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NICHOLAUS DE LYRA , *Postilla litteralis super vetus testamentum*
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Italy, Ferrara (?), c. 1451-1456

Two volumes, volume one: i (modern parchment) + i (paper) + ii (parchment) + 232 + i (parchment) folios on parchment, foliated in ink in a later hand, top, outer corner, recto, the text is now numbered ff. 5-236 (collation, i¹⁰ [-1 and 2, before f. 5, with loss of text, and -5 and 6, following f. 6, with loss of text] ii-xxiii¹⁰ xxiii¹⁰ xxiv⁸ [-7, and 8, cancelled with no loss of text]), horizontal catchwords, middle lower margin, except quire twenty-three, vertical catchword, no leaf or quire signatures, ruled lightly in lead with the top horizontal rule full across on some folios, single full-length vertical bounding lines, (justification, 255-250 x 180 mm.), written below the top line in a rounded gothic bookhand in two columns of seventy-three to seventy-two lines by two scribes, the first scribe copied ff. 5-227, and the second scribe copied ff. 227v-235v, running titles and foliation added by a later eighteenth-century (?) hand, who also added the table of contents on the first paper flyleaf, biblical lemmata usually underlined in red, guide letters for initials, chapters begin with two-line undecorated alternately red and blue initials, four-line red or blue initials with contrasting pen decoration in violet or red, fifty-two eleven- to eight-line initials (twenty-two in volume one, thirty in volume two), ff. 94v and 184v, volume one, thirty-four lines, blue or red initials, with decorative void spaces within the initial, infilled and with pen decoration in red or violet respectively, in intricate patterns, with touches of brushed gold, forming a box around the initial surrounded by large beading, some with pen flourishes extending full-column, but often with short flourishes terminating with pen flourishes and gold rayed disks, NINETEEN PEN-AND-WASH DRAWINGS in volume one (described below), ff. 227v-235v, (second scribe), chapters begin with four-line red initials, eight-line plain red initials, with simple void space within the initials, lemmata are not underlined, and chapter numbers are not added, in excellent condition, apart from f. 101, slight damage from damp, initial, f. 184, smudged, f. 122rv, stain, lower margin. Bound in modern dark brown leather over heavy pasteboard, front and back covers elaborately gold-tooled with four sets of double fillets forming three rectangular borders, the first and third filled with gold scrolls, and with a diamond shaped center panel, spine with four raised bands, forming compartments with gold fleurons and title in gold, "De Lyra, Postilla super bibiam", in very good condition with slight wear to the spine and edges in both volumes. Dimensions 295 x 275 mm.

Volume two, clearly always the second volume of a two volume set, see the complete physical description of both volumes, above: i + 281 folios, foliated in ink in a later hand, top, outer corner recto, (collation, i¹⁰ [+ one paper leaf, added later, before 1] ii-xii¹⁰ xiii² [through f. 122v] xiv-xix¹⁰ xx¹⁰ [5, f. 187, single, glued to 6, an added leaf, f. 187 bis] xxi-xxvii¹⁰ xxviii¹⁰ [middle bifolium reversed by binder so that 6, f. 267, comes before 5, f. 266] xxix² xxx⁶ [+ one leaf, f. 280, following 6, added to replace lost leaf]), horizontal catchwords, quires i-xv, through f. 142v, decorated horizontal catchwords, quires xvi-xx, through f. 149v, vertical catchwords, quires xxi-xxviii, through f. 271v, quire xxix lacks catchword, copied by three scribes, ff. 1-149, column a (scribe one of volume one), ff. 149, column b-188, and ff. 188v-end, the scribe who wrote the end of volume one, ff. 149-end, chapters begin with four-line alternately red and blue initials, ff.

188-end, no rubrics, chapters numbers, lemmata are not underlined, in good condition, apart from ff. 1-3, some stains and worm holes in the margins; wear on f. 1 suggests this was always at the beginning of a volume, f. 187, partially detached, ff. 122v-123, stains in lower halves, text remains legible, ff. 238-end, stain on the fore edge, f. 280v, stains from worm tracks, ff. 187 bis and 280 are later leaves added to replace the original leaves.

This is an impressive enormous copy, signed and dated by the main scribe, and notable also for its fine pen-and-wash illustrations, of one of the most popular and influential biblical commentaries from the later Middle Ages. Although Nicolaus's *Postilla* survives in hundreds of manuscripts, the majority of these include only single books of the Bible or small groups of books. Copies that include the entire Old Testament are much less common. Most copies are in institutional collections, and this text has not often been sold in recent decades.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was copied between c. 1451-1456 in Northern Italy. The style of the pen initials and illustrations, discussed below, support an origin in Northern Italy, possibly in Ferrara. The main scribe of the manuscripts signed his name, "Egidius Alemanus," or simply "Alemanus" in several places in the two volumes, and included dates when he finished a section: volume one, f. 172, "*Explicit postilla super esdram . . . 1451*" (the date was read by an earlier cataloguer as "1441"); and in volume two, f. 35, "*Explicit postilla super ecclesiasticorum edita a fratre Nicolao de Lyra ordinis minorum professore alemanus scripsit 1453*"; f. 107v, "*Explicit postilla supra librum psalmorum edita a fratre Nicholao de lyra de ordine fratrum minorum sacre pagine doctore, scripta per egidium alamanum [sic] <seven words, heavily expunged in ink> annis domino m ccc liiiii [1455] die xii mensis octobris*"; f. 115v, "*Explicit postilla fratris nycholai de lyra . . . immensas gratias altissimo per alemanum scriptus*"; and f. 122v "*Explicit . . . deo gratias 1456.*"

We unfortunately have no further records that shed any light on the life or career of Egidius Alemanus, although based on the evidence of this manuscript, we know he was an accomplished scribe. Although any identification with our scribe is highly speculative, there was an Egidius Teutonicus, active in 1474 (probably in Perugia?); see Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux des origines au XVIe siècle*, Spicilegii friburgensis subsidia 2-7, Fribourg, Suisse, Editions universitaires, 1965-1982, no. 3690, "Egidius Teuto fecit," Perugia, Biblioteca comunale, MS 798 L 50, a small prayer book copied in 1474; see also Erardo Aeschlimann, and Paolo d'Ancona, *Dictionnaire des miniaturistes du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance dans les différentes contrées de l'Europe*, 2nd ed., Milan, U. Hoepli, 1949, p. 65 (A. Serafini, *Ricerche sulla min. umbria*, p. 439, suggests this Egidius was an artist, an attribution Aeschlimann doubted) and Grazia Bistoni Grilli Cicloni, *Catalogo dei manoscritti in scrittura latina datati o databili per indicazione di anno, di luogo o di copista*, Turin, Bottega d'Erasmus, 1971- , volume 1, pp. 61-2, plate 155.

Also worth considering is another scribe "Egidius Thonotoci (?)" who was a Franciscan in Verona in 1512; see *Colophons*, cited above, no. 3691, "Qui liber scriptus est per manus fratris Egidii Thonotoci (?) conventus Verone qui multo tempore fuit capellanus supradicti monasterii (O.F.M.), Oxford, Bodl. Can. Misc. 5, a. 1512 (also reported in Krämer, "Scriptores," listed below in online sources).

Three scribes wrote these two volumes, which clearly always belonged together, and judging from the wear on the opening folio of the second volume, were probably always bound in two volumes; the main scribe, Egidius Alemanus, copied most of volume one, and the first half of volume two; the scribe who completed volume one also copied the end of volume two, and the third scribe copied the middle section of volume two; each used distinctive catchwords, and slightly different layouts. Egidius began each chapter with two-line initials, while scribes two and three used four-line initials; scribe two did not supply rubrics or chapter numbers, and did not underline the scriptural *lemmata* in red.

The vast majority of medieval scribes did not date their work, and scribes like Egidius Alemanus who added dates as they finished sections within a larger work are even more uncommon. Unfortunately, the dates in this manuscript are not exact enough to allow us to calculate exactly how long it took to copy this manuscript. They do tell us, however, that it was a remarkably slow process. Egidius completed f. 172 in volume one in 1451. It then took him as long as two years to complete the rest of the volume (the final eight folios were copied by a second scribe), and ff. 1-35 of the second volume, a total of 98 leaves. It again took him almost two more years, from 1453 until October 12, 1455, to copy the next seventy-two folios up until f. 107v. His last date is found on f. 122v, which he dated 1456. If he took a little more than sixty days to copy these fifteen folios (and he may have taken much longer), he was only copying an average of one page, or half a folio, per day. The volume was completed by the second scribe from volume one, and a third scribe, neither of whom signed or dated their work.

Christopher de Hamel has recently calculated that the scribes who copied the Giant Bible of Mainz (now Washington, D.C., Library of Congress), copied on average one folio per day (De Hamel, 2006, pp. 174-5). Egidius, and the other two scribes of these volumes, was obviously working at a much slower rate. These are very large manuscripts, copied in a very small, painstaking script, and these factors may partially explain why it took so long. It may also be possible that these facts indicate that the scribes who copied these volumes, skilled though they were, were not professional scribes, or at least, were not professional scribes who worked full-time copying this manuscript.

2. Bottom margin, volume two, f. 1, heavily erased and painted over with white, probably an ex-libris note; there are unfortunately no further clues of the early owners of this impressive manuscript, although it would have been a valuable addition to any monastic or mendicant library, or even a treasured possession of an individual schooled in theology, perhaps a bishop, or professor.

TEXT

Volume I:

f. Irv, Table of Contents, added in a later hand [followed by two blank parchment leaves, numbered 3-4].

ff. 5-29, incipit, "///data et edificata satis cito post diluuium . . . et ideo versimile est quod sperabat resurgere cum christo resurgente. Cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen."
Explicit postilla super genesim;

Postilla on Genesis; Stegmüller 5829; text begins imperfectly in the commentary on Genesis, chapter 1, Venice 1488, column a, p. 35; bifolium is missing after f. 6, with the commentary on ... ; f. 6v, ends "... posuit hominem in paradiso ut operarentum ipsum hominem//"; f. 7, begins, "quantum. "quoniam occidi nurum etc." Istud expositum comuniter sic ..."

ff. 29-53v, *Incipit postilla fratris Nicolai de lira super exodum, incipit, "Secundum quod dicit ysidorus primo... in memoria illa que de istis superius sunt expressa." Explicit postilla Nicolai de lira super exodum;*

Postilla on Exodus; Stegmüller 5830.

ff. 54-65, *Incipit postilla super Leuiticum secundum magistrum Nycolaum de Lyra fratrem ordinis minorum sancti francisci, ... , incipit, "Uocauit autem moysen et cetera. Sicut dictum fuit in principio exodi ...in littera ultimo recapitulat dicens hec sunt mandata et cetera, et patet." Explicit postilla super Leviticum ... ,*

Postilla on Leviticus; Stegmüller 5831.

ff. 65-78, *Incipit postilla super librum numerorum ... , incipit, "Locutusque est dominus. Ex predictis in precedentibus libris patet quod sicut in libro genesis ... iudicia. quantum ad iudicialia." Finis. Explicit postilla super librum numerorum edita a magistro Nycolao de Lyra fratre ordinis minorum sancti francisci doctore sacre pagine;*

Postilla on Numbers; Stegmüller 5832.

ff. 78-91, *Incipit postilla super librum deuteronomii ... , incipit, "Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat et intellectum dat paruulis [Ps. 118.130]. Sicut dictum fuit in principio exodi ... non sunt facta per alium prophetam in ueteri lege." Explicit Postilla super deuteronomium edita a fratre Nycolao de Lyra de ordine fratrum minorum sacre theologie doctore deo gracias. Amen [ends top col b, f. 91, remainder blank];*

Postilla on Deuteronomy; Stegmüller 5833.

ff. 91v- 99v, *Incipit postilla ... super librum iosue ... , incipit, "Introduces eos et plantabis eos in monte hereditatis tue. exo. xv. Secundum hebreos a libro iosue incipiunt libri prophetales ut patet per Ieronimum in prologo ... non est in hebreo nec in libris correctis." Explicit postilla super librum Iosue edita a fratre nycolao de lyra de ordine fratrum minorum;*

Postilla on Joshua; Stegmüller 5834.

ff. 99v- 107v, *Incipit postilla super librum Iudicum ... , incipit, "Suscitauit dominus iudices ... Sicut in libro iosue a quo incipiunt libri historiales agitur de terre promissionis ingressu ... quia non ceperant eas de uoluntate uestra." Explicit liber Iudicium.*

Postilla on Judges; Stegmüller 5835.

ff. 99v-109, *Incipit postilla super Ruth . . .*, incipit, "In diebus unius iudicis. hic consequenter ponitur tertius casus. scilicet ipsius Ruth et diuiditur in quatuor partes ... sicut dictum est supra secundo capitulo. *Explicit postilla super Ruth edita a fratre Nycolao de Lyra de ordine fratrum minorum deo gracias.*

Postilla on Ruth; Stegmüller 5836.

ff. 109- 152v, *Incipit postilla eiusdem nicolai super primum librum regum*, incipit "Per me reges regnant. proverb. viii. Sicut dictum fuit in principio libri Iudicum populus israel post ingressum terre ... et disponens omnia suauiter. Cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla super quartum regum edita a fratre Nicolao de lyra de ordine fratrum minorum. Amen,*

Postilla on I-IV Kings; Stegmüller 5837-40, with II Kings beginning on f. 121v, III Kings on f. 131, and IV Kings on f. 144.

ff. 152v-161v, Incipit, "Colligite fragmenta ne pereant. Iob vi. Secundum sententiam beati augustini ... scilicet xviii et xviii et xx";

Postilla on I Chronicles; Stegmüller 5841.

ff 161v-168v incipit, "Confortatus ergo salomon ... quod est factum est ut habetur plenius esdre primo";

Postilla on II Chronicles; Stegmüller 5842.

f. 168v, "Domine deus, ista oratio regis manasse non est in hebreo ... Et tibi est gloria in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Oratio manasse; Stegmüller 5843.

ff. 168v-172, incipit, "Erit sacerdos super solio suo, zachar. vi. Secundum quod in libris precedentibus ... et eos qui de hiis nati sunt." *Explicit postilla super esdram edita a fratre niolao de lira ordinis minorum professore sacre theologie summo doctore, 1451.*

Postilla on 1 Ezra; Stegmüller 5844.

ff. 172-176v, incipit, "Verba neemie. Postquam descripta est descriptio ... recommendat se suo creatori, cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum, Amen." *Explicit postilla super neemiam edita a fratre Nicola de Lira ordinis minorum summe magistro sacre tehologie peritissimo.*

Postilla on Nehemiah; Stegmüller 5845.

ff. 176v-180, *In nomine domini amen. Incipiunt pastille fratris Nycolai de lira de ordine fratrum minorum super libros biblie non canonicatos [sic]*, incipit, "Hec oportuit facere et illa non omittere, Mt. xxiii. Postquam auxiliante deo scriptis ... et gloriam ps. lxxxiii. Cui est gloria et honor in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla super librum tobie . . .*

Postilla on Tobit; Stegmüller 5847.

ff. 180 -184, *Incipere decet librum Judith* ..., incipit, "Arphaxat itaque. Post historias Susanne ... accipitur colatum. Ad laudem dei cuius uirtute facta sunt hec uictoria cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla ... super librum Iudith*;

Postilla on Judith; Stegmüller 5849.

ff. 184-187, *Incipit Liber hester*, incipit, "In diebus assueri, postquam descriptus est progressus ... et postea editioni uulgate inserta." *Explicit postilla super librum hester*;

Postilla on Esther; Stegmüller 5850.

ff. 187-208v, *Incipit liber iob* ..., incipit, "Patientiam habe in me ... mt. xviii. Quamuis uerbum propositum sit ... perductus ad futuram gloriam que perducatur in secula seculorum amen." *Explicit postilla super iob*

Postilla on Job; Stegmüller 5851.

ff. 208v-221v, *Incipiunt prouerborum salomonis*, incipit, "Ecce descripsi eam ... prov. xxii. Secundum quod dicitur in principio de plantis ... in quantum per eius studium sapientiam consequantur." *Explicit postilla super librum qui dicitur parabole salomonis*;

Postilla on Proverbs; Stegmüller 5865.

ff. 221v-227v, incipit, "Uerba ecclesiastes. Sicut dictum sunt in principio librum prouerborum ... et ad gloriam dei. Cui est gloria et honor in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla ... super ecclesiastam*.

Postilla on Ecclesiastes; Stegmüller 5866.

ff. 227v-233v, *Eiusdem celeberrimi expositioris postilla incipit super canticum canticorum*, incipit, "Osculetur me. Expeditio primo salomonis libro ... ad quam nos perducatur qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuat et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.

Postilla on Canticles; Stegmüller 5868.

ff. 233v-235v, incipit, "Et fecit iosias, liber iste qui dicitur esdre secundus uidetur magis ab alio doctor ... deputatus ad diuinas laudes et obsequia cui est gloria in secula et seculorum." [authorial colophon] incipit, 'Ego igitur gratias ago deo qui dedit mihi gratiam scribendi secundum modulum ingenii mei super omnium libros in biblia ... ut apud deum uelint me suis orationibus adiuuare. Amen.'

Postilla on III Ezra; Stegmüller 5846.

Volume 2:

Front flyleaf, f. I rv, later table of contents;

ff. 1-9v, *Incipit postilla super librum sapientie secundum magistrum Nicolaum de Lyra ordinis minorum sancti francisci professorem*, incipit, "Post libros historiales non canonicos magis tamen reputatos ... et in ceteris locis. Ad laudem nominis tui quod est benedictum in secula seculorum amen." *Explicit postilla super librum sapientie ...*;

Postilla on Wisdom; Stegmüller 5870.

ff. 9v-35, *Incipit postilla ... super ecclesiasticum ...*, incipit, "Ominis sapientia a domino deo est. Hic incipit liber ecclesiasticus qui primo fuit hebrayce scriptus ... et disponit omnia suaviter. Cuius nomen est benedictum in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla super ecclesiasticorum edita a fratre Nicolao de Lyra ordinis minorum professore alemanus scripsit 1453*";

Postilla on Ecclesiasticus; Stegmüller 5871.

ff. 35v-107v, *Incipit liber psalmodum feliciter*, incipit, "Propheta magnus surrexit in nobis luce vii. Quamuis liber psalmodum apud hebreos inter agyographa computetur tamen apud latinos inter libros propheticos reputatur nec immerito quia david ... in domo tua domine, in secula seculorum laudabunt te ad quam laudem nos perducatur qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla supra librum psalmodum edita a fratre Nicholao de lyra de ordine fratrum minorum sacre pagine doctore, scripta per egidium alamanum <seven words, heavily expunged in ink> annis domino m ccc liiiii [1455] die xii mensis octobri*;

Postilla on Psalms; Stegmüller 5853.

ff. 108-115v, *Incipit postilla super primum librum machabeorum ...*, incipit, "Et factum est. Post historiam libri Iudith quantum ad historias in sacra scriptura contentas ... alios de quibus fit mention in libris regum et paralipomenon." *Explicit postilla fratris nycholai de lyra ordinis minorum egredii doctoris pagine sacre super primum librum macabeorum immensas gratias altissimo per alemanum scripta*";

Postilla on 1 Maccabees; Stegmüller 5894.

ff. 115v-122v, incipit, "Fratribus qui sunt per egyptum iudeis. Liber iste secundus machabeorum quedam est abbreviatio ... incarnate cui cum patre et spiritu sancto sit honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla super secundum librum machabeorum ... 1456 [ends mid column a; remainder blank]*;

Postilla on II Maccabees; Stegmüller 5895.

ff. 123-160v, *Incipit postilla super librum ysaye prophete ...*, incipit, "Ierusalem evangelistam dabo, ysa xli. Secundum quod dicit beatus hieronymus in epistola ad paulinum de omnibus sacre scripture libris

isaias non videtur prophetiam sed magis evangelium texere... et ipsius dicitur principaliter. Cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla Nicolai de Lyra super ysaiam.*

Postilla on Isaiah; Stegmüller 5872.

ff. 160v-181, *Nicolai de Lyra super Ieremiam prophetam postilla incipit*, incipit, "Prophetam in gentibus dedite, Verbum propositum scribitur Ieri primo capitulo et dictum fuit ... non est in hebreo nec in libris correctis.";

Postilla on Jeremiah; Stegmüller 5874.

ff. 181- 183v, *Incipit super trenos capitulum primum*, incipit, "Quomodo sedet. In precedentibus huius libri ieremias ... est misereri et parcere, qui uiuas et regnas deus in secula seculorum amen." *Explicit postilla Nicolai de lyra super librum trenorum de lamentationibus Jeremie prophete ad laudem omnipotentem amen;*

Postilla on Lamentations; Stegmüller 5875.

ff. 183v-186v, *Eiusdem eximii sacre theologie doctoris magistri Nicolai de lyra postilla super baruch feliciter incipit*, incipit, Et hec uerba librum, Post librum thobie secundum ordinem temporis sequitur liber baruch Qui in trinitatie perfecta uiuat et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen." *Explicit postilla Nicolai de lyra super Baruch qui non est de canone;*

Postilla on Baruch; Stegmüller 5876.

ff. 186v-225v, *Incipit postilla eiusdem ... super Ezechielem prophetam*, incipit, "Aperti sunt celi et vidi visiones dei, Ezechielis primo. In uerbo proposito ab ezechiele dicto possunt notari quatuor cause libri ezechielis prophetae... et lux cum eo est. Cui laus sit honor et gloria per infinita secula seculorum. Amen."

Postilla on Ezekiel; Stegmüller 5877; f. 187, in chapter one of the commentary followed by a leaf added later, f. 187 bis, supplying a column of text, presumable omitted in error by the original scribe.

ff. 226-246v, *Incipit Daniel*, incipit, "Danieli autem dedit dominus intelligentiam omnium uisionum, Daniel primo. In uerbo proposito tanguntur ... boni possimus facere. Cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen"

Postilla on Daniel; Stegmüller 5880.

ff. 246v-254, incipit, "Duodecim prophetarum ossa pullulant de loco suo. Eccl. xlix. Sicut in libro psalmorum ... electorum qui cum eo regnabunt in secula seculorum. Amen."

Postilla on Hosea; Stegmüller 5882.

ff. 254-256v, incipit, "Verbum domini. Hic in principio Joelis prophetae duo sunt premissenda primum est quibus prophetaverit. Et dicit Hieronymus in primo prologo quod semper prophetavit ad tribum iuda ... nos perducatur qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum."

Postilla on Joel; Stegmüller 5883.

ff. 256v-260v, incipit, "Verba amos. Hec prophetia que tertio loco ponitur dividitur in duas partes scilicet in prohemium et tractatum qui incipit ibi ... quod nobis concedatur que cum patre etc."

Postilla on Amos; Stegmüller 5884.

ff. 260v-261v, incipit, "Visio Abdie. Secundum doctores hebreos et latinos iste abdis fuit dispensator domus ... perfecte subiciuntur domino nostro Iesu christo cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Obadiah; Stegmüller 5885.

ff. 261v-262v, incipit, "Et factum est. Hic incipit Ionas propheta et dividitur in duas partes quia primo ostenditur eius inobedientia ... est temperari iustitie mee rigorem etc.";

Postilla on Jonah; Stegmüller 5886.

ff. 262v-265v, *Incipit Micheas*, incipit, "Verbum domini. Hic incipit propheta michee que in duas partes dividitur scilicet in prohemium et in tractatum qui incipit ibi audite ... modo implete sunt in domino Iesu Christi cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Micah; Stegmüller 5887.

ff. 265v-267, *Incipit Naum*, incipit "Onus ninive etc., prophetia naum in duas partes dividitur scilicet in prohemium et tractatum qui incipit ibi dominus emulator ... applaudentes iustitie dei qui est benedictus in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Nahum; Stegmüller 5888.

ff. 267- 269, *Incipit Abachuc*, incipit "Onus quod vidit Abachuc. Hic incipit ipsius abachuc prophetia et dividitur in duas partes scilicet in prohemium et in tractatum qui incipit ibi usque quo. In prohemio primo tangitur breuiter materia ... in domo tua domine in secula seculorum laudabant te. Ad quam nos perducatur etc.";

Postilla on Habakkuk; Stegmüller 5889.

ff. 269-270v, *Incipit Sophonias*, incipit, "Verbum domini. Prophetia sophonie in duas partes dividitur scilicet prohemium et tractatum qui incipit ibi congregans. In prohemio notificatur ... qui est ipsa ueritas et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Zephaniah; Stegmüller 5890.

ff. 270v-271v, *Incipit Aggeus*, incipit, "In anno secundo. Incipit prophetia aggei que dividitur in duas partes scilicet in prohemium et tractatum qui incipit ibi hec dicit. In prohemio vero primo ponitur tempus huius prophetie cum dicitur ... qui est ueritas in secula seculorum. Amen";

Postilla on Haggai; Stegmüller 5891.

ff. 271v-278v, *Incipit Zacharias*, incipit "In mense octavo. Hic incipit prophetia zacharie et dividitur in duas partes scilicet in prohemium et in tractatum qui incipit ibi iratus est. Circa primum primo ponitur ... consonat et etiam precedenti";

Postilla on Zachariah; Stegmüller 5892.

ff. 278v-280v, *Incipit Malachias*, incipit, "Onus verbi domini. Hic incipit propheia malachie et dividitur in duas partes scilicet in prohemium et tractatum. Tractatus incipit ibi dilexi vos. In prima parte describitur ... ex electi adhibebunt deo sempiterna fruitione quam nobis concedat qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat deus in secula seculorum. Amen." *Postilla venerabilis fratris Nicolae de lyra s̄per Malachiam prophetam finit.* [ends mid col. a; remainder blank];

Postilla on Malachi; Stegmüller 5893. F. 280rv, is a replacement leaf, including the end of chapter three and chapter four of the commentary.

Nicolaus de Lyra, O.F.M. (ca. 1270-1349) was the greatest biblical scholars of the fourteenth century; indeed, many consider him one of the greatest biblical scholars of the Middle Ages. He was born in Lyre, near Évreux in Normandy. At the age of thirty, around 1300, he entered the Franciscan Convent at Verneuil, and was soon sent to the Franciscan House in Paris to study at the University; the remainder of his life was spent in Paris. He became a regent master in theology in 1308/09, and later the Franciscan provincial minister for the Province of Paris from 1319-1324, and the provincial minister for Burgundy from 1324-1330.

Nicolaus's greatest work was his massive commentary on the Bible, the *Postilla litteralis in vetus et novum testamentum*; in one of the prologues to this work, Nicolaus stresses the importance of the literal sense of the scriptures, which he argues was often neglected by other commentators. *Postilla*, a term which may derive from "post illa verba," ("after that word"), refers to a commentary written out as a continuous gloss, interspersed with scriptural *lemmata*. Throughout this commentary, he exhibits a thorough grounding in Jewish commentaries on the Bible, including the Talmud, the Midrash, and the works of Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac, 1045-1105), and some knowledge of Hebrew. Scholars have suggested that he studied with Jewish scholars in Évreux, which was an important center of Jewish learning in the late thirteenth century (for a comprehensive list of books and articles on Nicolaus de Lyra, see Krey and Smith, eds., 2000, and the articles by Krey from 1992 and 1996, listed below).

Nicolaus composed the work between 1322 and 1331, drawing no doubt on the lectures on the Bible that he prepared for his students in Paris. The *Postilla* were enormously popular, and survive

in hundreds of manuscripts; see Stegmüller, 1950-61, and Supplement, 1976-80, nos. 5829-5923. Most manuscripts, however, include only a single book of the Bible, or a group of books; manuscripts of the complete text with the Old and New Testaments are less common, as are manuscripts with the *Postilla* on the complete Old Testament. Stegmüller records seventeen manuscripts which include the *Postilla* on the entire Bible, and over two hundred and thirty manuscripts with commentaries on one or more books of the Old Testament.

There is no modern edition of the complete *Postilla*, although the Apocalypse commentary has been translated into English (Nicholas of Lyra, trans. Krey, 1997), and there is an edition of the Song of Songs (Nicholas of Lyra, trans. Kiecker, 1998); the Strasbourg 1492 edition was reprinted in Frankfurt am Main in 1970.

The influence of the *Postilla* extended far beyond the Middle Ages, and they were valued by Martin Luther and others. They were the first biblical commentary to appear in print, first printed in Rome in 1471, and then in more than one hundred editions until 1600, including editions in Basel, Douai, Cologne, Lyons, Nuremberg, Paris, Venice and Strasbourg; one of the most popular was Anton Koberger in Nuremberg, printing this work seven times from 1479 to 1497; see Gosselin, 1970, pp. 399-426.

Despite the popularity of the commentary, most copies are now in institutional collections; the Schoenberg database records only ten copies sold since 1958, including this one; these manuscripts all consisted of *Postilla* on part of the Bible: the Apocalypse, the Psalms, the Prophets and Psalms, extracts, and the most extensive manuscript, Genesis- 4 Kings; none were as extensive as the manuscript described here.

These two volumes include Nicolaus's commentaries on the Old Testament; although this was clearly an expensive, large-format copy, it was also equipped with a scholarly apparatus contemporary with the main text, including marginal comments, corrections to the text, frequent Nota marks, pointing hands (cf. f. 32), and other notes, for example, f. 28, "Contra iudeos, nota"; the frequency of the marginal notes varies from book to book; Genesis-Deuteronomy and Job have numerous notes in volume one, and in the second volume, the Psalms and Isaiah are the most frequently annotated.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations in manuscripts of Nicolaus de Lyra's *Postilla* are an integral part of the text, dating back to the original exemplar planned by Nicolaus. Nicolaus relied on these illustrations to help his readers envision details of the biblical text, in particular the details regarding the Temple in Jerusalem, and its furnishings. Since details differed in the Christian and Jewish commentary traditions, Nicolaus often provided his readers with drawings of both versions. Some of the drawings are prefaced by authorial explanations; for example Nicolaus comments before the drawing of the Ark of the Covenant, "That what has been discussed above, however, may be the more easily comprehended, I have described them in a picture. Nevertheless, as for those things which cannot be perfectly pictured on the page, it is necessary that the imagination of the viewer supply that which cannot be pictured in this manner" (Kaczynski, cited below, p. 10, from New Haven, Beinecke Library, MS Marston 215, f. 67; cf. our manuscript, f. 44).

Although the illustrations of the *Postilla* have been discussed by a number of scholars, the discussions have focused on a few chosen manuscripts. There is still no general survey of the surviving manuscripts of the *Postilla* and their illustrations, which address fundamental questions such as how many manuscripts of the *Postilla* include the illustrations? Were there variations in the illustrations included? Do some manuscripts include additional illustrations? And so forth. It would be a rewarding subject to research. In addition, the possible relationship between the illustrations included in the manuscripts of the *Postilla*, and the illustrations that once accompanied Rashi's commentaries is still a debated question. Studies of the illustrations are listed below and include Kaczynski in 1973; Gruber, in 1992; Rosenau, 1974; and Shailor, 1983.

The two volumes of this manuscript include nineteen pen-and-wash drawings (all in volume one), as well as numerous blank spaces for illustrations that were never completed. A comparison between the illustrations in Marston MS 215, ff. 67, 67v, and 68 is informative; the renderings of the Ark of the Covenant, the table of the Showbread, and the Candelabra in both manuscripts are almost identical in detail—both function identically as practical illustrations of the text. The versions in this manuscript, however, are exceptional in their careful draftsmanship and coloring; the cherubim on f. 44v, for example, are skillfully drawn with fine facial features, deeply pleated drapery, and are delicately colored in pale yellow, pink, and green. The Table of the Showbread, f. 45, is colored in pale yellow, but also includes vivid red and blue. The illustration of the High priest in his vestments on f. 48 is also noteworthy for the quality of the drawing, abundant details, and vivid coloring.

An earlier description of this manuscript noted that Professor Dr. Gaudenz Freuler, University of Zurich, observed that the human figures in this manuscript may be compared with those appearing in fragments of a Psalter, now in private collections in Switzerland and Milan, from an anonymous workshop in Ferrara.

The style of the flourished pen initials in the two volumes can be compared with two manuscripts from Lombardy, and in particular, Ferrara; see British Library, Harley MS 2577, copied in Ferrara in 1475 (<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts>); and a later Antiphonal copied by Johannes de Ferrara in 1513, sold by Sam Fogg, *Text Manuscripts and Documents 2200 BC to 1600 AD*, Catalogue 16, London, 1995, lot 126.

The subjects of the illustrations are as follows:

Volume I:

f. 8, two small depictions of Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:14-16);

f. 44v, the Ark of the Covenant and Throne of Mercy with cherubim (Exodus 25:10-22), two versions;

f. 45, Table of the Showbread, two versions (Exodus 25:10-22);

f. 45v, Candelabrum, two versions (Exodus 25:31-40);

f. 46, Two Curtains of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1-14);

f. 46v, two representations of the veil in front of the Holy of Holies, one, in the outer margin, a vivid red and green (Exodus 26:31-37);

f. 47, Altar of the Holocaust (Exodus 27:1-8);

f. 47v, Court of the tabernacle (Exodus 27:9-19);

f. 48, High priest in his vestments (Exodus 28:4-39);

f. 49v, the Bronze basin (Exodus 30:17-21);

f. 50v, Tablets of the Law (Exodus 32:15), two versions: "figura tabularum secundum doctores catholicos," and "Figura tabularum secundum doctores hebreos";

f. 53v, Floor plan of the Sanctuary (Exodus 38), here placed at the end of Exodus;

Blank spaces for illustrations:

f. 66, Numbers 3 (probably arrangement of the Levite Camps, Numbers 3:23-38, cf. Marson 215, f. 206v, see Kaczinsky, p. 11);

ff. 134-137v, III Kings 6-7, eleven blank spaces for illustrations (Marston 215 has eight illustrations for these chapters, many with two or three versions; see Kaczinsky, p. 11).

f. 151, IV Kings 19;

Volume II:

ff. 108rv, I Maccabees 1;

f. 127, Isaiah 6;

f. 146v, Isaiah 28;

f. 191v, Ezekiel 9.

ff. 209-214, Ezekiel 40-41, blank spaces for ten illustrations;

ff. 221-222v, Ezekiel 47-48, blank spaces for three illustrations;

f. 243, Daniel 11.

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