

NICHOLAS OF DINKELSBÜHL, *Questiones in librum quartum sententiarum, Lectura Mellicensis*  
("Commentary on Book four of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard"); Unidentified Extracts from a  
Commentary on Book four of the *Sentences*  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper  
Southern Germany or Austria, c. 1450-1475

ii (paper) + 550 + ii (paper) folios on paper, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, watermark, balances within a circle with a straight scale, same type as: Online Piccard 116723, Nuremberg 1458; 116713, Wiener Neustadt 1450; 116714, Breslau 1451; 11627, Wiener Neustadt 1460; 116744, Breslau 1450; 116758, Ulm 1453, etc., complete (collation, i<sup>10</sup> ii<sup>14</sup> iii<sup>10</sup> iv<sup>14</sup> v<sup>10</sup> vi<sup>14</sup> vii<sup>10</sup> viii<sup>14</sup> ix<sup>10</sup> x<sup>14</sup> xi<sup>10</sup> xii<sup>14</sup> xiii<sup>10</sup> xiv<sup>14</sup> xv<sup>10</sup> xvi<sup>14</sup> xvii<sup>10</sup> xviii<sup>14</sup> xix<sup>10</sup> xx<sup>14</sup> xxi<sup>10</sup> xxii<sup>14</sup> xxiii<sup>10</sup> xxiv<sup>14</sup> xxv<sup>10</sup> xxvi<sup>14</sup> xxvii<sup>10</sup> xxviii<sup>14</sup> xxix<sup>10</sup> xxx<sup>14</sup> xxxi<sup>10</sup> xxxii<sup>14</sup> xxxiii<sup>10</sup> xxxiv<sup>14</sup> xxxv<sup>10</sup> xxxvi<sup>14</sup> xxxvii<sup>10</sup> xxxviii<sup>14</sup> xxxix<sup>10</sup> xl<sup>14</sup> xli<sup>10</sup> xlii<sup>14</sup> xliii<sup>10</sup> [+one leaf, f. 515, added after 10] xlv<sup>14</sup> xlvi<sup>12</sup> xlvi<sup>12</sup> [-10 through 12, cancelled with no loss of text]), no catchwords or signatures, frame-ruled in blind with single full-length vertical rules only, inside, outside and between the columns, (justification, 198-196 x 133 mm.), written in a cursive gothic bookhand by several scribes, with changes of hand (but not necessarily new scribes) at ff. 49v, column b, 51v, 218v, 219, 223v, 224v, 226v, 408v (?), 449, 504, and 530, in two columns of forty-one lines, majuscules within the text stroked in red, running titles in red and blue, red underlining and paragraph marks, occasional red rubrics, eight- to four-line alternately red or blue and occasionally purplish-red initials, some with simple decoration, ff. 287, 213, 324, eight- to six-line parted red and blue initials, on f. 324 with red, blue and purple infilling and pen decoration, eight-line blue initial, f. 530, with elaborate beading and red pen decoration, twelve-line initial neatly excised from f. 1, with pale pink acanthus with touches of green extending from the initial forming a border in the inner and top margins, in excellent, almost pristine condition, some minor foxing throughout, running titles trimmed on a few folios (see ff. 216-217), ff. 407-443, small stain upper margin, ff. 548-550, inner column of text lightly stained although text remains easily legible. Bound in sixteenth-century stiff vellum, covers turn in slightly to protect fore edge, sewn on four bands, and with decorative blue and yellow herringbone head and tail bands, once with two ties, holes remain front and back covers, spine lettered in an early hand in ink, "Nicol. Dinkelbsp. Supra Sententiarum," shelf-mark, added in ink in another hand, "C 20," in excellent condition apart from some soiling, covers slightly warped, flyleaves have been folded and creased. Dimensions 275 x 200 mm.

This is a physically impressive copy (large and notably thick) of an important, unpublished commentary by Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, copied by a number of accomplished scribes in easily legible formal scripts. This commentary has rarely been available for sale in the last century (three manuscripts in the Schoenberg Database and TM 566 on this site). Most copies are in public libraries in Austria and Germany, with only one recorded in the United States. The second, shorter commentary is still unidentified and calls for further study.

## PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of the script and decoration suggest an origin in Southern Germany or Austria in the third quarter of the fifteenth century; the watermark (a balance within a circle) was found in this

region during this period, documented in Vienna, Nuremberg, and Ulm between 1450-1458, although it is also found later (for example, Online Piccard 116760, Frankfurt am Main, 1486), and in Breslau, Poland (Online Piccard 116714, 116744, etc.). The opening initial was unfortunately cut out, but the delicate attenuated pink acanthus still remaining in the border is similar to decorative motifs found in Southern German and Austrian manuscripts such as British Library, Burney MS 272, possibly from Melk, c. 1473, and Egerton MS 1895, from Regensburg, 1465 (see British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, Online Resources).

This is a handsome manuscript. Judging from the acanthus still remaining on f. 1, the initial that was excised was of high quality. The manuscript was copied by a number of scribes, most of them quite skilled, in a formal version of a cursive gothic bookhand, and the layout of the manuscript is remarkably consistent throughout, despite the changes in hand. The original owner and user of this manuscript is, however, something of a mystery. The lack of signs of use is quite puzzling – there are a few scribal corrections (for example, ff. 347rv, 507v), nota marks (ff. 243v, 244v, and 448), marginal comments (ff. 420, 423, 424, 425rv, 426, 426v), and paragraph marks added in black ink (ff. 442v and f. 448v) – but apart from these traces of use, the lengthy text is virtually pristine. Given the nature of the text, a commentary one would expect was read and owned mostly by theology students and teachers, more signs of active use would seem natural. Perhaps this manuscript was commissioned by a prelate, after his active student days (at the University of Vienna?) were over, or commissioned as a gift to a monastery without an active tradition of scholarship, and rarely used.

2. The shelf-mark, "C 20," added to the binding suggests institutional ownership in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.
3. Inside front cover, seventeenth-century hand, "Nicolai in 4or Sententiarum."
4. Modern dealer's notes in pencil, inside front cover.

## TEXT

ff. 1-529v, [I]n nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen. Cum desiderarem vestris caritatibus in aliquo deservire et illud exposuissem venerabilibus patribus ...; [Distinctio 1, pars 1, q. 1] In prima distinctio magister tractat de sacramentis in generali. Propter quod sit questio prima talis, Utrum in quolibet hominum statu fuerint aliqua sacramenta ..."; f. 153, [D. 10, q. 1] incipit, "... Utrum corpus christi et eius sangwis vere et realiter sub speciebus panis et vini post consecrationem contineantur ..."; f. 204v, [D. 13, q. 1] incipit, "... Utrum omnes sacerdos posset consecrare ... qui corpus suum mysticum deo patri coniungit et ecclesiae triumphanti"; f. 213, [D. 14], incipit, "Post hec de penitentia etc. Postquam magister determinavit de sacramento baptismi confirmationis .... Utrum penitentia necessario requiratur ad delectionem peccati mortalis ..."; f. 307v, [D. 18], incipit, "Hic queri solet ..., Utrum in ecclesia sit clavis ..."; f. 525v, [D. 50, q. 1], incipit, "... An omnis dampnatorum voluntas sit mala ... et fortitudo per infinita seculorum secula. Amen." *Explicit secunda pars quarti libri sententiarum edita per egregium ac eximium doctorem Nicolaum de dinkelspubel*;

Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, *Questiones in librum quartum sententiarum* ("Commentary on Book Four of the *Sentences* by Peter Lombard"), in the version known as the *Lectura Mellicensis*, listed in Stegmüller, *Repertorium* (1947), no. 569, and analyzed in Madre, 1965, pp. 99-121. This lengthy commentary on Book Four of the *Sentences* was

the most popular of Nicholas's commentaries and may survive in as many as 200 manuscripts (see Madre, fewer are listed in Stegmüller). There is no edition, nor has this text been printed.

ff. 530-550, incipit, "Utrum in quolibet hominum stau fuerint aliqua sacramenta [Petrus Lombard, Sent. IV, D. 8, qu. 1]"; [commentary] incipit, "Distingwntur duo status scilicet nature integre et nature corrupte. Et tria tempora scilicet legis nature ..., Utrum sacramenta veteris lege suo tempore ..., Utrum sacramenta nole conserant gratiam..."; f. 530, *Circa ccx*, incipit, "Primum dubium an omne sacramentum sit signum ..."; f. 530, *Quomodo sacramenta nole*, incipit, "Quoniam sacramenta nole ..."; f. 530, *Circa secundam partem prime distinctionis*, incipit, "Vtrum circumcisio fuit in remedium orginali peccati ..."; f. 530v, *Distinctio prima*, incipit, "Contra quo non est ex mutabilite[?]..."; f. 530v, *Distinctio secunda*, incipit, "Utrum tantum septem sunt sacramenta ... , Respdonditur quod solum septem .."; f. 530v, *Dubitatur contra textum* , incipit, "Dubitatur dicit magister quod aliqua sacramenta sunt instituta in remedium ..."; f. 530v, *Dubitatur contra textum circa secundam partem distinctionem*, incipit, "Utrum baptismus iohannis fuerit sacramentum ..."; ... f. 550, *Distinctio 50*, incipit, "Dubium an omnes dampantorum voluntas scilicet mala ... de qua magister loquitur in fine libri etc."; [f. 550v, blank].

Brief unidentified Commentary on Book Four of the *Sentences*, probably extracts from a longer text; the *Lectura Mellicensis* circulated in numerous shorter versions and as excerpts by a number of different authors; several of these share similar incipits with this text, but more research is needed for a meaningful comparison; see Madre, 1965, pp. 122-125, and Stegmüller, *Repertorium* (1947), nos. 577-580.

Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl composed at least three commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. We lack modern scholarly editions of all of these commentaries, and indeed, none of them has ever been printed. All versions of Nicholas's commentaries are closely related to commentaries by his teacher, Henry of Langstein, and also to commentaries by contemporary theologians lecturing at the University of Vienna. Most of this material is largely unexplored. The result is a fascinating, but complicated, textual situation, and all manuscripts of his commentaries are thus of interest to scholars.

Born in Dinkelsbühl in Bavaria c. 1360 and died in Vienna in 1433, Nicolas studied at the University of Vienna, where he earned his Master of Arts degree in 1389. He lectured on the Bible in 1396-1398, and then on the *Sentences* in 1398-1402 (his first Commentary, known as the *Questiones communes*). In 1409 he became a Master in Theology, and probably in 1409-1413, lectured on the *Sentences* a second time (the *Questiones magistrales*, which survive in at least two versions). In 1421-1424, Nicholas lectured on the *Sentences* a third time, while staying temporarily at the famous Benedictine Abbey at Melk, the center of Austrian monastic reform. His career was an illustrious one, both within academic circles and among the broader movement of religious reform during his lifetime. He served as rector of University of Vienna, represented Duke Albert V of Austria at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), and is known for his involvement in the monastic reform movement centering around Melk. In addition to his Commentaries on the *Sentences*, he was the author of numerous works including biblical commentaries, very popular and widely disseminated sermon collections, and numerous short theological and pastoral works (see Madre, 1965).

Despite the centrality of Commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* in the intellectual history of the Middle Ages, they have often been neglected by scholars. Recent scholarship has begun to reverse this trend (see especially Evans and Rosemann, 2002, 2009), but fifteenth-century commentaries on the *Sentences* still represent a largely unexplored area of research. The commentaries by the so-called "Vienna group" –

Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, Peter of Pulkau, Arnold of Seehausen, and John Berwart, scholars that followed the first generation of thinkers at the University of Vienna, especially Henry Langstein (1325-1397) and Henry Totting von Oyta (c. 1330-1396) – are characterized by a particularly complicated and inter-related textual tradition. These authors borrowed heavily from each other and recycled each other's ideas. Their commentaries deserve careful study (Madre, 1965, p. 93, and Schabel and Bakker, 2002, p. 462). Given Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl's interest in church reform, it seems likely that his commentaries on the fourth book of the *Sentences* with their focus on the Sacraments may prove to be of particular interest.

Peter Lombard (c. 1100-c. 1160-4) wrote the *Sentences* in the mid-twelfth century: it is a theological compilation of different *sententia* (opinions or judgments) of the Church Fathers concerning difficult biblical passages. Often the authorities on a given question did not agree, and Peter tried to resolve the matter. The *Sentences* became the fundamental textbook for the study of theology, and as such it was required reading in theology faculties in the medieval universities across Europe. Apart from the Bible, there is no theological work more commented on than the *Sentences*. 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 commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences* discusses God, the Sacraments and the Four Last Things (Death, Last Judgment, Hell, and Heaven).

## LITERATURE

Bakker, Paul J. J. M. and Chris Schabel. "Sentences Commentaries of the Later Fourteenth century," in Evans and Rosemann, 2002, 2009, volume 1, pp. 425-464.

Colish, Marcia. *Peter Lombard*, Leiden and New York, Brill, 1994.

Evans, G. R. and Phillipp W. Roseman, eds. *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard: Current Research*, 2 vols., Leiden, Brill, 2002, and 2009.

Madre, Alois. *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl: Leben und Schriften, ein Beitrag zur theologischen Literaturgeschichte*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 40, Münster, Westfalen, Äschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965.

Peter Lombard. *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4, Grottaferrata (Rome), Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971-1981.

Peter Lombard. *The Sentences*, tr. by Giulio Silano, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2007-2008.

Rosemann, Phillipp. *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's Sentences*, Peterborough, Ontario and Orchard Park, New York, Broadview Press, 2007.

Stegmüller, Friedrich. *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, Würzburg, 1947.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Watermarks, Piccard Online

<http://www.piccard-online.de/ergebnis1.php>

British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts

Egerton MS 1895

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=2752&CollID=28&NStart=1895>

Burney MS 272

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=1498&CollID=18&NStart=272>

A. Madre. "Nikolaus v. Dinkelsbühl," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Stuttgart, Metzler, 1977-1999, vol. 6, col. 1178, in *Brepolis Medieval Encyclopaedias - Lexikon des Mittelalters Online*

<http://www.brepolis.net/>

The Internet Guide to Master Peter Lombard

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

COMMBASE: An Electronic Database of Medieval Commentators on Aristotle and Peter Lombard's Sentences

<http://www.ou.edu/class/med-sci/Commbase.htm>

Bibliotheca Augustana, *Sententiarum libri IV*

[http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost12/PetrusLombardus/pet\\_s400.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost12/PetrusLombardus/pet_s400.html)

TM 536