

ALBERTUS DE SAXONIA [ALBERT VON SACHSEN], *Quaestiones super Libros Posteriorum Aristotelis* [Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics]

In Latin, manuscript on parchment and paper

Italy, likely Tuscany [Siena?], c. 1400-1425

48 folios, lacking a gathering after f. 20, else complete (collation: i-ii20, iii8), on parchment and paper (watermark close to Briquet 11689, or close variant, "Montagne surmontée d'une croix": Florence, 1411-1421 and Pisa, 1416), inner and outer bifolia of the first gathering of vellum, outer bifolia of the second gathering of vellum, all other leaves of paper, text on two columns (justification 190 x 160 mm), written in brown ink in a clear cursive bookhand, on up to 37-39 lines, some passages underlined in red (e.g., f. 12) and some words or passages stroked through in red, some headings in red, capitals touched in red, paragraph marks throughout in bright red, 2- to 3-line painted initials in bright red. Disbound (Dampstain in lower margin of first folio, sporadic wormholes, but overall good clean copy, in fine condition, with wide margins). Dimensions 279 x 214 mm.

Unedited commentary on one of Aristotle's works on logic, originally written in the milieu of the University of Paris by a near-contemporary of John Buridan, here penned by an unrecorded scribe, Peter of Poland, and including the contemporary ex-libris of a Cistercian monk near Siena. There is no modern critical edition, nor is there an accurate recension of the extant manuscripts. None of the recorded copies is found in North American collections. Further study of the present manuscript in the manuscript tradition would shed new light on the reception of Aristotelian logic in monastic circles outside France.

## PROVENANCE

1. Manuscript signed by the scribe on f. 46: "Explicit tabula secundi libri posteriorum et [...] scripti per manus Petri etc. capellani domini pape, de Polonia" [written by my hand, Peter, papal chaplain, of Poland]. At this time, the pope could be either John XXII (1410-1415) or Martin V (1417-1431), and neither being Polish, it is likely the scribe came from Poland. This would explain a rather northern-looking hand in an Italian context. This scribe "Peter of Poland" is not recorded in Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux* (1979).

2. In a fifteenth-century hand, a contemporary ownership note is added below the explicit-colophon (f. 46), copied in bright red: "Liber iste est fratris Johannis de Senis [Siena], ordinis cisterciensis etc." [This book belongs to brother John of Siena, of the Cistercian Order]. This is likely a member of the male Cistercian abbey near Siena, known as San Galgano in Chiusdino, province of Siena (see Cottineau, *Répertoire topographique des abbayes...*, III, col. 2684 ; A. Lubin, *Abbatiarum Italiae brevis notitia...*, p. 157 ; see also C. Enlart, *L'abbaye de San Galgano près Siemme au 13e siècle*, Rome [1894] and more recently, I. Rainini, *L'abbazia di San Galgano. Studi di architettura monastica cistercense del territorio senese*, Milano [2001]). The only Cistercian monastery recorded in Siena proper is the female convent Santa Maria delle Visitazione or San Prospero (see M. Cocheril, *Bibliographie générale de l'Ordre Cisterciens. Dictionnaire des monastères cisterciens* [1976], p. 142).

Interestingly, the contemporary note by brother John of Siena is copied in bright red, of the same ink and script used for headings and probably also for painted initials and paragraph marks. Could the rubrication have been realized in the Cistercian monastery by its first--or near-first--proprietor, who would have "personalized" his exemplar in the important scriptorium of San Galgano?

3. Ex-collection Dr. André Rooryck, his MS. 18.

## TEXT

ff. 1-31v, Albertus de Saxonia, *Quaestiones super Libros Posteriorum Aristotelis*, Book I, rubric, *Q[uesti]ones posterior[um] and [Primus] liber*; incipit, "Primo queritur in libro posteriorum. Utrum de demonstratione possit habere aliquas distinctas noticias specie..." [breaks off from mid Quaestio 12 to mid Quaestio 24; begins complete again from Book I, Quaestio 25 to the end of Book I, Quaestio 33]; explicit, "[...] accipiendo scibile pro scibili propinquo sicut dicitur de toto etc. et sic est finis questionem primi libri posteriorum" (Fitzgerald, 2002, Appendix II, pp. 339-361 provides a transcription of Book I, questions 1, 3, 10, 11 as found in the incunable Albertus de Saxonia, *Quaestiones...*, Venice, 1497; Appendix VI, pp. 371-387, provides a transcription of Book I, questions 3, 7, 13 as found in MS. Tortosa Cath. 108);

ff. 32-45, Albertus de Saxonia, *Quaestiones super Libros Posteriorum Aristotelis*, Book II, incipit, "Circa secundum librum posteriorum queritur utrum ista proposition sit vera quam posuit..."; explicit, "[...] assendiendum ipsis principiis et sic est finis. Amen", followed by: "Expliciunt questiones secundi posteriorum disputate parisius per reverendum doctorem magistrum Albertum de Saxonia. Amen".

f. 45v, Table of chapters for Book I: "Explicit tabula primi libri";

f. 46, Table of chapters for Book II followed by colophon: "Explicit tabula secundi libri posteriorum et [...] scripti per manus Petri etc. capellani domini pape, de Polonia etc.";

ff. 46v-48, blank.

Albertus de Saxonia or Albert von Sachsen (1316-1390) was a secular cleric who studied in Prague and Paris. Sometimes called "Little Albert" to distinguish him from Albert the Great, Albert of Saxony was named rector of the University of Paris in 1353. He left this position to found the University of Vienna in 1362, and he then became bishop of Halberstadt. He is recognized as a continuator of the ideas of his near-contemporary in Paris, the Aristotelian master and philosopher John Buridan (c. 1295-c. 1358), and he is also seen as an ardent proponent of nominalism in Central European universities. Recent scholarship on Albert of Saxony, including his works on logic, refutes the claim that he was merely a student of Buridan and assembles a full list of Albert's own original tracts and works on logic (see Fitzgerald, 2002, esp. pp. 2-3). Unlike Buridan, for example, Albert was much influenced by English thinkers. Considered among his major works on logic, the *Quaestiones super Libros Priorum et Posteriorum Aristotelis* (Commentaries on Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics) was written early in Albert's career, when he would have been in contact with Buridan.

The present manuscript contains the Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, a work in which Aristotle delivers his theory of demonstration and of knowledge. In the Prior Analytics,

sylogistic logic is considered in its formal aspect; in the Posterior Analytics it is considered in respect to its matter. The "form" of a syllogism lies in the necessary connection between the premises and the conclusion. Even where there is no fault in the form, there may be in the matter, i.e. the propositions of which it is composed, which may be true or false, probable or improbable. In this and other works, Albert is credited as a logician with expanding the analysis of language based on the properties of terms. It is generally agreed that Albert composed the bulk of his logical compositions during his Parisian period, which lasted from 1351 to 1362. Fitzgerald has identified a manuscript in Tortosa Cathedral (MS 108), datable c. 1355-56 and thus transcribed close to the date of composition, as the oldest known copy of the Commentary on the Posterior Analytics (p. 35).

Although Lohr (1967) records only 5 manuscripts (Avranches, BV 227; Crakow, BJ 736; Padua, Bibl. Antoniana, 397; Stettin, Bibl. Marienstiftgymn. Cam. 5; Tortosa, Cathedral 108), Patar (2001) cites some 26 manuscripts (see Patar, pp. 84-85), none in North American collections. There is an incunable edition published in Venice, 1497 (a facsimile edition is listed below) and a later edition, Venice, 1522. However, there is no modern critical edition other than the excerpts quoted in Fitzgerald. This critical edition remains to be completed and with it a full recension of all the extant manuscripts.

Further study of the treatise in the present manuscript, along with the Commentary on the Prior Analytics, should further clarify the place of Albert of Saxony in the evolution of the understanding of Aristotelian logic at the University of Paris in the fourteenth century. Such a study should shed additional light not only on the relationship of his thought with that of John Buridan, but also on the influences English philosophy had on him and the dissemination of his works in Central Europe and Italy.

## LITERATURE

Albertus de Saxonia. *Quaestiones subtilissime super libros Posteriorum analyticorum Aristotelis*, Bonetus Locatellus, for O. Scotus, Venice, 1497 (Goff, A-349). See facsimile: Albertus de Saxonia. *Questiones subtilissime in libros posteriorum Aristotelis*, Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1986.

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Lohr, C. H. "Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries. Authors A-F," in *Traditio*, 1967 (23), esp. pp. 348-352.

Patar, B. *La Physique de Bruges de Buridan et le Traité du Ciel d'Albert de Saxe: étude critique, textuelle et doctrinale*, Longueil [Québec], Presses philosophiques, 2001.

#### ONLINE RESOURCES

Life and Works of Albert of Saxony

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/albert-saxony/>

Aristotle's Logic

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-logic/>

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