter, higher quality, no watermark, modern foliation in pencil, top outer corner recto, complete (collation, i^s [1, unnumbered pastedown] ii¹² iii-xviii^s xix¹⁰ xx^s [-3 and 4, following f. 159, apparently cancelled with no loss of text] xxi-xxiv^s xxv^s [-2, following f. 196, cancelled with no loss of text]), no catchwords or signatures, unruled (justification, 115-105 x 90-85 mm.), written in a quick cursive script in seventeen to fifteen long lines, red rubrics, running titles, and list of contents, additions, ff. 160-175v, with a heading in red, f. 160, otherwise copied in very small cursive scripts in brown ink in twenty-eight to twenty-four long lines (justification 135-120 x 90-80 mm.), in very good condition, first folio darkened, ff. 1-7v, darkened and foxed with a few worm holes, ff. 164-end, leaves slightly darkened. Bound in its ORIGINAL brown leather binding, stamped in blind, front cover with double rules forming four rectangular panels, the outer panels with roll-stamps of Renaissance ornament of urns and tendrils, and the inner two panels with diamond-shaped stamps of crowned eagles (similar to Schunke 1979 Adler 248, Ullm Basilisk 5) and an upper horizontal panel with stamps of rosettes with five petals and urns, bordered with triple fillets, back cover, wide rules forming a diamond-shaped panel, intersected by diagonal rules forming smaller compartments, each enclosing similar rosettes, once fastened back to front, remains of straps, lower board, and impressions and nails from catches, upper board, rounded spine with three raised bands and head and tail bands, paper label on spine, lettered, "<?> Scripturae," top and bottom of spine damaged, both covers and spine scuffed and worn, but overall in sound condition. Dimensions 149 x 103 mm.

This is a text by an unknown sixteenth-century theologian; no other copies have been identified, and it is likely this was the author's personal copy. Reading through the work, we can gain insight into which parts of the Scriptures this writer considered most important. The manuscript also includes a copy of a text by Niccolò Aurificio de Bonfigli, which was printed several times in the sixteenth century, added in 1581. It retains its original blindtooled binding and was once part of the important theological library in Hall, the Ritter-Waldauf Bibliothek.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in the sixteenth century, probably c. 1525-1550, judging from the evidence of the script, in Austria; we know it was owned in 1581 by Veit Hiltprandt, a citizen of Hall, and it seems quite likely that it was also written in Hall, a town near Innsbruck in the Tyrol.

Owned by Veit Hiltprandt von Edelshausen (d. 1591); he was granted the title by Archduke Ferdinand in 1576, and was active in civic government in Hall, becoming Mayor of Hall in 1587; in 1581, he recorded the death of two of the mayors of Hall, Joseph Schick and Thomas Rauscher, in notes inscribed in the inside, back cover: "Anno Domini 1581 in der nacht [...] starb Joseph Schikh der Älter Burgermaister umb 2 uhr nach mitternacht dessen Seelh gott gnadt. Anno etc. 1581. In der Nacht Matthai Apostoli et Evangelistae Starb Thomas Rauscher der elter Burgermaister dem got gnadt."

Veit Hiltprandt (or Hillprannt), Joseph Schick, and Thomas Rauscher all served in the town government in Hall in various capacities before becoming Mayor; they are found as witnesses to documents dated 1555-1559, 1554, and 1567, respectively (see Moser 2000, nos. 073-03 to 073-08, 073-00, 074-00 to 074-01, and 075-00).

2. In 1581, Veit Hiltprandt presented the volume to his friend, the preacher Michael Rauth; recorded on f. 1, "Anfang bedenckhs Enndt. Veit Hiltprandt Zu Edlhaussen Verehrt Hn. Michael Rauth Prediger zu Hall meinem günstigen gliebten Hn. und Freundt [...] 12. Junii Anno 81" The texts beginning on f. 160 are dated 1581 and it is possible that they were copied into the volume by (or for) Michael Rauth.
3. Probably deposited from Rauth's estate into the Ritter-Waldauf-Bibliothek; contemporary marks on pastedown and flyleaf, dated 1596, as well as nineteenth-century stamp: inside front cover in brown ink "Waldaufficae fundationis <20?> 1596 Halae"; f. 1, in ink, "Bibliothecae Waldaufficae"; f. 9, lower margin, library stamp, s. XIX, in blue ink, "Ritter Waldaus ... Bibliothecae."
4. The foundation of the library dates to the gift made in 1501 by the imperial protonotary Florian Waldauf (also Baldauf, c. 1450-1510; in 1495, he was countersignatory to the preliminary contract of the Habsburg-Spanish double wedding), and his wife Barbara, of a chapel, a collection of relics and the ministry of the parish church in Hall. As steward of the Waldauf endowment, the city of Hall was responsible for the donations "dass alle jar etliche puecher nach anzaigen des predigers zum predigambt gekauft und in der heiligen capellen liberei an ketten gehalten und vesorgt warden," as well as for acquiring books from the estates of religious figures. Although the library rarely made purchases, it did acquire books from the bequests of clergymen, monasteries and schools (including the books of Johannes Eck; for a discussion of his importance, see below). During the Second World War an unknown number of valuable manuscripts were given to private individuals in Hall for safekeeping; after the war, none of these books were returned (see online resources, below).

TEXT

[ff. 1 (blank except for added notes, see provenance above) – 8v, blank] f. 9rv, [in red] *Registrum huius Libelluli quod et quales Libros in se continent In primo, incipit, "Euangelios Sancti mathei ... Epist. Iud, Loci Communes ex Biblia, Loci Communes prophetarum, Loci Communes Spalmarum [sic]";*

The contents are listed in the following order: Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, John, Hebrews, James, and Jude. Omitted are 2 Thessalonians, 2 John, and 3 John. The order was transposed so that Hebrews and James, which should be at the end of the Pauline Epistles and the beginning of the Catholic Epistles, are here incorrectly placed after the Letter of John. Furthermore, the *Loci communes* of the Prophets and Psalms which conclude the list are not found in this manuscript.

ff. 10-159v: ff. 10-31, Matthew, *Incipiunt Loci Communes in matheum Euangelistarum, capitulum primum*, incipit, "Saluum faciet populum suum peccatis suis [Mt. 1:21], *Cap. 2 et michae 5*, Et tu Bethleem terra Iuda nequamquam ... Israel [Mt 2:6], *Idem et Osee ii*, Ex egipto ... *Christus ablegat discipulos et cum illes est semper, mar 16*, Data est mihi omnis potestas in celo ... ad consummationem seculi [Mt. 28:18-20]." *Finis libri mathei Euangeliste.*; ff. 31v-33v, Mark, *Incipit feliciter Euangelium secundum Marcum. Cap. 1*, *Testimonium Ioannis de Cristo, Acts 12*, incipit, "Venit is qui fortior ... [Mark 1:7] ..."; ff. 34-45v, Luke, *Incipit feliciter Euangelium secundum Lucam, Cap. 1*, *Cur Zacharias ...*, incipit, "Eo quod non credidit uerbis ... [Luke 1:20] ..."; ff. 46-62v, John, *Incipit foeliciter sancti Joannis Euangeliste, cap. I*, *Testimonium Joanis de christo*, incipit, "Hic erat de quo dicebam ... [cf. John 1:15] ..."; ff. 63-74 Acts; ff. 75-90v, Romans, *Incipit foeliciter Epistola pauli ad Romanos, captiulum primum*, *Quid euangelium Christi*, incipit, "Et potentia dei ad salutem omni credenti ... [cf. Romans 1:16] ..."; ff. 91-102v, 1 Corinthians; ff. 103-109v, 2 Corinthians; ff. 110-114, Galatians; ff. 114v-118, Ephesians; ff. 118v-121, Philippians; ff. 121v-123v, Colossians; ff. 124-126, 1 Thessalonians; ff. 126v-127v, 2 Thessalonians; ff. 128-133v, 1 Timothy; ff. 134-136, 2 Timothy; ff. 136v-137v, Titus; ff. 138-144v, Hebrews; ff. 145-149, James; ff. 149-153, 1 Peter; ff. 153-155v, 2 Peter; ff. 155v-158v, 1 John; f. 159, 2 John; f. 159v, *Epistola Judae catholica frater Jacobi, Qui dei nostri gratiam ... Finis* [ends without further text for Jude]";

Loci Communes ex biblia, which can probably best be translated as "Theological Commonplaces from the Bible"; this is a text by an anonymous sixteenth-century theologian; no other copies have been identified, and it is likely this manuscript is the author's personal copy of the text. On this basis, we can suggest that the text was compiled by a theologian in Hall in Tirol in Austria in the first half of the sixteenth century, and probably c. 1525-50.

This text consists of quotations selected from the Gospels, Pauline and Catholic Epistles usually prefaced by short summaries or subject headings. The Letter to Philemon and the third Letter of John are omitted, and the letter of Jude is mentioned only in a heading, without any biblical passages. Although the author chose to call his collection "*loci communes*" from the Bible, echoing the title of a number of sophisticated sixteenth-century theological works, it is difficult to discern the doctrinal concerns underlying the selection. Overall, it seems to be a selection of biblical commonplaces – passages the author considered interesting and important for many different reasons.

The number of passages selected from each biblical book varies. Matthew, for example, is represented by one hundred and fifty-four citations. The first few passages are listed only by their chapter number, together with notes on parallel passages found in other Gospels or other books of the Bible. Most of the remaining passages copied from Matthew, and indeed all the biblical books, begin with short subject notes copied in red. Mark is treated very briefly and includes only ten citations, all beginning with subject headings. Many of the subject headings point to the content of the verse selected, for example, on f. 31v, at the beginning of Mark, we read, "The witness of John the Baptist concerning Christ," and "The difference between baptism by John and Christ" (referring to Mark 1:7 and Mark 1:8). The heading before Luke 24:39 ("a spirit has no flesh and bones that you can see I have") points out the importance of the passage, "Christ after the resurrection was not a spirit." Some of the scriptural passages are actual citations; others are paraphrased. For example, the passage from Mathew 5:17, is paraphrased as "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it," with the heading "Christ, on the Law."

The term "*loci communes*" was originally a technical term used in classical rhetoric, where the orator is directed to find the elements of persuasion, or plausible patterns of an argument, by identifying the *topoi* or *loci*, that is the basic points of a text; universally applicable points were identified as *loci communes*, or commonplaces. This term was applied to theology in the sixteenth century, where the search for truth focused on searching for basic truths; this theological method has been called a "theology of definitions."

Humanist scholars such as Erasmus and Rudolf Agricola argued that an author's work cannot be comprehended unless one finds the basic ideas that dominate his thinking. Erasmus recommended that one should: "Organize for yourself collections of *loci theologici*. You can find in the Bible two hundred and even three hundred such concepts. Each one of these must be supported by biblical passages. *Loci* are little nests in which you place the fruit of your readings" (cited by Pauck, introduction to Melancthon, 1969, pg. 12). Our anonymous author seems to have been following Erasmus's advice very closely.

The classic Protestant example of this approach is the treatise by Melancthon, *Loci communes rerum theologiarum*, which was published in Wittenberg in 1521 (a second, enlarged edition, appeared in 1543); Melancthon sought to identify the "topoi" or "loci" in the Bible, in order to deduce the truths of religion -- the *loci communes* or *loci theologici*. Melancthon's treatise is organized by topics, and is far more than a simple collection of scriptural passages.

The most important Catholic example of this genre is by Johannes Eck (1486-1543), who born Johannes Maier in Eck in Bavaria, where he studied theology. In 1510 he received his doctorate at Freiburg im Breisgau, and accepted a chair of theology in Ingolstadt, where he taught for the remainder of his life. Many of his writings were directed against the teachings of Protestant theologians, and his *Enchiridion locorum communium adversus Lutherum et alios hostes ecclesiae* (*A Handbook of Commonplaces against Luther and Other Enemies of the Church*), which was dedicated to Henry VIII of England, and was published in forty-five editions from 1525-1576, can be seen as the Catholic response to Melancthon's *Loci communes*. In this work, Eck discusses the primacy of the Apostolic See, Scripture, faith and works, confirmation, ordination, confession, communion under both kinds, matrimony, extreme unction, the worship of saints and their images, the Mass, clerical celibacy, and infant baptism, among other topics. As mentioned above, it is a point of interest that his library was eventually acquired by the Ritter-Waldauf-Bibliothek.

ff. 160-175v, Texts added in 1581; ff. 160rv, dated 1581 in red in upper margin ("Anphang den 2 July anno Christi 1581"), *De 12 Apostolis Christi*, incipit, "Petrus et Paulus ... simul anno christi 70 romae, Judas Simon et Jacobus timerunt fratres quomodo sit ..." [Epigram] "Sanguine mandata est ecclesia sanguine ... finis erit [followed by four lines of German]";

ff. 161-173, *De dignitate vita et moribus clericorum precipue uero eorum quibus animarum cura demandata est opusculum ex sacris literis S. Patrum monumentis ecclesiasticisque sanctionibus excerptum per F. Nicolaus Aurificum Senensem Carmelitam theologum eligimus*, c. 1, *De eorum dignitate*, incipit, "Vos elegit dominus ut stetis 2 Paralyt 29 [2 Par 29:11] ... Chrisostomus, Multi sacerdotes ... in cathedra majesti." *Explicit 9 Octobris A[nn]o 81*;

Niccolò Aurifico de Bonfigli, *De dignitate vita et moribus clericorum praecipue vero eorum quibus animarum cura demandata est ospusculum ex sacris literis S. Patrum monumentis ecclesiasticisque sanctionibus excerptum per F. Nicolaum Aurificum Senensem Theologum Carmelitam*, printed in Venice by Franciscus Zilettum in 1570, 1577, 1584, and 1587, here probably including selections from the complete work. Niccolò Aurifico de Bonfigli (1529-c.1603) was a Carmelite monk from Siena. Twenty-seven chapters are copied here including, (2) "De eorum natura," (3) "Quibus studii <?> debeant," (4), "In clerico curam animarum habente quanta scripturarum cognitio necessario <?>,"; the text consists of excerpts from numerous authors including Jerome, Augustine, Council of Trent (on f. 166v), Seneca, Isidore, and others.

ff. 173v-175v, incipit, "i. Quid demens gaudes tantum inuenilibus annis/ Cum fugit volucris laeta iuuenta pede; ii. Discite mortales fragili non fidere formae ...; 22. Quam grates moriens tumulo exhalabis odores/ Gratis odor <..?> cadauer eris" [ff. 176-202v, blank].

Twenty-two epigrams, (incomplete, 23, is copied at the bottom of the folio, but no text has been added); these have not been identified in other sources, and appear to be unique to this manuscript; in each case the Latin verses are followed by verses in German.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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