

PAUL OF VENICE, *Summa philosophiae naturalis* (Summa of natural philosophy)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

Northern Italy (perhaps Padua), 1436

143 folios on paper, watermark a horn suspended horizontally by a cord with a loop at the top centered vertically on a chain line, similar to Picard 119594 and 119607 (both Padua 1420) and Picard 119602-119604 (Udine 1423 and 1429), modern penciled foliation 1-143 upper right corner rectos, incomplete, lacking probably 36-44 folios at the beginning, 2 folios between present ff. 1 and 2, and at least one quire at end (present collation: i² [singletons from the previous lost quire] ii-ix¹² x¹⁰ [-10 with minor loss of text] xi-xiii¹²), horizontal catchwords in ornamental red ink cartouches lower right corner last versos, present quires ii-iv with contemporary signatures lower left corner last versos 4^o sexternus-6^o sexternus, single full-length vertical and horizontal bounding lines ruled lightly, often invisibly, in lead, prickings occasionally visible in lower margins (justification: 185 x 150 mm), written by a single hand in a small highly abbreviated semi-cursive script in 2 columns of ca. 40 lines, red paragraph signs in text, running section titles in red in top margins, a few rubrics in red, 4-line Lombard initials alternating red and blue each with a tiny guide letter in brown ink and a small stroke of red or blue to indicate which color the initial should be, a few with pen-flourishing in the opposite color, 4 large initial spaces of 12-15 lines, two empty (ff. 39, 65), one with a large Lombard T in black ink [f. 19], two with brown pen-and-ink drawings (f. 1, f. 108, fore-edge margins slightly frayed front and back, slight discoloration to most margins, dampstains to upper margins of many leaves often invading the text which remains legible, initial on f. 1 rubbed and patched, ff. 1-3 with holes patched and small losses to text. ORIGINAL ITALIAN BINDING of brown leather over wooden boards blind-tooled to a simple pattern of rectangle, lozenges and circles, four clasps (now lacking) catching on rear cover (outlines of shaped catchplates visible in the leather), originally 18 small round bosses (9 now lacking, the others represented by nails), nails on rear cover once fastened a rectangular titling piece, a few wormholes, some wear and discoloration, rebaked and old repairs to the spine (original pastedowns removed), in modern blue cloth box. Dimensions 290 x 215 mm.

This manuscript fits in a category of "selfies," that is, manuscripts copied by the owner for his or her own use, in this case by a member of the Order of Augustinian Hermits. It is a newly discovered manuscript of an influential text by one of the most important medieval philosophers, who was an Augustinian friar, like the copyist who signed and dated the work. The long and carefully defined program of education of the Augustinian friars was intended to produce knowledgeable teachers and preachers, and study of this manuscript promises to elucidate that program and the role of student copyists in creating Augustinian libraries.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was copied in 1436 by Alexander de Saxto, who signed and dated it on f. 64v: "Fratris Alexandri de Saxto ordinis heremitarum sancti Augustini. 1436" (Brother Alexander of Saxto [perhaps Sesto in the province of Bolzano] of the order of Augustinian hermits). The date also occurs on f. 39. The horn motif of the watermark is widely attested in Italian manuscripts of the fifteenth century, especially in northern Italy, but the examples in this manuscript are closest to watermarks found in manuscripts from Padua and Udine. Although the copyist is not otherwise recorded

(not in Bénédictins de Bouveret, 1982, or Krämer (Online Resources); not indexed in Kristeller, 1963-1997), it seems most likely that he worked in Padua, where Paulus Venetus taught over a number of years. His name, however, does not appear in Zonta, suggesting that he may have been associated with a *studium* of the order rather than with the university. The modest script, together with minor inconstancies in the formulation and placement of titles and rubrics, suggest an ambitious but relatively inexperienced scribe, and it seems very likely that this was copied by Alexander for his own use.

2. Evidence of use include manicules and marginal annotations in several contemporary hands, a few in shaped cartouches.
3. A penciled note in the upper right-hand corner of f. 143 reads: "Schluss 2/III.1920" (End, March 2, 1920), apparently the mark of a German dealer, who also supplied the penciled foliation.

TEXT

ff. 1-18, incipit, "Finita parte prima, in qua de motu agitur [illegible] ad motus [illegible] descendens iuxta [illegible] ... determinans sibi quatuor qualitates primas ut lapis lignum plante// [ends incompletely] [f. 2] [begins incompletely] "///sibi simile arguit perfectionem sed mundus totalis est ens perfectissimum ... Quare oportet ipsum descendere in propria regione, quia gravia appetunt esse sub levioribus et leviora super graviora ergo." *Explicit secunda pars summe naturalium compilata per reverendum doctorem sacrae theologiae dignissimum magistrum Paulum de Venetiis ordinis fratrum heremitarum sancti Augustini et sequitur tertia pars eiusdem, scilicet liber de generatione et corruptione. Explicit liber de caelo et mundo. Incipit liber de generatione et corruptione*"; [f. 18v, blank];

Book II of Paulus Venetus, *Summa de philosophiae naturalis, Liber de caelo et mundo* (On the heavens and the earth). The incipit is partially illegible because of damage to the first lines of the first column of f. 1; the text in the printed edition of 1503 reads: "Finita parte prima in qua de motu agitur in communi iam ad motus speciales descendens iuxta processum Aristotelis..." Owing to the lacuna between f. 1 and f. 2, the latter part of chapter 2, all of chapter 3, and the first part of chapter 4 are missing; f. 2 picks up near the end of chapter 4 and the text continues to the end of Book II. Book I of the treatise, on physics, is not now present in this manuscript.

ff. 19-39, incipit, "Tractaturus de generatione et corruptione elemetorum per actionem et paxionem qualitatuum primarum provenienti ex maiori et minori intensione et remissione illarum ... sicut contingit de duobus agentibus eque fortibus facientibus unam et eandem actionem quibus debet correspondens una potentia," *Et sic est finis huius tertie partis. Explicit tertia pars summe naturalium, egregii et famosissimi doctoris magistri Pauli de Venetiis ordinis fratrum heremitarum sancti Augustini. Incipit consequenter liber methaurorum eiusdem. Explicit liber De generatione et corruptione. Incipit liber Methaurorum. 1436,*

Book III of Paulus Venetus, *Summa de philosophiae naturalis, Liber de generatione et corruptione* (On the generation of animals).

ff. 39-64v, incipit, "Necesse est mundum hunc inferiorem esse continuum superioribus lationibus ut omnis virtus eius gubernetur inde inquit Aristoteles libro Methaurorum in quo de impressionibus agitur de quibus in hac quarta parte est summatim dicendum ... De apostemate autem dicitur quod non fit mollius ratione digestionis sed ratione humiditatis superflue continue habundantis et supervenientis quare ergo etc.," *Explicit quarta pars summae naturalium egregii doctoris*

magistri Pauli de Venetiis, ordinis fratrum heremitarum sancti Augustini. Fratris Alexandri de Saxto ordinis heremitarum sancti Augustini. 1436. Incipit liber de anima parvus et bonus;

Book IV of Paulus Venetus, *Summa de philosophiae naturalis, Liber methaurorum* [i.e., *Meteorologicarum*] (On meteorology).

ff. 65r-107v, incipit, "Quoniam scientia de anima est de numero bonorum honorabilium singulas disciplinasque excedens naturales ex parte subiecti et ex parte demonstrationis ut testatur Aristoteles ... ad quartum negatur consequentia nam licet intelligentia aliqua cognoscat aliud per motum caeli scilicet cognoscat se esse causam illius non tamen propter hoc cognoscit illud per essentiam suam, sed bene per speciem intelligibilem/" [ends incompletely];

Book V of Paulus Venetus, *Summa de philosophiae naturalis, Liber de anima* (On the soul); now lacking a few lines at the end.

ff. 108-143v, incipit, "Naturalium ultima pars difficultates methaphysicas summatim colligens ab esse et essentia initium summit ... Istam divisionem ponit commentator 6 Physicorum dicens Motus generationis et corruptionis est compositus ex transmutatione in qualitate et transmutatione in substantia. Et transmutatio illa quae est in substantia non est in/" [ends incompletely].

Book VI of Paulus Venetus, *Summa de philosophiae naturalis, Liber de difficultatibus methaphysicis* (On metaphysics). The text breaks off near the end of chapter 29 (of 43 chapters) of Book VI, the final book of this work. Although the catchword for the next quire ("tempore et secundum illam") appears at the foot of f. 143v, the final quire or quires are no longer present in the manuscript.

It is probable that this manuscript once included all six books of the *Summa philosophiae naturalis* by Paulus Venetus. The work was printed in three incunable editions, in Venice and in Milan, both in 1476, and in Perugia in 1477 (ISTC, author and title listed as Paulus Venetus, *Expositio librorum naturalium Aristotelis*). There is still no modern critical edition, but a convenient text for reference is Octavianus Scotus edition, Venice in 1503, available in a modern facsimile reprint (Paulus, 1503). The approximate lengths of the lacunae in the present manuscript were calculated by comparing the column lengths in this printed text with column lengths in the manuscript.

Paul of Venice (1369-1429), also known as Paulo Nicoletti Veneto, was born in Udine of a family with Venetian connections. At age 14, probably in 1383, he joined the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine (OESA) at the convent of San Stefano in Venice. After completing his novitiate there, he studied at the Augustinian convent in Padua from 1387 until 1390 and then at the *studium* of the order in Oxford 1390-1393. From 1395 he taught at the University of Padua, later teaching at Siena (1420-1424) and Perugia (1424-1428) and lecturing in Bologna (1424). In 1428 he returned to Padua (Conti, 2002, Conti, 2014, Conti, 1996, Perreiah, 1986, Perreiah, 1967). When he passed away the following year, he was buried in the Augustinian church in Padua (Chiesa degli Eremitani), where his tombstone can still be found (illustrated in Bettini, color plate X). During his career, he also held administrative positions within the Augustinian order and, on behalf of the Republic of Venice, went on diplomatic missions to the court of Hungary and to Cracow, Poland.

His importance to the history of medieval philosophy would be difficult to exaggerate. Alessandra Conti has observed, "Paul of Venice was the most important Italian thinker of his times, and one of the most prominent and interesting logicians of the Middle Ages" (Conti, Online Resources). Paul wrote many philosophical and theological treatises, including commentaries on works of Aristotle and also works on logic, one of which, the *Logica parva* (Small logic) an elementary account, became a standard textbook. His *Summa philosophiae naturalis* was begun probably between 1405 and 1410 and completed at the latest by 1417, as attested by the ownership inscription in Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS lat. VI 316 (2611), which contains the complete text of all six books (Perreiah, 1986, p. 69, n. 240). The topics are taken from works of Aristotle: *Physica*, *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *Meteorologica*, *De anima*, and *Metaphysica*. The treatises themselves, however, are more than simple commentaries. Rather, Paul engages with the principal philosophical concerns suggested by each of these topics and during his own discussion makes reference to the variety of philosophical positions proposed in his own time, citing, pro or con, a number of authorities, including Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Walter Burley, and others.

In his census of manuscripts of all of Paul's works Perreiah lists 52 codices, not including the present one, for a total of 53 manuscripts (Perreiah, 1986). This is equal to the number of surviving manuscripts of Paul's *Lectura super librum Posteriorum Analyticorum* (also 53 manuscripts) and exceeded only by the 81 surviving manuscripts of the *Logica parva*. Of the 53 manuscripts of the *Summa* about half contain only some of the six books, although it is not clear how much of this is due to selection and how much to mutilation. Most are preserved in Italian libraries; three are located in the United States: Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS Marston 32, dated 1473, containing all six books; New York, Columbia University, Butler Library, Western MS 33, dated 1455, containing Books I, part of III, and V; and Los Angeles, University of California Research Library, MS *170/322, dated 1421, contents not specified. According to Perreiah, more than half of the manuscripts bear precise dates in the fifteenth century. To judge from colophons reported by Kristeller (1963-1997), the precisely dated manuscripts also name a copyist, as does our manuscript. The order of Augustinian friars, to which both the copyist of this manuscript and the author of the work belonged, had a long and carefully defined program of education intended to produce knowledgeable teachers and preachers. Taken together, the number of surviving manuscripts of the work and the high proportion of dated and signed manuscripts suggests that the *Summa philosophiae naturalis* quickly became a standard text in the educational program of the mendicant orders and that individual students were expected to make copies for their own use.

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