

## ALBERT OF SAXONY, *Sophismata*

In Latin, manuscript on paper

Padua, Italy, dated 1398

*i + 114 + i leaves, in quarto, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner, recto, 1-116 (including both flyleaves), supplanting an earlier, fifteenth-century foliation in sepia ink, top, outer corner, recto, 1-115, including neither modern flyleaf, and with a counting error that omits a fol. 107 (collation i-xi<sup>10</sup> + xii<sup>1</sup>), catchwords at ends of quires, written in one hand, a small, heavily contracted and quite rounded cursiva libraria in 2 columns of 36-38 unruled lines (justification 95 x 155 mm.), and marginal additions in several later hands, principally [i] a cursiva currens of the fifteenth century, on ff. 2, 4v, 31, 42, and 67-67v; [ii] a second fifteenth-century cursiva currens, on ff. 19, 28, 43v, 45-45v, 65v, and 67, and the start of the register on f. 115ra; [iii] a sixteenth-, perhaps even seventeenth-century cursive script, on ff. 2v, 3-3v, 4, 5, 6v, 7, 8, 8v, 10-10v, and 11v; [iv] a small, highly contracted fifteenth-century semitextualis, responsible for the astronomical diagram on f. 114v; [v] a fifteenth-century semihybrida, responsible for the continuation of the register on f. 115ra, a design in very light red ink, possibly a notary's signet, in the left-hand margin of f. 2ra; four-line initial in red and blue penwork on f. 2ra, two-line initials in red and blue, ff. 2va-71vb, and in red, ff. 72ra-106rb and 107va-108rb, including a dragon biting its tail on f. 17va and a tonsured, bearded male face on f. 18ra, rubrication of occasional majuscules and of sub-section divisions in red and blue ink, ff. 2ra-71vb, and in red ink only, ff. 72ra-87rb, f. 114r and the rear modern flyleaf are both blank. Sewn on three cords, with parchment reinforcement strips in the centre of quires, some cut from an earlier Latin manuscript (see e.g. that between ff. 6-7), modern, probably nineteenth-century binding in scuffed grey-brown leather over paste boards, now somewhat cockled, with blind-tooled foliate stamps on spine, and "Sophismata Alberti de Saxonia" stamped in imitation Gothic script on front cover. Dimensions binding 213 x 150 mm.; book block 204 x 135 mm.*

A material witness to the academic culture of the late Middle Ages, this manuscript contains one of the most interesting – and still unedited – medieval treatises on logic, the *Sophismata* of Albert of Saxony (d. 1397). Copied just eight years after its author's death, for a friar of the Augustinian *studium generale* in Padua, the manuscript retains the traces of generations of Italian students who entered their names, and then erased them; who added marginal comments, attempted on two occasions to produce an index, and used a blank leaf to note down an astronomical diagram showing the relative position of the sun.

### PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was copied for Nicholas of Siena OESA in Padua, Italy, by one friar (order uncertain), named John of Cologne, both students at Padua, and completed on 8 November 1398, as described in the very detailed colophon on f. 113v, "Completa sunt sophismata alberti anno dominij .1398<sup>o</sup>. 8<sup>a</sup> die mensis nouembris per me fratrem Johannem de colonia studentem padue Ad petitionem generosi et honesti fratris nycolay de senis ordinis fratrum heremitarum sancti augustini studentis padue etc."

The phrase *de senis*, "of Siena," appears in red ink underneath the catchword on f. 31v, and in the right-hand margin of the same leaf, which may suggest that the commissioner of the manuscript was also its rubricator, or simply that the identity of the commissioner was known to the rubricator (who gradually gave up over the final five quires, and completely mid-way through the penultimate quire). Neither John of Cologne nor

Nicholas of Siena is attested in the graduation lists of the University of Padua: see Gloria, 1888, for the records from this period. They were thus likely not students at the University at all, but at the Paduan *studium generale* of the Augustinian Order. There, they would have studied under the great Paul of Venice, who held the office of *lector* there in the years 1396-99, and was then at work on his *Logica parva*, which would become one of the central textbooks for the teaching of logic in the later Middle Ages: see Perreiah, 1986, pp. 12-13. The John of Cologne who received his doctorate at Padua on 12 April 1430 (see Zonta and Brotto, ed., 1970, vol. 1, p. 246, no. 772) is likely to be too young to be identical with the scribe of this manuscript.

2. Remained in Padua, Italy through the fifteenth century, as indicated by the series of no less than six separate ownership marks and other entries, all erased, on f. 115v, and provide cumulative evidence (insofar as they remain legible) of the possession and use of the work by students in Padua; one includes the year 1422; another follows an erased name with "studentis padue," and the marginalia throughout the volume are likely to be the work of some of these former Paduan owners. The academic context in which this volume was used is further illustrated by the astronomical diagram, unrelated to the content of the work contained in the manuscript, added onto a blank leaf at f. 114v. The sketch in the left-hand margin of f. 2, which shows a fleur-de-lis above a shield, may be the seal (*signetum publicum*) of a legal notary. It could not be identified in the standard database (see Online Resources below), but it should be noted that the collection and identification of notarial seals is a study in its infancy.
3. Belonged to the Franciscan friary, at Feltre, Italy; ownership mark in the upper margin of f. 2 in a late fifteenth- or even early sixteenth-century hand, "Sophismata albertj conventus feltri ordinis fratrum minorum sancte ma'ie apte (??)."
4. Theodore Craig, London; his bookplate, inside front cover. This may well be the Theodore Craig known as a friend and correspondent of the author and poet Richard Le Gallienne (1866-1947), whose literary estate is held by the Liverpool Record Office, shelfmark 920 LEG, including correspondence with, and a portrait of, the aforementioned Theodore Craig in London (see Online Resources below).
5. Wigan, Public Library, United Kingdom. The manuscript was acquired by the Wigan librarian Henry Tennyson Folkard in February 1901: see his note, initialled H. T. F., on the front flyleaf, with a rather inaccurate transcription and translation of the colophon tipped in thereafter. The small white label affixed to the front cover, on which we read "Case 13", and the five-digit shelfmark on the verso of the front flyleaf (38,346), are further indicators of Wigan provenance, even if no library stamp or bookplate is to be found. The manuscript was still held in Wigan in 1992, when it was listed there in Ker and Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts*, 1992 (cf. Schoenberg Database, no. 186431), and has since been deaccessioned.

## TEXT

ff. 2ra-113vb and 115ra, incipit, "Ob rogatum quorundam scholarium deo fauente quedam sophismata conscribam ex parte diuersarum sincategorematum difficultatem habentium talem ordinem obseruando / Primo tractabo sophismata difficultatem habentia ex parte sincategorematum affirmatiuorum..."; [f. 2v, prima pars], incipit, "Omnis homo est omnis homo. Sophisma probatur sic hic predicatur idem de seipso ergo sophisma uerum consequentia tenet ex eo quod nulla propositio est uerior illa in qua idem predicatur de seipso. / 2° iste homo

est iste homo et iste homo est iste homo ergo omnis homo est omnis homo..."; [f. 50, secunda pars], incipit, "In hac 2<sup>a</sup> parte pone[n]da sunt sophismata difficultatem habentia ratione negationis et terminorum includentium negationem sicut sunt dictiones exclusiue exceptiue ut iste dictiones differt aliud non idem et plures tales et consimiliter sicut sunt ista uerba incipit et desinit..."; [103v, tertia pars], incipit, "Tertia pars huius operis est in qua sunt ponenda sophismata habentia difficultatem ex eo quod in ipsis ponitur uerbum preteriti uel futuri temporis uel ex eo quod hic copula est modifica[ta] aliquo istorum modorum scilicet necessarie possibile impossibile contigens etc..."; [f. 112, quarta pars], incipit, "[U]ltima pars tractatus presentis est In qua ponenda sunt sophismata habentia difficultatem ex eo quod ceteris istorum modorum necessarie possibile contingens etc. est determinatio totius propositionis et erit statim futurus ad honorem dei etc..."; f. 115ra, register (incomplete), rubric, *Hic inferius erunt assignata omnia sophismata alberti per ordinem* ....

Albert of Saxony, *Sophismata*; Albert of Saxony was a logician and natural philosopher of European stature in the mid- to late fourteenth century. Born around 1320, the son of a farmer, he studied at Paris in the later 1340s, and took his MA in 1351. He remained at Paris as a senior tutor until 1362, serving as Rector of the University in 1353, and the large proportion of his very considerable oeuvre was written during this period. He was in Vienna by 1364 at the latest, a leading figure in the efforts to establish a university there, and became the first Rector of the new University of Vienna in 1365. In the autumn of 1366 he was offered the bishopric of Halberstadt by Pope Urban V, and was invested in 1367, remaining in post until his death in 1390. For Albert's biography and literary work, see Berger, 2004, and Sarnowsky, 1989, pp. 11-71.

Albert's *Sophismata* is a university textbook, and contains a total of two hundred and fifty-four sophismata divided into four categories. A sophisma is a sentence that contains within it a logical problem, being both true and false if read in different ways, and can thus serve as the basis for a treatment of philosophical issues in the context of teaching logic. The first sophisma in Albert's collection, for example, "omnis homo est omnis homo," is true insofar as each man is indeed each man, and so by extension every man is every man, but is false insofar as each man is not every other man simultaneously. The skill lies in providing a philosophically cogent resolution to the logical problem posed by the inherent paradox of the sophisma.

This work is known in a total of twenty-six manuscripts, the earliest dated 1366, and five early printed editions: see Berger, 2004, Sarnowsky, 1989, pp. 438-39, and Muñoz García, 1990, pp. 167-68; for the incunable editions, see *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, nos. 00799-802. A critical edition is in preparation by Harald Berger at the University of Graz (see Online Resources below). This present manuscript documents the rapid dissemination of the work as a tool for the teaching of logic across the European university centres, and the close engagement with the text on the part of later students. The sixteenth-century marginal hand (Hand iii above) reports on the opinions of other logicians, namely Paul of Venice (e.g. ff. 3v, 5, and 6v), Peter of Mantua (e.g. ff. 9v and 10v), and one "Guglielmus" (e.g. f. 7): one might normally understand an otherwise unspecified Guglielmus to be William of Ockham, but in the context of resolving sophismata, this is more likely to be the Oxford Calculator William Heytesbury.

f. 114v, Astronomical diagram, labelled "Figura solis", representing the sun as the centre circle within the heavens, and showing the angle at which the earth stands in relation to it. An attempt at the same diagram was made, and broken off, on f. 115v.

## LITERATURE

Berger, Harald. "Albert von Sachsen," <sup>2</sup>*Verfasserlexikon* 11, Berlin and New York, 2004 [online edition].

Gloria, A. *Monumenti della Università di Padova (1318-1405)*, Padua, 1888.

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Muñoz García, Angel. "Albert of Saxony, Bibliography," *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 32 (1990), pp. 161-90.

Perreiah, Alan R. *Paul of Venice: A Bibliographical Guide*, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1986.

Sarnowsky, Jürgen. *Die Aristotelisch-scholastische Theorie der Bewegung. Studien zum Kommentar Alberts von Sachsen zur Physik des Aristoteles*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen N. F. 32, Münster, 1989.

Zonta, Gasparo, and Giovanni Brotto. *Acta graduum academicorum gymnasii Patavini ab anno 1406 ad annum 1450*, vol. 1, 1406-1434, *Fonti per la storia dell'Università di Padova* 4, Padua, <sup>2</sup>1970.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Alcuin: Infothek der Scholastik, on Albert's "Sophismata"

[http://www-app.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/PKGG/Philosophie/Gesch\\_Phil/alcuin/work.php?id=966](http://www-app.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/PKGG/Philosophie/Gesch_Phil/alcuin/work.php?id=966)

Critical Edition of Albert's "Sophismata" Project

<http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/abstracts/abstract.asp?L=D&PROJ=P24892>

Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke

<http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>

Historische Grundwissenschaften: Database of Notarial Seals

<http://www.hgw-online.net/menschzeichen/index.php?nav=Notarszeichen&p=41#>

The National Archives, United Kingdom: The Richard Le Gallienne Papers

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=138-920leg&cid=-1#-1>

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