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PRINCIPIA AND INTROITUS
IN THIRTEENTH CENTURY CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL EXEGESIS
WITH RELATED TEXTS

During the last twenty years scholars in the field of medieval scriptural exegesis, Gilbert Dahan, A. J. Minnis and Nancy Spatz, among others, have studied the content, structure, and function of principia or inaugural university lectures on the entire Bible, and introitus or author's prologues. A notable increase in the number of edited principia and prologue material now available has enriched scholarship and contributed to a better understanding of their place within the broader spectrum of the Christian medieval biblical commentary tradition. Nevertheless, the edited material represents only a fraction of what has been identified in manuscript form. A surprising number of principia have survived — more than one hundred fifty — although only a small proportion, perhaps only five to ten percent, can be securely linked to an author and date. The vast majority are

anonymous, difficult to date, and scattered throughout sermon collections and works of biblical exegesis. It is important to identify, edit and study additional texts that introduced students to either the Bible as a whole or individual books so that their theological, historical, exegetical, and pedagogical value may be better understood within the context of scripture study at the Paris schools during the thirteenth century.

This article examines texts that fall into one of two categories: principia on the whole Bible and introitus on particular books of the Bible. Within a medieval context this division was not disjunctive as medieval exegetes and scribes made no such distinction. However, an artificial distinction will be drawn between these two terms in this article: principium will be understood primarily as general introductory material to the whole Bible; introitus as prologue material to particular books of the Bible. The first part of this article examines principia on the entire Bible, both in specific and general terms; the second part discusses introitus by Stephen Langton, Hugh of St. Cher, Peter of Rheims, William of Middleton, William of Luzi, and Peter of Limoges, five of which have been edited and may be found in the appendices. The selected texts, products of unprecedented biblical commentary production at Paris between 1180 and 1280, share related material that is useful in distinguishing what an author contributed from what he contributed as an exegete.

I. PRINCIA AND RELATED TEXTS

The term principium can refer to an inaugural address on the whole Bible delivered by an incepting Master of the Sacred Page or perhaps by a Dominican or Franciscan lector at the beginning of his course on Scripture. Sixteen thirteenth-century principia, attributed to the following authors, have been published: Thomas Chobham, Robert Grosseteste, Odo of Châteauroux, John of La Rochelle, Albert the Great, Guy of Aumone, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas Pressoir, Odo of Châteauroux, (2) Matthew of Aquasparta, Peter John Olivi, and Stephen of Besançon. I have identified a third manuscript, Paris, BNF lat. 15604, folio 358rb-vc, containing Albert the Great’s Principium biblicum in its entirety, which may necessitate a revision of Fries’ edition, previously based on two manuscripts. Three edited principia attributed to Peter John Olivi, Henry of Ghent, and Peter of Scala, cannot be securely linked to these authors. A principium by Nicholas of Gorran has survived in no less than eleven manuscripts. Two other principia were assigned dubious attributions by later scholars: one is entitled, Introitus alter generalis ad S. Scripturam: Hoc omnia liber vivo et testamentum principium, which was dubiousy attributed to Matthew of Aquas-

3. Unlike the other fourteen principia, which were most likely delivered as inception speeches, Peter Olivi’s five principia on Scripture are introductory lectures recommending the study of the Bible; cf. Peter of John Olivi on the Bible. Principia quinque in sacrum scripturam. Postilla in libros et in I ad Corinthios, ed. D. Flood and G. Göll, St. Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1997.


5. D. Flood argued persuasively against attributing to Peter John Olivi the anonymous principium, Ostentatio nubi Dominus liberum, which initially had been attributed to Bonaventure; cf. Peter of John Olivi on the Bible, pp. 7-8.

6. Although both B. Smalley and the editor of the Lactans ordinaria, R. Macken, are wary of attributing the work to Henry of Ghent, both agree that it was probably the work of a master of theology produced sometime in the last quarter of the thirteenth century; cf. Henricus de Gandavo, Lactans Ordinaria super sacram scripturam, ed. with intro. by R. Macken, Leiden: Brill, 1985, p. XX; and B. Smalley, “A Commentary on the Hexaemeron by Henry of Ghent,” RTAM 20 (1995): p. 60.

parare the other, an introitus in theologiam, Intravit Rex ut videret discambientes... produced before 1250, was falsely attributed to Thomas Aquinas. In Fr. Louis Bataillon's opinion, it was probably composed by a Dominican sometime before 1250. The bulk of the principia, however, remain anonymous.

As Gilbert Dahan has noted, a complete inventory of biblical principia has yet to be made. Stegmüller's catalogue of biblical commentaries offers the best starting point for indentifying principia. Although at least 150 complete and incomplete principia were identified by Stegmüller and Schnayer, there is little doubt that this number falls far short of the actual number of surviving principia. However, it is important to note that as principia were not normally part of a larger work and stood alone, they


11) The principia were variously listed by Stegmüller as "Atlas prologus in principiis studii" [11456], "Principium et virium tot., virium toti., [11455], "Principium in theologiam [10261,717]. "Principium biblicon [10262, 12]. "Principium in sacra Scriptura [8656]."

were often taken for sermons on account of their style, structure, and length. Consequently, they are sometimes found among large collections of university sermons, or, on rare occasions, in collections of principia. For example, seven principia are ascribed to the Dominican John of Naples, Master of Theology at Paris between 1315 and 1317. An interesting collection of 28 anonymous, thirteenth century principia is located in a manuscript conserved at Naples. Recent research by Michèle Mulchay in the manuscript Florence, Conv. soppr. G. 4. 936, indicates that principia and introitus were gathered together for the purpose of lecturing on the Bible at the Dominican studium in Florence during the last quarter of the thirteenth century. As Mulchay notes, a copy of Thomas Aquinas's principium survives in a collection of sixteen introductory sermons on the entire Bible. These were preserved by Thomas' student, Dominican Remigio de Girolami, who refers to them as « Prologi super Bibliam » 17. Twenty introductions to individual books of the Bible follow these introductory sermons. Mulchay speculates that Remigio delivered these prolegomena and principia at the opening of each school year lector in the convent of Santa Maria Novella at Florence.

12) For example, see Schnayer, Rep. vol. 4, pp. 628 and 164; vol. 5, p. 601, n. 302; vol. 6, p. 255; and vol. 8, p. 683.
15) The author is grateful to Professor Mulchay for sharing her research material. For a more complete assessment of the Florentine manuscript and its contents, see M. Mulchay's forthcoming book, Dominikum Theologin Santrae Florentiae. Remigio de Girolami and the School of Santa Maria Novellae in Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, series, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers.
16) Fols. 269ra-259rb. This is the only copy of Aquinas's principium biblicum known to contain both Rigo monte (Commentatio scripturarum) and Hie est liber (Divisor scripturarum) in the same manuscript; see MS Firenze, Bibli. Corv. Suppr. G. IV. 936, f. 269ra-271vb; cf. H. F. Dondaine and H. V. Schoener, Codices Manuascripti operarum Thomas de Aquinum, i. Rome, Comendio Leoni, 1967, pp. 31-351. Rigo monte has been identified in one other manuscript: Munich, Staatsbibl., Clm. 13501, f. 109v-11r; cf. H. V. Schoener, Codices Manuascripti..., i. II, p. 367-[827]. Hie est liber has been identified in two manuscripts: London, British Museum, Harley 2628, f. 429ra-430vb; cf. H. V. Schoener, idem, p. 239-[150]; and Venezia Biblioteca dei PP. Redentoristis, 4, 470-471; cf. R. Quinto, Venezia Biblioteca dei PP. Redentoristis (S. Maria della Consolazione, detta "Della Pasa"), to be published in Venice in 2003. The author wishes to express his gratitude to R. Quinto for sharing his scholarship with him.
18) Fols. 399rb-337ra.
Nearly all the edited examples of identifiable principia have been linked to inaugural speeches by incepting masters of the Sacred Page at Paris. Although the principium; Hic est liber mandatorum, by Nicholas of Gorran, who never incepted as a master at Paris, suggests that biblical lectors of the mendicant orders may have patterned their introductory material upon university incepition speeches, more evidence is needed to confirm whether lectors at the Dominican and Franciscan studies looked to the Parisian university principium as a model for their own opening lectures on the Bible. That Nicholas’s principium is indistinguishable from a university incepition speech is hardly surprising given that, as the parallel passages show, he clearly borrowed from Thomas Aquinas’ incepition speech of 1256.

NICHOLAS DE GORRAN
MS. Würzburg. 151, f., 9v

Autoritas huius Scripturae magna ostenditur ex tribus.
Secundo ex necessitate, quia littera faciendum. Marc. ultimum. Qui crediderit, et baptizatus fuerit, salus orit etc.

Tertio ex dictorium uniformitate, quia omnes auctores idem crediderunt. Nec mirum, quia omnes ab uno magistro didicerunt. Mr. XXIII: Veni et genu magister vester. Iem edem spiritu loquiti sunt, I Cor. XII: Dissectiones sunt gratiarum, idem autem Spiritus; et II Pe. 1: Spiritus sancto inspiravit etc. Iem habuerunt unum affectum, Act. III:15: Multitudinis etc.

THOMAS DE AQUINO

Autoritas autem huius Scripturae ex tribus ostenditur efficax.
Primo ex origine: quia Deus origo eius est. Unde dicit: mandatorum Dei. Baruch III [37]: Hic admitterit omnem viam;

Secundo, ostenditur ex necessitate quam scilicet imponit: Marc. ult. [16]: qui autem non crediderit, condemnabitur etc.

Tertio, ostenditur efficax ex dictorium uniformitate, quia omnes qui sacram doctrinam crediderunt, idem docuerunt: 1 Cor. XV [11]: Sive autem ego, sive illi: sic praeventum, sic credidissim. Et hoc necesse est quia omnes habuerunt unum magistrum: Matth. XXIII [8]: Unus est magister vester etc.; unam habuerunt spiritum: 2 Cor. XII [18]: Nonne edem spiritus ambulavit in?; unum insumpserunt affectum: Act. III [33]: Multitudinis credendum una orat anima et cor unum in Deo.

20. The passage is taken from P. Salvatore’s edition, Due sermoni inediti di S. Tommaso d’Aquino, Roma, 1912, p. 17, whose transcription of Thomas’ text was based on ms Firenze, Conv. Sopiti. G. iv. 936.

The First Part

Principia on the whole Bible had a twofold division. In the first part the author might praise the excellence of Sacred Scripture or theology, emphasize qualities which should mark a master, or define the study of theology (theologia vel sacra doctrina) by discussing its similarities to and dissimilarities from the human arts and sciences. As was noted earlier, all edited principia appear to be of a magisterial level and none of them can be definitively linked to the promotion ceremony of a baccalarius biblicus. Nancy Spatz’s research has led her to conclude that «no commendations of Scripture delivered by bachelors or cursores at inaugural ceremonies have been positively identified. Whether or not bachelors who lectured on Scripture in the thirteenth century delivered solemn principia in accordance with fourteenth-century practices remains debatable.» However, as she noted, bachelors by the early 1240’s were producing introductions to the first book of the Sententia. Certain prologues to the Sententia were clearly patterned after the commendatio sacrae scripturae of principia delivered by masters of the Sacred Page. One such example is contained in ms Paris, BNF lat. 155743, that Gerard of Abbeville, a Master of Theology, bequeathed to the Sorbonne library in 12724. Its rubric on folio 110a reads: «ex legato magistro G. de Abbatissaevilla», followed by:


APPENDIX I
Petrus de Lemoviciis

Principium super canicium canticorum


1. In uerbo proposito dupliciter exposito in uinantur duo, uidelice sacre Scriptu
re commendacio et presentis doctrina dilucidacio. Commentarius autem in primis
sacra Scriptura a quattuor prorogatuis quibus preferetur uniuersis scientiis, usurpate ab
originis nobilitate, a celstitudinis dignitate, a certitudinis claritate, a pluritutinis
fructuositate.

2. Quantum ad primum prorogatium premitiitur in uerbo proposito: Ego faci. Est
enim Verbum sapiencie increate a qua sacra Scriptura originatur immediate, infra
eodem capitulum: Ego sapiencia effusi flumin. Illa flumin sunt sacrae uolumina,
que spiritualibus documentis uelud intelleclualibus fluctuibus irrand ingent erem
terre. Hec audimus cotidie in sacris erudicionibus et uexationibus uocem saluific
eam eleuare. Vnde recte dicitur per Psalmistam: Eleeuuerunt flumin, Domino, eleeu
uerunt flumin uocem suam. Nunc absurde dicit flumin et flumin, ut comprehendat
non saepe quam ueretur. In Vetere namque Testamento uffinit sapiencie quattuor uolumi
qua quattuor flumin, ut puro legale, sapiens, historiale, prophetale; ac in Novo
quattuor alia sibi correspondcntia, uicelcer evangelicum, apostolicium, hystoricum et
propheticum. Et quoniam in his fluminibus seu uolumibus idem spiritus per
diversa capita est loquentur, non inepre prescriptu Gen. 2,15, per flumin in quattuor
icapta derivantur.

3. Quantum ad secundum prorogatium, subiectum: in celis, id est in celestibus non
terestribus doctrinis. Quanto nunc prae orisernos sunt terris, tanto celestes doctri
nec sunt celsiores terrenis. Vnde celestis sapiencie dicto uoce propheticico: Sicut exsultau
tur celis a terra, sic exsultate sunt uie mea a viis uestris. Ys. 55,8. Que uie nse uie sapiencie,
de quibus scribunt Prover. 96. Ambulate per uias prudentie.

4. Quantum ad terciam prorogatiam, subiectum: ut oriretur lumen. In quo, sicut
dictum est, commendatur sacra Scriptura quattuor ad certitudinis et uidencia clari
tatem, et aper uidencia luminis comparatur uidencia doctrine salutaris. Habet enim
lumen siue lux uidenciae causalem, uniuersalem, naturalem: naturalem eo quod ipsa

1. Principium super canicium canticorum. ms. Paris, BNP 16590 f. 94v
16. pot[ pot] uita scriptis cod. 29. causalem, uniuersalem, naturalem om. hom. pr. m. rest. mg. eodem m.
9-10. infra eodem capitulum] Eccli. 24,40 13-14. Psalmistam 92,3 27. dictum est] Cf. supra u. 6