Commentary on PETER LOMBARD’S *First Book of the Sentences*, related to PAULUS VENETUS, *Super primum sententiarum Johannis de Ripa Lecturae Abbreviatio*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper and parchment

Northern Italy, 1479 (?)

This is an important manuscript, one that opens up complex textual issues warranting further study. The manuscript presents an abbreviated version of the lengthy commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter the Lombard by the fourteenth-century Franciscan theologian, Johannes de Ripa. In fact, our text corresponds most closely with the version of Ripa by Paul of Venice, written shortly before 1402 at Padua and known in a single manuscript, which was the basis of the modern edition.

**PROVENANCE**

1. The script and decoration suggest that this manuscript was copied in northern Italy in the fifteenth century; an inscription on the front flyleaf states that the manuscript dates from 1479: “Commento sul libro delle Sentenze di Pietro Lombardo scritto l’anno 1479”; no evidence to support this assertion is found in the manuscript, but it may have had some support at the beginning or end of the text, both now missing, and it is certainly not impossible.

2. Spine, shelf-mark (?), B (at top), and S C (at bottom), s. XVII (?).

3. Once owned by Fürsten Portia, according to the handwritten description in German, housed with the manuscript, dated 28 January 1937.

5. Cutting from unidentified printed bookseller’s catalogue in German, laid in.

TEXT
ff. 1-123v, “/huius dona infusa creat scilicet fidem et creatorem pro etiam . . . , f. 25, Circa promuam distinctionem pribri sententiarum in qua magister tractat de frui et uti primo enim videndum est defructione beatifica creature, secunda de ipsa fructione . . ., Quero igitur primo istam questionem, Utrum sola trinitate incommutabili creature rationalis beatifice possit frui . . . [f. 123] Circa 16 distinctionem quero talem questionem, Vtrum creature rationalis prius sanctificetur . . . est tamen meritorious/!”

This is a scholastic commentary on the First Book of The Sentences of Peter the Lombard. The text now begins imperfectly in the commentary on the prologue, and ends in the sixteenth distinction.

Together with the Bible, The Sentences of Peter Lombard (Libri quatuor sententiarum) was the fundamental textbook of the Theology Faculty of the medieval Universities from the twelfth century through the sixteenth century. Peter Lombard (c. 1100-1160), a canon at Notre Dame, and Bishop of Paris, composed the work around 1150. In a long series of questions, he systematically presented the whole body of theological teaching, based on the Bible and the teachings of the Fathers. His work is divided into four books, covering the Trinity, Creation, Christ and the Sacraments respectively.

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. The work continued to be used in the schools from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Colish (1994) and more recently Rosemann (2007) have exhaustively studied the impact of the Sentences on medieval theology over these centuries, but each new commentary takes its place in an important context, showing how the Sentences were interpreted differently after the scholastics within the schools and within the monastic tradition.

This manuscript presents a commentary on the First Book of the Sentences, which discusses God, the Trinity, God’s attributes, Predestination and the problem of Evil. The commentary is an abbreviation of the Commentary on the Sentences by Johannes de Ripa, also known as Johannes de Marchia, a fourteenth-century Franciscan theologian, who studied at Paris, and taught at Paris c. 1360-80, and probably also at Amiens. His importance in medieval philosophy and epistemology is only emerging gradually, as modern scholars study his contributions. His importance to theologians during the later Middle Ages is witnessed by the fact that Paul of Venice prepared an abbreviated version of his commentary.

Paul of Venice, O.E.S.A., was born around 1369; he entered the Augustinian Order at an early age, and studied Philosophy and Theology at Oxford and at Padua, where he became a Doctor of Theology and Arts in 1405. He died at Padua in 1429. Paul of Venice is known for his
contributions to logic and epistemology, Alessandro Conti describes him as “the most important Italian thinker of his times, and one of the most prominent and interesting logicians of the Middle Ages.” His abbreviation of John of Ripa’s Commentary was composed around 1402 at Padua, and reflects an early stage of his education and philosophical interests.

Johannes de Ripa, a Franciscan theologian who taught in Paris c. 1360 (see Friedrich Stegmüller. Repertorium commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi, Würzburg, 1947, no. 485, pp. 237-238), wrote a lengthy commentary on the Sentences. There is no complete modern edition of the Ripa commentary, but the prologue and one distinction from book one have been edited from the nine complete manuscripts, and the seven or eight additional manuscripts including part of the text (see Jean de Ripa. Lectura super Primum Sententiarum Prologi, [Quaestiones I & II/Quaestiones Ultimae], ed. A. Combes & F. Ruello, 2 Vols., Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age, VIII & XVI, Paris, J. Vrin, 1961 and 1970, and “Jean de Ripa, In I Sent. Dist. XXXVII,” ed. A. Combes & F. Ruello, Traditio 23 [1967], pp. 191-267). Our manuscript does not correspond with the Ripa commentary enough to be considered a full version of it.

The text in this manuscript generally agrees most closely with the abbreviated version of John of Ripa’s Commentary by Paul of Venice (see Paulus Venetus, Super Primum Sententiarum Johannis de Ripa Lecturae. Abbreviatio, ed. F. Ruello, Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi, Testi e studi XV, SISMEL, Firenze: Edizione del Galluzzo, 1999). Paul of Venice was an Augustinian Hermit, who prepared his text shortly after 1402 at Padua. The modern edition is based on a single manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS lat. theol. e. 34.

Paul of Venice’s abbreviation is not listed in Stegmüller, Repertorium. A different abbreviation of Johannes de Ripa’s text by the fifteenth-century Augustinian Hermit, Baltassar de Tolentino, OESA, Stegmüller no. 91, p. 48, which survives in one manuscript, an autograph, now Vatican City, Var. Lat. 1084, ff. 1-106 (described in Augustus Pelzer, Codices vaticanus latini, vol. 2, pars prior, codices 79-1134, Bibliotheca Vaticana, 1931, pp. 646-647) differs from the text in the manuscript described here.

This is a working, well organized copy of the text, using a system of initials, two-sizes of script, and red paragraph marks to delineate its structure; arguments are numbered in the margin in a contemporary hand (many now cut-away), with two notes added by later readers, see ff. 102v, and 111.

LITERATURE


**ONLINE RESOURCES**

Conti, Alessandro, “Paul of Venice,” in *The Stanford History of Philosophy*,
http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paul-venice/

“The Internet Guide to Master Peter Lombard,”

Franciscan Authors, 13th-18th century: (Ioannes de Ripa, Ioannes de Marchia)
http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/

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