

An Unedited *Principium Biblicum* attributed to Petrus de Scala, O.P.

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Commissio Leonina

Sixteen thirteenth century *principia* on the Bible have been edited,¹ representing a very small fraction of those that have survived in manuscript form. For this reason alone the anonymous *Principium biblicum*: "*Habet argentum uenarum suarum principia...*", the subject of this article, remains a valuable document. It not only adds materially to our knowledge of biblical training during the second half of the thirteenth century, but also contributes to an understanding of the scholastic structure of biblical teaching, the place of the arts and sciences in the formation of a scripture scholar, and the rationale for dividing and organizing the books of the Bible. Apart from being a formal speech delivered by an incepting master of the sacred page, the *principium* also developed in response to a need by students for introductory material on the entire Bible that was both systematic and easily remembered.

***Principium Biblicum*: dubious authorship**

The *Principium biblicum* by an anonymous thirteenth century biblicist is contained in MS Paris, BNF, lat. 15596 (P), a manuscript that also contains the Dominican Peter of Scala's *Postilla super Matthaum*. Based on solid manuscript evidence, the postill on Matthew can be attributed to Peter of Scala. The same, however, cannot be said for the *Principium biblicum*, which precedes the postill, since it bears no ascription. Its authorship is therefore in doubt. Eight copies of the postill have been identified. Six were copied in the thirteenth century and are of parisian provenance. Of the seven witnesses known, six containing the postill on Matthew bear Peter's name;² the seventh bears no name at all.³

¹ For a complete list of the authors and their edited texts, see the author's forthcoming article, "*Principia* and *Introitus* in Thirteenth Century Biblical Exegesis with Related Texts" presented at the international symposium: "*La Bibbia del XIII secolo*", sponsored by the *Fondazione Ezio Franceschini* and the *Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo Latino* (S.I.S.M.E.L.), in Florence. The paper will be published by S.I.S.M.E.L. in 2002.

² Cf. F. STEGMÜLLER (and K. Reinhardt), *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, (*Repert.*), Madrid-Barcelona, 1950-1980 (11 vol.), t. VI, p. 395: MSS Lüneburg, Ratsbibl. Theol.; Paris, BNF lat. 12022, 15594, 15595 and 15596.

³ *Ibid.*, Paris, BNF lat. 12022.

The ascription in manuscript P, written in the same first hand, reads: "*Explicit postille super matheum secundum fratrem petrum de scala ordinis predicatorum*". It would be imprudent to attribute this *principium* to Peter of Scala given that it accompanies only one of the seven surviving copies of his postill on Matthew. It could well have been appended to Peter of Scala's postill by a biblicalist who wished to present a general introduction on the Bible before proceeding to lecture on Matthew. However doubtful its link to Peter, the possibility that he may have authored it should not be altogether ruled out until philological evidence is provided.

Peter of Scala, O.P.

The Dominican historian Échard provides far more reliable information concerning Peter of Scala's writings than he does concerning his life. He attributed both the *Principium biblicum* and the postill on Matthew to Peter. He seems to have seen manuscript P, since he noted that it was the only manuscript to contain the *Principium biblicum*. In addition to the postill, a sermon *ad clerum* can be added to his surviving writings.⁴ A fourth work, a postill on the Gospel of John that Pope Sixtus V (1585-90) claimed to have seen is presumed lost.⁵ He states that Peter was born at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the northern Italian city of Bergamo, a member of the Veronese ruling family of the Scaliger. He also claims that, according to an oral tradition, he received the habit from St. Dominic in 1219.⁶ However, these details make it difficult to accept that he was the same Peter of Scala, OP who was consecrated bishop of Verona in 1290.⁷ Were they the same person, he would have been in his eighties at the time. Peter died on September 12, 1295.⁸

Date

There is no firm date of composition for manuscript P. However, it is possible to set some provisional dates for the composition of this *principium*. Given that manuscript P was one of eight manuscripts bequeathed to the Sorbonne by the French Cardinal, Guillelmus de Feucherliis, who died in 1295, it must

have been copied before 1295. In addition to this, there is a clear exchange of ideas between Peter's text and the *Lectura ordinaria* attributed to Henry of Ghent.⁹ Although both Beryl Smalley and the editor of the *Lectura ordinaria*, R. Macken, were wary of attributing the work to Henry of Ghent, both agreed that it was probably the work of a master of theology produced sometime in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁰ The following passages show an exchange of thought.

PRINCIPIUM BIBLICUM

MS Paris, BNF lat. 15596

f. 5rb: Quia enim pigri sumus ad faciendum precepta que in libris Moysi continentur, nobis additur duplex excitatium, scilicet per exempla in hystoribus libris et per admonitiones in libris Salomonis: exempla incitant per facta, admonitiones l5val per uerba.

f. 5va: Doctrina mandatorum, id est Moysi, proprie dicta diuiditur in tres partes, scilicet prohemium uel prologum, tractatum et epilogum, sicut diuiditur Liber predicamentorum in antepredicamenta, predicamenta, postpredicamenta. Prologus traditur in libro Genesis ... Tractatus traditur in tribus libris sequentibus, scilicet in Exodo, Leuitico, Numeris, in quibus dantur precepta. Epilogus traditur in Deuteronomio.

f. 5vb: Si ut reparetur iustitia perdita, sic dupliciter: uel secundum statum contemplationis, sic dantur exempla in Esdra, qui reparat templum Domini et reformat cultum Dei; in templo enim erat sedes pontificalis officii et cultus diuini, uel secundum statum actionis, sicut in Neemia, qui reparat ciuitatem, in qua erat sedes regni.

LECTURA ORDINARIA¹¹

p. 17, v. 68-71: Unde quia nos sumus pigri et ignari ad implendum nuda praecepta, propter hoc nobis ad praecepti impletionem necessaria est directio, ut sciamus qualiter rite agamus: quae fiunt et per uerba exhortationis doctorum, et per exempla operis iustorum.

p. 19, v. 3-7: Lex Moysis tripliciter solet diuidi. Primo modo in prooemium, tractatum et epilogum, ut dicamus secundum Hebraeos, quod illi quinque libri sunt unus liber, cuius prooemium sit Genesis, tractatus sint tres libri sequentes: Exodus, Leuiticus et Numeri, epilogus sit Deuteronomium.

p. 22, v. 18-23: Sequitur pars exemplorum de reparatione iustitiae deperditae, quae sunt duplicia: aut enim sunt ad reparandam iustitiam deperditam in regimine spiritualium vitae contemplativae, quae habentur in Esdra, qui templum reparavit et cultum diuinum in eo, aut in regimine temporalium vitae activae, quae habentur in Neemia, qui reparavit ciuitatem et regimen in ea.

⁴ Cf. T. KAEPEL, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi* (SOPMA), t. III, p. 260, n. 3336; SCHNEIDER, *Repert.*, t. IV, p. 357, n. 4; p. 82, n. 1; and C. LUNA, *16 Repertorio dei sermoni*, in the series, *Aegidii Romani opera omnia*, Firenze Olschki, 1990, p. 57, n. 68.

⁵ Cf. J. QUÉTIF and J. ÉCHARD, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* (SOP), (Paris, 1719-1721) t. I, p. 417B.

⁶ Cf. SOP, t. I, p. 417A.

⁷ Cf. C. EUBUL *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, Regensburg, 1898, p. 554.

⁸ Cf. STEPHANUS DE SALANIACO et BERNARDUS GUIDONIS, *De quatuor in quibus Deus Praedicatorum ordinem insigniuit*, ed. T. KAEPEL, MOPH 22 (1949): 76, note 6.

⁹ For the text of the *introductio generalis* to the *Lectura ordinaria*, see: *Lectura ordinaria super sacram scripturam Henrico de Gandavo adscripta*, ed. R. MACKEN in the series, *Henrici de Gandavo opera omnia XXXVI*, Leuven, 1980: pp. 5-27.

¹⁰ Cf. MACKEN, *op. cit.*, p. xxli; B. SMALLEY, "A Commentary on the Hexameron by Henry of Ghent" in *RTAM* 20 (1953): p. 60.

¹¹ Cf. MACKEN, *op. cit.*

(i) ad ea que sunt fidei	EPIST. AD CORINTHIOS I	30
(ii) ad ea sunt morum uel bone uite	EPIST. AD CORINTHIOS II	30
ii. concordia ad prelatos et superiores	EPIST. AD GALATAS	30
iii. exercitium boni operis		
(i) faciendo bona	EPIST. AD EPHESIOS	30
(ii) tolerando aduersa	EPIST. AD PHILIPPENSES	30
(iii) declinando a malo	EPIST. AD COLOSSENSES	30
iv. perseuerancia finalis		
(i) contra graues temptationes	EPIST. AD THESSALONICENSES I	31
(ii) contra grauiore temptationes	EPIST. AD THESSALONICENSES II	31
Vel:		
(i) in operatione boni	EPIST. AD THESSALONICENSES I	31
(ii) in absentatione mali	EPIST. AD THESSALONICENSES II	31
(b) prelati siue maiores		32-36
i. in spiritualibus		
(i) hortatur prelatos ad benignitatem		
(1) officium pastorale benigne exequendo	EPIST. AD TIMOTHEUM I	36
(2) contra tyrannos gregem Domini deffendendo	EPIST. AD TIMOTHEUM II	36
(ii) hortatur ad seueritatem	EPIST. AD TITUM	35
ii. in temporalibus		
(i) principes instruit quod bene se habeant ad subditos	EPIST. AD PHILEMONEM	37
(c) Conuersi de iudeis	EPIST. AD HEBRAEOS	37
B. Secundum tempus belli et aduersitatis		39-43
a. constancia fidei quoad Deum	EPIST. IACOBI	40
b. obediencia quoad prelatum		41
(a) hortatur ad obedientiam minores siue imperfectiores	EPIST. I PETRI	44
(b) hortatur ad obedientiam maiores siue perfectiores	EPIST. II PETRI	44
c. concordia quoad proximum		
(a) hortatur ad caritatem generaliter	EPIST. I IOANNIS	45
(b) hortatur ad caritatem specialiter		
i. ad caritatis affectum	EPIST. II IOANNIS	45
ii. ad caritatis opus uel effectum	EPIST. III IOANNIS	45
d. perseueranciam in bono quoad seipsum	EPIST. IUDAE	43
3.3. quoad ecclesie consummationem et terminum	APOCALYPSIS	46

<Principium Biblicum>

<Sacrae Scripturae Commendatio>

*Habet argentum uenarum suarum principia, et auro locus est
in quo conflatur. Iob xxviii, a.*

1. Sicut dicit beatus Augustinus, IIII libro, *De doctrina christiana*, capitulo II^o a: "Debet diuinarum Scripturarum tractator et doctor, defensor recte fidei ac debellator erroris, et bona docere et male dedocere. 5
Et in hoc opere sermonis consiliare aduersos, remissos erigere, nescientibus, quid agere, quid exspectare debeant intimare". Sed ut conuenienter hec exequantur tria sunt doctori necessaria, scilicet eloquencia, sapientia, et bona uita seu gracia, que in uerbis propositis designantur, cum dicitur: *Habet argentum* etc., in argento, eloquencia; in auro, sapientia; in con- 10
flatorio gracia significantur. Prouer. xxii^o, a: *Super argentum et aurum gracia bona*. In quibus uerbis Iob sacram Scripturam sub methaphora auri et argenti commendat. Vnde beatus Gregorius, exponens illud uerbum, *Habet argentum* etc., *Moralia*, libro xviii^o, tractu xiii^o, dicit: "In argento eloquium, in auro uite uel sapientie claritas designari solet". 15

2. In sacra enim Scriptura inuenimus argentum eloquencie, aurum sapientie, et conflatorium gracie. Primo, uideamus de argento eloquencie, circa quod notandum quod diuinum eloquium ad modum argenti debet esse purgatum, ponderatum, sonorum, et a sacris paginis sumere uenarum exordium. 20

3. Primo, debet esse purgatum ab omni errore et falsitate, ideo dicit Ps.: *Eloquia Domini eloquia casta*, id est ab omni errore et falsitate immunia; *argentum igne eaminatum, probatum terre*, id est a terra, scilicet ab omni terrenitate, *purgatum septuplum*, id est perfecte per septiformem Spiritum sanctum. 25

4. Secundo, debet diuinum eloquium ad modum argenti esse ponderatum in discreta consideratione, Ysa. lvi^o, dicitur: *Argentum statera ponderatis*. Debet enim doctor uerba sue antequam ea proferat ponderare in statera discretionis ut prius ueniant ad limam quam ad linguam. Ideo dicitur Eccl. xxviii^o 29 g: *Argentum tuum confla*, Glosa interlinearis, 30
"eloquia ^{113rb} oris". Et uerbis tuis facito stateram, et frenos ori tuo rec-

29 limam] lunam cod.: limam scripsi.

3-7 Augustinus] *De doctr. christiana* lib. 4, c. 4 (CCSL 32, p. 119, u.1-6). 14-15 Moralia] Gregorius, *Moral.* lib. 18, c. 26 (CCSL 143A, p. 910, u. 2-4). 22-25 Ps. ... sanctum] Cf. *Glossa Lombardi*, in Ps. 11,7 (PL 191, 157A). 23-24 Ps.] 11,7. 24-25 per septisformem ... sanctum] Cf. Isa. 11, 2-3. 30-31 Glosa] *Glossa interlin.* (Rusch, t.II p.774a).