

PETRUS LOMBARDUS, *Liber Sententiarum IV* [Four Books of the Sentences]

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Northern Italy, c. 1240-60

*i* (parchment) + 184 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, complete (collation  $i-x^{12}$   $xi^{14}$   $xii-xiii^8$   $xiv-xv^{12}$   $xvi^{12}$  [-9 and 10 after f. 182, cancelled blanks]), ruled in ink with the top and bottom horizontal rules full across, single vertical bounding lines, (ff. 131-150, with the two, bottom two and line 10, 19 and 28 full across, and with additional single rules full across in the upper, used for running titles, and lower margins), some prickings top and bottom margins (justification 125 x 84-83 mm.), written below the top line in a careful gothic bookhand in two columns of thirty-eight lines, chapter lists in four columns, red rubrics, red and blue running titles, one-line alternately red and blue initials with simple pen decoration, two-line alternately red and blue initials with contrasting pen decoration (f. 101v, including a dragon's head), FIVE three- to eight-line BRIGHTLY COLORED PAINTED INITIALS (orange, dark red or both), at the beginning of each book and the opening prologue, some infilled with green leaves encircling a bright floral motif on a blue, green and yellow, or red and blue grounds edged in orange or yellow, all with white highlights, initials on f. 3 and 115v followed by the opening words of the text in decorative two- to three-line alternately red and blue majuscules with contrasting pen decoration, in excellent condition apart from some worming on the opening folios (no loss of text). Bound in an attractive fifteenth- or early-sixteenth century French binding of brown leather over wooden boards, blind stamped with two sets of double rules forming a rectangular outer frame, with additional double rules in a lattice pattern in the center panel, interspersed with small stamps placed in the corners of the outer panel, and in three rows across the center panel: fleur-de-lys [see Gid, 1984, plate 7, lis 30 and 31], face of Jesus, stag [similar to Gid, an 10, but larger], maltese cross, and an armorial shield with fleur-de-lys, spine with three raised bands, green head and tail bands, front pastedown and flyleaf from a single large late fourteenth- or fifteenth-century document in French, in a cursive gothic script, twenty-seven long lines, now trimmed on all four sides (no date or signatories remain), with some restoration, severely cracked along both sides of the spine, and partially detached, bottom of the spine missing, both front and back covers somewhat worn, now fastens front to back with strap and pin fastenings, two pins, lower board, straps are replacements. Dimensions 192 x 133 mm.

The *Sentences* was the most important medieval textbook on theology. Surviving in numerous manuscripts, they are available only sporadically on the market (seven have changed hands in the last 30 years, some multiple times). This unusually small example, adorned with very colorful painted initials, is bound in an elegant blind-stamped French binding. Copied in Italy, it includes evidence of ownership by a monk studying in Paris, and then by a monastery dedicated to St. Martin (probably in Southwestern France); in modern times it was part of the famous Hans Fürstenberg collection.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Northern Italy in the middle of the thirteenth century, c. 1240-60; some elements of its decoration and penwork suggest that it may have been copied in the Northeast in Venice or Padua (cf. the small-format Bibles from Padua and Venice, including TM 27, sold on this site, and Avril and Gousset, 1984, nos. 4-8, and Philadelphia Free Library, MS Lewis E.36), but the question is still an open one, and further research might discover closer comparisons from elsewhere in Northern Italy. Most surviving manuscripts of this text are large manuscripts. This is an unusually small example, close in format to these contemporary pocket Bibles from Padua and Venice.

2. Belonged to brother Mathew, probably in the second half of the fourteenth, based on the evidence of the script in this note, who obtained the book in Paris: f. 183v, "Hunc librum habuit parisiis frater Matheus <fecdati?> monachus sancti martini[?] in canaco annis mulits studens" ["in canaco," possibly Chenac, today Chenac-Saint-Seurin-d'Uzet in Southwestern France (Charente-Maritime)]. There was an Abbey of St. Martin at the nearby town of Arces-sur-Gironde that was a priory of the Abbaye de Vaux-sur-Mer, founded in the eleventh century (and there were churches dedicated to St. Marin at Chenac itself and nearby in Saujon).
3. There are additional fourteenth-century notes below this inscription; possibly pledge notes (*cautiones*); books were valuable possessions and were frequently used to guarantee loans.
4. Belonged to the Abbey of St. Martin (f. 184, "Iste liber pertinent abbacie sancti martini"); fourteenth-century inscription, f. 184, and still in an institutional collection (probably the Abbey of St Martin?) in the next century, "CC.XI, Quattuor libri Sententiarum," f. 183v.
5. Sold in Paris, 1914, Librairie Théophile Belin, *Livres des XVe & XVIe siècles dans leurs reliures originales*, p. 82, cat. no. 214.
6. "Ex Musaeo Hans Fürstenberg"; bookplate, front flyleaf, f. ii verso; Hans Fürstenberg (1890-1982) was a Jewish banker and noted collector of books and bindings, who escaped to France in 1937. In France he adopted the name, Jean Furstenberg. His collection – one of the finest private collections of his day -- was housed at the Château de Beaumesnil in Normandy. It was confiscated by the Nazis during the war, and partly lost, but many of the books, including this manuscript, were returned to the chateau after the war (Schoenberg Database 224885). The chateau and the collection passed to the Furstenberg-Beaumesnil foundation after his death in 1982 (see Breslauer, 1960 and 1982).

## TEXT

ff. 1-181, [prologue book one], incipit, "Cupientes aliquid de penuria ac tenuitate nostra ..."; f. 1v, [capitula], *I distinctio*, incipit, "Omnis doctrina est de rebus vel de signis ..."; f. 3 [book one], *De rebus communiter agit*, incipit, "Ueteris ac noue legis contientiam diligenti ..."; f. 60v, [prologue book two], incipit, "Que ad myserium diuine unitatis ..."; f. 61 [capitula], incipit, "Dvod [sic, for Quod] unum est principium rerum ..."; f. 62v, [prologue copied again, see above f. 60v]; f. 62v, [book two], *Unum esse rerum principium ut quidam putauerunt*, incipit, "Creationem rerum insinuans scriptura ..."; f. 114v, [prologue book three, incorrect rubric designates this the end of the second book], incipit, "Iam nunc hiis intelligendis ... reuelante ualeamus," *Explicit liber secundus [sententiarum?]*, f. 114v, [prologue book three, continued], incipit, "Sic enim rationis ordo postulat ..."; f. 114v [capitula], *Incipit capitula tertii libri*, incipit, "Quare filius carnem assumpsit ..."; f. 115v [book three], *Incipit liber tertius de incarnatione uerbi, D. I*, incipit, "Cum uenit igitur plenitudo temporis ut ait apostolus misit deus filium suum factum de muliere ..."; f. 150v, [prologue book four], incipit, "His tractatis que ad doctrinam ..."; f. 151, [capitula], *Incipit quartus liber de sacramentis*, incipit, "Quid sit sacramentum ..."; f. 153, [book four], *Incipit liber quartus*, incipit, "Samaritanus enim vulnerato approprians ... per media ad pedes usque uia duce peruenit."

Petrus Lombardus, *Liber Sententiarum IV* (Four Books of the Sentences), critical edition Ignatius Brady, 1971-1981; English translation, Silano, 2007-10; outline of the Latin text, with selected chapters, available online (Online Resources). The number of surviving manuscripts testifies to the importance of this text. There is no complete census, but the editor of the critical edition, which was based on ten twelfth-century manuscripts, the oldest dated 1158, states that he knew of more than three hundred copies, but estimated that the actual number may be closer to 600 or even 900 surviving manuscripts (Brady, 1971-1981, vol. 1, p. 129-136\*; Stegmüller, 1947, lists 178 manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries). At least nineteen editions were printed in the fifteenth century, dozens more in the sixteenth; new commentaries on the text were still being written in the eighteenth century.

f. 181 [Notes added at the end of the text], *Hec sunt oppiniones in quibus magister a modernis non tenetur*, incipit, "Quod hec nomina trinus et trinitatis in divinis . . . ut cum dicimus tres personas non significatur . . . , distinctio xxiv, liber primo; Quod caritatis non que diligamus deum et proximum est, distinctio xvii, liber primo . . . Quod deus potuit dare potentiam creandi alicui creaturis, d [no number listed], liber quarto."

A list of eleven propositions from the *Sentences* that "modern" masters no longer agree with added neatly but informally below the text probably in the fourteenth century. Similar lists appear to be found in Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 756, and Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 463.

Although the *Sentences* was the basic theology text for the University of Paris, there were occasional objections raised to specific passages. To cite two examples: Walter of St. Victor stated that there was a proposal to condemn the *Sentences* at the Lateran council of 1179, but other matters prevented a discussion of the proposal; and in the thirteenth century the University of Paris refused its assent to eight propositions, all of a highly technical character. It would be of interest to compare the objections raised in the thirteenth century with the list in this manuscript.

Peter Lombard (c. 1100-1160) was the first truly magisterial teacher of the emerging schools of Paris, which were to become the greatest of all medieval universities. The *Sentences*, his most important work, date from the middle of the twelfth century: it is a systematic presentation of Christian theology constructed from a compilation of different *sententia* (opinions or judgments) of the Church Fathers. The *Sentences* became the fundamental textbook for the study of theology, and as such it was required reading in theology faculties in medieval Universities across Europe. Apart 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.

Born in Northern Italy in the region of Novara, near the end of the eleventh or in the early twelfth century, Peter Lombard probably studied at Bologna. In the 1130s he left Italy and travelled to France to study, first at Reims, and then c. 1136 in Paris. In Paris, Peter had the opportunity of attending lectures by the preeminent theologians of his day, Hugh of St.-Victor (d. 1141), and Abelard (d. 1142), and both were important influences on his thought. In the 1140s he was himself teaching at the Cathedral School of Notre-Dame, a position he held until 1159 when he became Bishop of Paris. He was the author of numerous important works including Commentaries on the Glossed Psalter and Pauline Epistles, but it is the *Sentences* that were without doubt his most important and influential work. The exact date of their composition is not known. The earliest dated manuscript is 1158, and scholars have dated the

work variously to the early to mid-1150s – no doubt the distillation of the decades Peter had spent teaching theology.

De Ghellinck famously saw the *Sentences* as one of the paramount achievements of the rich development of theology stretching back for almost a century, and as a work that influenced every subsequent medieval theologian (as cited in Silano, p. xiii). Peter's great achievement was to gather together the whole body of theological doctrine into one systematic whole – it is a long work (over 1200 pages in the modern critical edition), but Peter saw it as a time-saver, as he explains in his prologue:

"In a short work are brought together the opinions [*sententiae*] of the fathers, whose testimonies are included so that there is no need for any researcher to open too many books; for such a person the compact, small size of my work provides without effort whatever he needs to find. Furthermore, in this exercise I desire not only a devout reader, but also an open-minded critic, especially where so important an inquiry after the truth is involved. My wish is that this question may have as many finders of the truth as it has opponents! Now, so that what one is searching for may more easily come to view, I have prefaced what follows with titles used to identify the chapters of each of the books."

It is divided into four books: God as the Trinity (with 210 chapters); Creation, including the creation of angels and man, and the Fall (269 chapters); Christology – the Incarnation of the Word, virtues, vices and commandments (164 chapters); and the Sacraments and the last things (290 chapters). Peter divided each book into numerous chapters, and included tables of chapters before each book. He specifically states in his prologue, just cited, that he wants this to be a work that can be easily searched, a reflection of the needs of busy masters and students in the urban schools and new Universities. His concern for the organization and presentation of his text is also reflected in the marginal apparatus that included identification of authors cited and their works, as well as additional subject headings (Brady, 1962, and critical edition). This manuscript includes subject headings and names of authors, copied formally by the scribe, for only parts of the text (book II, ff. 87v-89, 100v-102v; book III, ff. 116-138; book IV, ff. 156v-174).

In the early thirteenth century, perhaps c. 1223-1227 by Alexander of Hales, another set of divisions was added, dividing each book into a number of larger divisions, or distinctions (which were in turn divided into the chapters used by Peter). Note that in this manuscript the distinctions are numbered in the chapter lists and in the margins, but the chapters are usually unnumbered (an exception on ff. 3-4v, where a later hand numbered the opening chapters of book 1). The *distinctiones* were not fixed in thirteenth century; Brady gives the example of Bonaventure, who wanted Book II, distinction xxvii to begin at an earlier chapter. In our manuscript (and in many post-Bonaventure commentaries) the older division by Alexander of Hales is found at the chapter beginning, "Hic videndum est" (see f. 94; see also book I, d. xl, f. 51v, and book III, d. xii, f. 125, all beginning with the early version of Alexander Hales; Brady, pp. 104-106 and p. 116, and note that book two has 44 distinctions).

## ILLUSTRATION

The opening prologue, and each of the four books begin with very attractive painted initials, notable for their bright color palette; the initials themselves are a rather bright orange, dark red, or both colors, placed on contrasting, brightly colored grounds – blue, green and yellow, or red and blue, all with tiny white highlights, and edged with contrasting colors, usually orange. Most of the initials are infilled with equally brightly colored stylized green leaves or stems that form a

circle around an abstract floral motif, generally orange. The initials for books one, f. 3, and book three, f. 115v, are the largest, equivalent to 8-lines of text, and are followed by the opening words of the text copied in alternately red and blue capitals with contrasting pen decoration. The remaining initials are smaller, 7- to 3-line: prologue, f. 1; book two, f. 62v; book four, f. 153. The numerous chapters begin with alternately red and blue initials, with contrasting pen decoration. The initial on f. 101v includes a dragon's head, and many include points that suggest a bird's beak (see for example, ff. 133v-134). No exact parallels for this style have been identified, but the fondness for bright colors and the style of the pen initials suggest Northern Italy (see also, Provenance, above).

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

The Internet Guide to Master Peter Lombard  
<http://www.franciscan-archive.org/lombardus/>

Bibliotheca Augustana, Petri Lombardi *Sententiarum libri IV* (outline of contents and selected chapters in Latin)  
[http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost12/PetrusLombardus/pet\\_s000.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost12/PetrusLombardus/pet_s000.html)

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