

# STUDIA SENTENTIARUM

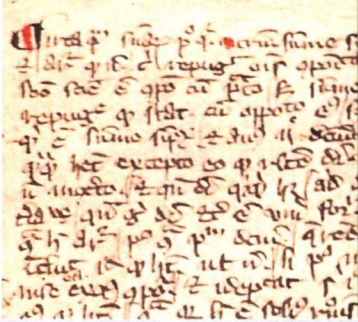
## The Forge of Doctrine

The Academic Year 1330-31 and the Rise of  
Scotism at the University of Paris

*William O. Duba*

BREKON'S





# STUDIA SENTENTIARUM

A rare survival provides unmatched access to the the medieval classroom. In the academic year 1330-31, the Franciscan theologian, William of Brienne, lectured on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and disputed with the other theologians at the University of Paris. The original, official notes of these lectures and disputes survives in a manuscript codex at the National Library of the Czech Republic, and they constitute the oldest known original record of an entire university course. An analysis of this manuscript reconstructs the daily reality of the University of Paris in the fourteenth century, delineating the pace and organization of instruction within the school and the debates between the schools. The transcription made during William's lectures and the later modifications and additions reveal how the major vehicle for Scholastic thought, the written *Sentences* commentary, relates to fourteenth-century teaching. As a teacher and a scholar, William of Brienne was a dedicated follower of the philosophy and theology of John Duns Scotus (+1308). He constructed Scotist doctrine for his students and defended it from his peers. This book shows concretely how scholastic thinkers made, communicated, and debated ideas at the medieval universities. Appendices document the entire process with critical editions of William's academic debates (*principia*), his promotion speech, and a selection of his lectures and sources.

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# THE FORGE OF DOCTRINE

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# Studia Sententiarum

Edited by / dirigé par  
Claire Angotti, Monica Brânzei, and William O. Duba

Volume 2



# Preface

I conceived this book on Nissi Beach, Ayia Napa, Cyprus. I had brought with me to Cyprus my bathing suit, a beach towel, sunscreen – in short, I thought I had everything for the beach. As we were about to get in the car, my host, Chris Schabel, pointed out what I'd forgotten: both he and Monica Brânzei had prints of Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl manuscripts, but I'd already gone through my manuscript prints on the flights from Switzerland. No matter, he had just printed out images from a codex in Prague.

Of course, I knew the codex. Six months previously, I had been to Prague to study a manuscript of Francis of Marchia's commentary on book III of the *Sentences* held in the Castle Archive. Chris wanted to edit a future-contingent question from an obscure Franciscan's *Sentences* commentary, but his microfilm of the only manuscript witness was illegible. Could I order a copy? Maybe we'll do a question-list together. So I trudged down to the National Library, found the manuscript room, and ordered digital reproductions.

From Prague, I returned to Switzerland and continued work on the Francis of Marchia project, trying to sort out the redactional mess behind his commentaries on the *Sentences*. To make sense of the complex tradition, I hypothesized what the original must have looked like, uneasily aware of the fantastic peril such reasoning entailed; for countless scholars, especially those involved with Scotus, have been seduced by an attractive manuscript, leading teams of editors deeper in the desert in the pursuit of what turns out to be a mirage.

What I saw on the beach, printed on A3 black-and-white paper, had to be an illusion. It looked exactly like what I believed an original *reportatio* of a Franciscan's lectures on the *Sentences* would look like, and no such thing was known to survive. I tried to pierce the illusion, to find some trait, some correction, some mark that would show that this was not the original. I failed.



I took the imagery back with me to Switzerland, where the study of the manuscript became a priority for the Swiss National Science Foundation *Ambizione* project I was leading. At the beginning, my goals were modest: The *festschrift* we were preparing for William J. Courtenay was delayed, and my article, an edition of a Parisian arts master's promotion speech, seemed rather thin. Lest the *festschrift* be too short, I decided to work this manuscript into a longer article, using as inspiration Courtenay's own "Pastor of Serrescuderio (d. 1356) and MS Saint-Omer 239". Like Courtenay's classic article, I wanted to present an original witness to *Sentences* lectures. Yet, in confronting Courtenay's results with my own, it became evident that the Saint-Omer MS was also a *reportatio*. At the same time, we identified who the *reportator* was: Steven J. Livesey had just discovered another Saint-Omer manuscript, the notebook of Peter of Allouagne, and Peter's hand matched the one of the note-taker of Pastor. Peter's notebook itself held great riches for understanding the university milieu in which William of Brienne worked. Only in Prague could I put these pieces together. The Czech Academy of Sciences generously financed an extended visit to Prague so that I could examine the codex in detail. On March 21, 2014, I completed a draft of "William of Brienne (fl. 1330) and MS Praha, NKCR VIII.F.14", which contained an early version of the central chapters of this book (now I–V) and most of the appendices (all but D and G). At 180 A4 pages, the "Equinox Edition" proved to be too long for a *festschrift*; I circulated a draft among colleagues, put some of my conclusions on Durand of Aurillac into a note for the *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, and returned to editorial work.

During the next two years, while working at Radboud University Nijmegen as a part of the Radboud Excellence Initiative, I strove not only to write an article for the Courtenay *festschrift*, but also to correct the shortcomings of the Equinox Edition. To complete the picture of William of Brienne as a Scotist, I had to discuss his doctrine of the formal distinction; to present the totality of his known creative work, I needed to edit his inaugural lecture. These changes resulted in the penultimate draft, completed in August, 2016 (the "Assumption Edition"), which, again, circulated informally for comment.

I have also presented parts of this research at various colloquia, notably at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, organized by Dr. Pavel Blažek, the Freiburger Forschungskolloquium, organized by Professor Catherine König-Pralong, and the First Meeting of the Society for

the Study of Medieval Thought in the Americas, organized by Professor Katherine Tachau. I owe a great debt to the organizers for giving me the opportunity to discuss the work and to the participants, both for their helpful feedback and their remarkable patience.

This volume represents the culmination of this work. Some might find it rather old-fashioned, building on nineteenth-century attempts to reconstruct the history of universities, debating theses posited before the Second World War, and the average publication date of modern works cited is 1981. Yet, the most recent developments in information technology have made this book possible. The manuscript that serves as the focus of this book was catalogued in the 1950s, and microfilmed in the 1980s, but it is only with the advent of digital photography that its importance became apparent. With the advent of large-scale digitalization projects, this individual case becomes the general rule: as ever more of our shared patrimony becomes available practically instantaneously, the requirements for scholarship have changed. For this study, while the overwhelming majority of scholastic works from the early fourteenth century exist only in manuscript form, I have benefited from having many of these manuscripts available in a way previous generations could not even imagine. Yet, with so much uncharted territory, I know I have overlooked far more than I have found. For this, I beg the reader's indulgence.

I owe thanks to my wife, Trine Wismann, who has accompanied me on the project from the beach onward. She has also graciously traced the watermarks and compiled the index. I am also greatly indebted to the generosity of many institutions, named above, and the kind help of many friends and scholars, too numerous to name. I owe particular thanks to Paul Bakker, Monica Brînzei, Julie Brumberg-Chaumont, William J. Courtenay, Jo Edge, Francesco Fiorentino, Russ Friedman, Roberto Lambertini, Steven J. Livesey, Patrick Nold, Timothy Noone, Chris Schabel, Garrett Smith, Tiziana Suarez-Nani, Edith Sylla, Okihito Utamura, and Ueli Zahnd.



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# Introduction

## William of Brienne (fl. 1330) and MS Praha, NKCR VIII.F.14

From its foundation at the beginning of the thirteenth century until the Black Death arrived in 1348, the University of Paris enjoyed a position of undisputed hegemony over European thought. Its Faculty of Theology claimed to be supreme at the university, and the educational systems of the religious orders supported this claim. The mendicant orders, most famously the Dominicans and Franciscans, set for themselves the mission of preaching across the known world, and that mission required not only a network of convents, but also a sophisticated means of teaching its preachers, while enforcing a doctrinal consistency that maintained not only orthodoxy, but also the shared identity of the particular order.<sup>1</sup> The means of instruction adopted by the mendicant orders foresaw a series of schools, whose teachers had spent some time studying at a *studium generale*, most notably Paris, overseen and guided by those who had achieved the highest degree, the Master of Theology, and the “best” masters acquired such a degree at Paris. For all, religious or secular, who aspired to the glory of Master of Theology in Paris, the most onerous requirement was the famed “Reading of the *Sentences*”, to give an obligatory two-year course (shortened to one year in the fourteenth century) that covered the material in Peter Lombard’s *Four Books of the Sentences*, a theological textbook produced in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> During

<sup>1</sup> N. ŞENOCAK, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209–1310*, Ithaca 2012; B. ROEST, *A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210–1517)* (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance 11), Leiden 2000; M.M. MULCHAHEY, “*First the Bow is Bent in Study...*” *Dominican Education Before 1350* (Studies and Texts 132), Toronto 1998.

<sup>2</sup> For a general introduction to Peter Lombard’s and his *Sentences*, see M.L. COLLISH, *Peter Lombard* (Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 41), Leiden 1994; P.W. ROSEMAN, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard’s Sentences* (Rethinking the Middle Ages 2), Peterborough, ON 2007. On the history

this *Sentences*-lecture, the candidate, now a “bachelor of the *Sentences*” or *sententiarius*, actualized his knowledge, demonstrating his competence to discuss philosophical and theological topics ranging from God to Creation and back. At the end of the lecture, the candidate became known as a “formed bachelor”, and it is this teaching, this masterwork, that more than any other activity qualified him to seek the license and become a master of theology.

The present study focuses on a single artefact, a manuscript codex preserved in Prague, in the National Library of the Czech Republic. It uses this artefact, containing the written account of the *Sentences* lectures of an eminently obscure Franciscan theologian, to expand our knowledge of the careers of theologians at the medieval universities, as well as the institutional and social contexts. From this perspective, it tries to answer the questions: What was the intellectual enterprise of lecturing on the *Sentences* in Fourteenth-Century Paris? How were, mechanically, courses given? What process did a scholar follow to produce what is now known as a “*Sentences* commentary”?<sup>3</sup> How did a theologian, over

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of *Sentences* commentaries, see R.L. FRIEDMAN, “The *Sentences* Commentary 1250–1320. General Trends, The Impact of the Religious Orders, and the Test Case of Predestination”, in *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Current Research*, vol. 1, ed. G. EVANS, Leiden 2002, pp. 41–128.

- <sup>3</sup> C. SCHABEL, “Were There *Sentences* Commentaries?”, in *Commenter au moyen âge*, ed. O. BOULNOIS, forthcoming, finds the earliest mention of a “Commentary on the *Sentences*” of Peter Lombard in the mid-sixteenth century. On the grounds that these texts are not literal commentaries, but usually take the form of questions, and that they have at best a thematic relationship with the Lombard’s text, Schabel argues that they are not *Sentences* commentaries; rather the term should be reserved for the expositions of Peter Lombard’s text. I will concede that the medieval usage of *commentarium* and its variants refers primarily to literal commentaries and that the expression “*Sentences* commentary” tends to fool scholars into thinking the so-named work a debased derivative of a twelfth-century handbook of patristics instead of potentially being a treatise of systematic philosophy and theology with a global scope. Yet the medieval practice of producing a commentary often includes both an *expositio* of the literal text followed by a series of *dubia* or *quaestiones*, and many of these texts (including Schabel’s “extreme example” of a non-commentary, that of Gerald Odonis) have both an *expositio* and questions. Moreover, even Pierre Ceffons, Schabel’s exemplary case “of separation from Peter Lombard’s text”, does make some vestigial effort to relate his questions to the structure of Lombard’s text. Schabel himself in the article in question uses the term “*Sentences* commentary” to refer to the genre. Therefore, in what follows, I follow Schabel in using the term as an anachronistic reference to the genre of works related to classroom teaching on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* and that exhibit explicit structural dependence on that work.

the course of an academic year, forge the doctrine that defined himself and his school?

The method used to answer these questions presents itself: incorporate the results of previous studies on the history of universities, when necessary reconstructing institutional practice from surviving statutes and documents of record, and connect the outcome to the preferred grand narrative in the history of ideas and institutions. Yet the challenge is that the preferred grand narratives of previous generations have not only colored prior syntheses on the history of universities, but they have also influenced the publication and even the survival of the documents of record on which these syntheses depend.

For the University of Paris, the foundational history was provided by Du Boulay's 6-volume *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, stretching from its supposed foundation by Charlemagne to 1500.<sup>4</sup> By the nineteenth century, advances in archival science and philological rigor led to the collection and publication of university statutes,<sup>5</sup> as well as the weaving of this material together into the grand histories of universities.<sup>6</sup> These early historians of universities were well aware of the limitation of using purely prescriptive documents and they sought out documents of record.<sup>7</sup> Alongside their claims to scientific accuracy and embedded

<sup>4</sup> E. DU BOULAY, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, 6 vols., Paris 1665–1673.

<sup>5</sup> Most notably, H. DENIFLE and E. CHATELAIN, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (=CUP), 5 vols., Paris 1889–1897; M. FOURNIER, *Les statuts et privilèges des universités françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu'en 1789*, 4 vols., Paris 1890–1894; C. THUROT, *De l'organisation de l'enseignement dans l'université de Paris au moyen âge*, Paris 1850; F. EHRLE, *I più antichi statuti della Facoltà teologica dell'Università di Bologna* (Universitatis Bononiensis Monumenta 1), Bologna 1932.

<sup>6</sup> Chief among which is H. RASHDALL, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, second edition, 3 vols., ed. F.M. POWICKE and A.B. EMDEN, Oxford 1936.

<sup>7</sup> A. MOLINIER, "Étude sur l'organisation de l'Université de Toulouse, au quatorzième et au quinzième siècle", in *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, eds. C. DE VIC and J. VAISSETTE, second edition, v. 7, Toulouse 1879, pp. 570–571: "Loin d'avoir la prétention de combler une lacune, qui subsistera peut-être longtemps encore, nous avons seulement voulu fournir aux historiens de cette célèbre institution les matériaux les plus indispensables; publiant les statuts de l'Université dont la plupart sont restés inédits jusqu'à ce jour, nous avons cru utile de noter les principales remarques que la lecture de ces textes a pu nous suggérer. Mais les statuts, si importants qu'on les suppose, ne donnent que l'histoire extérieure de l'Université; nous y trouvons pour ainsi dire la théorie des études, les règles qui présidaient aux examens, le but que les législateurs du quatorzième siècle s'étaient proposé. Pour savoir comment ces statuts étaient appliqués, pour apprécier leur influence sur les études, pour connaître la vie des étudiants, la nature

in their monumental contributions, these scholars promoted a specific vision of the history of universities and its relevance for the present. Since the present study builds upon these sources, it would help at the outset to underscore the explicit goal of previous generations of historians of the University of Paris, and, in particular, to focus on how this goal influenced the selection and presentation of material in the single most important edition of source material, the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*.

In 1879, Pope Leo XIII promulgated the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, calling for a revival of studies of Thomas Aquinas and scholastic thought in general, citing as the chief reason:

Many of those who, with minds alienated from the faith, hate Catholic institutions, claim reason as their sole mistress and guide. Now, We think that, apart from the supernatural help of God, nothing is better calculated to heal those minds and to bring them into favor with the Catholic faith than the solid doctrine of the Fathers and the Scholastics, who so clearly and forcibly demonstrate the firm foundations of the faith, its divine origin, its certain truth, the arguments that sustain it, the benefits it has conferred on the human race, and its perfect accord with reason, in a manner to satisfy completely minds open to persuasion, however unwilling and repugnant.<sup>8</sup>

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de l'enseignement des maîtres, il faudrait joindre aux textes que nous publions des éléments d'information bien plus nombreux et beaucoup plus difficiles à réunir. Pour savoir comment se recrutait la population universitaire de Toulouse au moyen âge, il faudrait parcourir les registres d'inscriptions qui nous sont restés; pour connaître les mœurs des étudiants, il faudrait étudier les statuts des collèges et rechercher les documents littéraires, judiciaires, administratifs, qui parlent de cette turbulente agglomération, qui répriment ses excès ou règlementent sa vie journalière. Enfin, celui qui voudrait se rendre compte du profit que l'on pouvait tirer de l'instruction reçue à l'Université de Toulouse devrait rechercher les écrivains marquants qui y ont fait leurs études, parcourir leurs écrits, étudier leur enseignement. Ce sont là des recherches qu'il nous était impossible de faire."

<sup>8</sup> LEO PAPA XIII, "Aeterni Patris", [http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/la/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_04081879\\_aeterni-patris.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/la/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html) (last accessed January 3, 2016; English translation at the same site): "Deinde plurimi ex iis hominibus qui, abalienato a fide animo, instituta catholica oderunt, solam sibi esse magistrum ac ducem rationem profitentur. Ad hos autem sanandos, et in gratiam cum fide catholica restituendos, praeter supernaturale Dei auxilium, nihil esse opportunius arbitramur, quam solidam Patrum et Scholasticorum doctrinam, qui firmissima fidei fundamenta, divinam illius originem, certam veritatem, argumenta quibus suadetur, beneficia in humanum genus collata, perfectamque cum ratione concordiam tanta evidentia et vi commonstrant, quanta nectendis mentibus vel maxime invititis et repugnantias abunde sufficiat."