


Introduction

THE YOUNG candidate – some thought too young – sat behind a large podium at the front of the room. To his left, seated in a long line of chairs, were the junior masters of the university; to his right sat the chancellor and all the senior masters. The previous evening had been spent responding to bachelors and masters in a complex series of “disputed questions.” But now the presiding master stood and placed on his head a biretta and said aloud: “I place on you the magisterial biretta in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The young candidate had become a master, and after birettas had been distributed to the other masters to place on their own heads, the gathered company sat down to hear the new master deliver his inaugural lecture: the *principium*. It was spring, 1256, and the new master was the Dominican friar, Thomas d’Aquino, the son of a minor nobleman from Italy, who had grown up in a small castle not too far from the site of the great Benedictine abbey at Monte Cassino, where the newly incepted master had studied as a youth.¹

Two years earlier, in 1254, Giovanni di Fidanza from Bagnoregio in Umbria, a friar of the Franciscan order who had taken the religious name Bonaventure and was several years Thomas’s senior, was incepted in a similar ceremony.² Whereas Brother Thomas had been only a few years in residence at Paris, having spent his early years studying at the Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, after which he had studied grammar, logic, and the *libri naturales* of Aristotle with the Dominicans at Naples, young Giovanni, by contrast, had been resident at the University of Paris for many years by the time of his inception, having begun his studies in the Arts there as a layman nearly twenty years earlier in 1235 at

¹ For the chronology of Thomas’s life and work, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). Still good, however, is James Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas d’Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1974, 1983).

² The best research on the chronology of Bonaventure’s life and the date of his inception as master can be found in Jay Hammond, “Dating Bonaventure’s Inception as Regent Master,” *Franciscan Studies*, vol. 67 (2009): 179–226.

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the age of 14. He had attained the rank of Master of Arts by the time he was 22, at which point he entered the Franciscan novitiate and began his studies as an *auditor theologiae*.

There he studied for some years under the great Franciscan master Alexander of Hales who, as legend has it, said of young Giovanni that “it seemed as though Adam never sinned in him.” After entering the Franciscan order in 1244 at age 23, Bonaventure advanced quickly in his studies. He was licensed as a *lector biblicus* by John of Parma, Minister General of the order, in 1248 and began lecturing cursorily on the Bible, but only to his fellow friars at the Cordeliers, the Franciscan House of Studies. In 1248, he was officially granted the status of *baccalarius biblicus*, a “bachelor of the Bible,” at the University of Paris. In 1250, he advanced to the status of *baccalarius sententiarius* “bachelor of the *Sentences*.” By 1253, he was ready to be incepted as a master.

By this time, however, serious disputes had broken out between the secular masters and the friars at the University. In February of 1252, the secular masters had published a letter, *Quoniam in promotione*, in which they demanded that no religious order could have more than one chair at the University. The Dominicans already had two, so this demand presented a decisive challenge to them. The Franciscans had only one chair at the University, and it was occupied by William of Middleton, so the Franciscans simply kept Bonaventure lecturing in the private chair at the Franciscan House. During March of 1253, riots broke out in Paris, and a student was killed. The University decreed that all lectures should cease until the town made proper reparations. Despite the decree, the two Dominican masters and the Franciscan William of Middleton continued lecturing. In retaliation, the University expelled all three masters and began the formal process of excommunication.

Unlike the Dominicans, who continued their fight against the secular masters and the University until 1256 (when Thomas was incepted, but only after the intervention of Pope Alexander IV), the Franciscans under John of Parma appear to have made peace with University officials two years earlier by consenting to all the University’s demands: the Franciscans would henceforth abide by all University statutes; they would not seek more than one chair; and they would remove William of Middleton from his chair. William was removed from the public chair in theology recognized by the University and took up a position teaching in the private chair at the Franciscan House, while Bonaventure left the private chair and made ready to take the public chair at the University. First, however, he had to be incepted.³

Every regent master in theology at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century had to receive his position in an official inception ceremony, usually held in the great hall (the *aula*) of the Bishop of Paris, during which the candidate would deliver a brief sermon that came to be known as the *principium in aula*. Sometime later, usually on the first day before classes were scheduled to begin, the new Master was also required to deliver a *resumptio* (a “resumption” address), which constituted his first act as a fully incepted Master.⁴

³ Hammond, “Dating Bonaventure’s Inception,” 225, holds that the “almost three year silence regarding any secular opposition to the Franciscans [between 1254 and 1257] strongly suggests that Bonaventure was received into the *consortium magistrorum* at the time of his inception [in 1254]. While this must be explained more clearly, it undermines the dominate narrative that he remained unrecognized by the University until 1256 or 1257.”

⁴ For an invaluable introduction to the inception ceremony and to the entire genre of the medieval *principium* address, see Nancy Spatz, *Principia: A Study and Edition of Inception Speeches Delivered*

There were clear rules in the University's documents about what the subject matter of each of these two addresses should be: the *principium in aula* was to contain "a commendation of Scripture and a comparison of Scripture to other fields of study," and the *resumptio* was to set forth a "division and description of the books of the Bible."⁵ This inception ceremony was seen as the culmination of a long course of study and the commencement of a long and fruitful scholarly career for which the master had spent many years preparing.

The Three Types of *Principia*

The *principium in aula* was not the only *principium* these aspiring medieval masters were asked to compose. They had been prepared for their inception by writing many *principia* – what we often call "prologues" – to their biblical commentaries and to each book of their commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

Since we will be discussing *principia* of various types, it will be good to get clear on the different items in the medieval university that fell under this one heading.⁶ At the University of Paris in the thirteenth century, "*principium*" could refer to one of three things: (1) the inaugural lecture of a course, (2) a written prologue to a commentary, or (3) the address a candidate would give during his inception as regent master.⁷ Let's begin with the first of these.


When a bachelor or master began a course in the thirteenth century, he would give an inaugural lecture in which he would extol the importance of the text on which he would be lecturing and exhort the students to prepare themselves for the discipline of study. This introductory lecture was also called an *introitus*, an *ingressus* or an *accessus*, terms that indicate the character of the address. This lecture was supposed to provide an "entrance" (*ingressus*) or "introduction" (*introitus*) by which the students could "enter into" the text to

Before the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, ca. 1180–1286 (Cornell University Dissertation, 1992), esp. 39–50. Spatz uses the term *principium* for the first address delivered in the bishop's hall, and "resumption *principium*" for the second. I have chosen to simplify the terminology and call the first, the master's *principium* and the second, his *resumptio*, although I have sometimes used the phrases "resumptio address" or "resumption address." All contemporary descriptions of the inception ceremony for the masters at Paris are based ultimately on the early fourteenth century document that can be found in the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 2:693–694. See also the description of the inception ceremony in Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, 96–110.

⁵ See Spatz, *Principia*, 62. We do not have both the *principium in aula* and the *resumptio* addresses for each master, so it is not possible to make a final judgment. For a description of the extant thirteenth-century *principia in aula*, see Spatz, 130–145; for the *resumptio* addresses, see Spatz, 145–155.

⁶ We have an analogous problem in English books with the terms "preface," "prologue," and "introduction," the meaning and usage of which are flexible and interchangeable.

⁷ See Mariken Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages*, Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du Moyen Âge 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), esp. 315: "The term *principium* is generally used, in the context of the medieval university, for the inaugural lecture of a course. In the context of a student's career an inaugural lecture of this kind marked the transitions from one phase to another, and was, usually, a solemn and public occasion. Bachelors of Theology, who were first allowed to teach on the Bible and then on Peter of Lombard's *Sententiae*, held *principia* or inaugural lectures on each of these occasions, in which they eulogized the texts and gave short analyses or introductions."

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be studied. It gave them “access” (*accessus*) by “drawing them nearer” to the subject. All these terms suggest what I will later describe in more detail as the “protreptic” function of these *principia*.⁸

Nothing approaching a complete inventory of these biblical *principia* has yet been made.⁹ Although, as Athanasius Sulavik reports, “A surprising number of *principia* [of this first sort] have survived – more than one hundred fifty . . . only a small proportion, perhaps only five to ten percent, can be securely linked to an author and date. The majority of these are anonymous, difficult to date, and scattered throughout sermon collections and works of biblical exegesis.”¹⁰ The challenge in identifying such *principia* is that “they were often taken for sermons on account of their structure, style, and length.”¹¹ This is because when masters delivered these inaugural *principia* lectures, they employed the same *sermo modernus* style they used in preaching.

It is important not to confuse these introductory lectures with the *principium in aula* address a master would give at his inception. There are more *principia in aula* addresses remaining to be discovered for the masters we know incepted at Paris, but even if we had them all, there would not be “more than one hundred fifty.”¹² In one collection of “*principia*,” for example, seven *principia* are ascribed to the Dominican John of Naples, who was master of theology at Paris between 1315 and 1317.¹³ John did not incept seven times during those two years; these seven *principia* are the introductory lectures he delivered at the beginning of successive terms.

This brings us to the second type of *principium*. What seems likely is that, if a master’s lectures on a book of the Bible were recorded, corrected, and sent to the stationers for copying, the *principium* he had delivered verbally at the beginning of the term was published as the *principium* (what we call the “prologue”) of the text.¹⁴ Just as schoolmen

⁸ For an excellent introduction to the genre of the classical philosophical protreptic, see Mark D. Jordan, “Ancient Philosophic Protreptic and the Problem of Persuasive Genres,” *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, vol. 4, no. 4 (Autumn 1986): 309–333.

⁹ See Gilbert Dahan, “Genres, Forms and Various Methods in Christian Exegesis of the Middle Ages,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation V/2*, ed. M. Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 215.

¹⁰ Athanasius Sulavik, “*Principia* and *Introitus* in Thirteenth Century Christian Biblical Exegesis with Related Texts,” in *La Bibbia del XIII secolo, storia del testo, storia dell’esegesi*, eds. Giuseppe Cremascoli and Francesco Santi (Florence: SISMEL, 2004), 269–270. So, for example, *principia* are listed in various places and under various titles in Friedrich Stegmüller’s *Repertorium biblicum mediæ ævi*, 11 vols. (Madrid, 1950–), now online at <http://repbib.uni-trier.de/cgi-bin/rebihome.tcl>; as for example, *Alius prologus in principio* [11456], *Principium vet. et nov. test.* [11455], *Principium biblicum* [10026, 12], and *Principium in sacra Scriptura* [8650].

¹¹ Sulavik, 272–273.

¹² According to Sulavik, 270–271: “Sixteen thirteenth-century *principia* [in the sense of “inaugural addresses”] attributed to the following, have been published: Thomas Chobham, Robert Grosseteste, Odo of Châteaux, John of La Rochelle, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas Pressoir, Odo of Chateauroux, Matthew of Aquasparta, Peter John Olivi, and Stephen of Besançon.”

¹³ See Sulavik, 273.

¹⁴ For the best overview of the nature and function of these prologues to medieval biblical commentaries, especially as an *accessus* guiding the reader’s interpretive perspective and interests, see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984; 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988, 2009).

of the thirteenth century would call both the original oral dispute and the later written document a “disputed question,” so also he would call both the preparatory exhortatory address delivered orally on the first day of the term and the later written version a “*principium*.”

Along with (1) the inaugural lecture of a course, and (2) a written prologue to a commentary, the word *principium* was also used to refer to (3) the address a candidate would give during his inception ceremony. The third type of *principium* was what we have been calling the *principium in aula*. In an attempt to clarify matters, Athanasius Sulavik sets up a distinction between a *principium*, a term he associates solely with an inception address, and an *introitus*, the term he uses for the prologue to an individual book of the Bible. While the distinction is useful, it seems not to have been one commonly observed in the thirteenth century, when the word *principium* could apply to either.

So, for example, the manuscript in which Joshua Benson discovered St. Bonaventure’s inaugural *principium in aula* address contained a collection of both inaugural addresses and commentary prologues (or what Prof. Sulavik would call an *introitus*).¹⁵ Scholars have long known of collections of medieval sermons; Bonaventure made a collection of his sermons, one for each Sunday of the liturgical year, many of which may not have been preached before an actual congregation.¹⁶ Such collections were likely meant to serve as samples from which other preachers could learn. We now know that collections of *principia* were also sometimes kept, both inception addresses and first lectures of the term, likely for similar reasons: as examples from which prospective masters could learn.¹⁷


In much of the modern literature on inception *principia*, the master’s two addresses – what I have called earlier the *principium in aula* and the *resumptio* – are sometimes both called a *principium*.¹⁸ There may be medieval precedent for this confusing usage, since the *resumptio* address was usually delivered the day before classes commenced and thus may have been thought of as the new master’s first introductory lecture. In his *resumptio*, the master was required to provide a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible, and as we will see, an elaborate *divisio textus* was a common feature in thirteenth century introductory lectures and prologues.

¹⁵ See Joshua C. Benson, “Bonaventure’s Inaugural Sermon at Paris,” *Collectanea Franciscana* 82 (2012): 517–562.

¹⁶ See *The Sunday Sermons of St. Bonaventure*, tr. Timothy Johnson, Works of Bonaventure, vol. 12 (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008).

¹⁷ Recent research by Michèle Mulcahey on the manuscript Firenze, 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 Mulcahey notes, a copy of Thomas Aquinas’ *principium* survives in a collection of sixteen introductory sermons on the entire Bible. These were preserved by Thomas’ student, Remigio de’Girolami, who refers to them as “*Prologi super Bibliam*.” Twenty introductions to individual books of the Bible and several prologues to the books of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* follow these introductory sermons. See M. Mulcahey, *First the Bow Is Bent in Study: Dominican Education Before 1350* (Toronto: P.I.M.S., 1998), 391–394 and Sulavik, 273, nn. 13–18.

¹⁸ So, for example, if one were to look up the text published under the title “*Principium Biblicum Alberti Magni*,” edited by Albert Fries, in *Studia Albertina: Festschrift für Bernhard Geyer*, ed. H. Ostlender (Münster Westf.: Aschendorff, 1952), 128–147, a quick glance at the text reveals that it contains a long *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible, suggesting that this is actually Albert’s *resumptio*.

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In her dissertation on thirteenth-century inception *principia*, Nancy Spatz attempted to clarify matters for her readers by calling the first address (*in aula*) a “*principium*” and the second on the first day of class a “resumption *principium*.”¹⁹ These terms were helpful in the context of her work, because she dealt exclusively with inaugural addresses. They would be less useful for our purposes, however, since we will be dealing with inaugural addresses and written prologues both. In this text, therefore, when I am referring to the first of the two inception addresses, I will call it a “*principium* address” or a *principium in aula* address.” The second of the two inaugural lectures I will call a “*resumptio*” or “*resumptio* address.”

Principia and the Thirteenth-Century “Modern Sermon”

One especially crucial element connecting all three types of *principia* is that they all employ the contemporary *sermo modernus* style of preaching. This style of preaching had become popular – indeed it was nearly ubiquitous in Western Europe – from the mid-thirteenth century to the late fourteenth.²⁰

I will have more to say about the *sermo modernus* style and its origins in Chapter 2, but very briefly, the three basic characteristics of this style of preaching were

1. The *thema*

Sermo modernus sermons were structured around an opening biblical verse, the *thema*, which served as a mnemonic device that provided the structure for the topics covered in the sermon.

2. The *divisio*

After a short introductory prologue (or *prothema*), the preacher would divide the opening biblical *thema* verse, typically into three or four sections. Thomas’s sermon *Ecce rex tuus*, for example, took as its *thema* verse the passage from Matthew 21.5: *Ecce rex tuus venit tibi mansuetus*. For the purpose of his sermon, Thomas divided the verse into four parts that provided the topics for each of the four parts of his sermon: *Ecce / rex tuus / venit tibi / mansuetus*.

3. The *dilatatio*

After the medieval preacher had made his basic division of the *thema*, he then had to develop or “dilate” each. *Dilatatio* is sometimes translated “amplify,” but I prefer to stay closer to the Latin original. There were many creative ways of dilating upon a word or a group of words recommended by the preaching manuals of the day.²¹

¹⁹ For a good explanation of the sometimes confusing nomenclature used in inception ceremonies (*aula*, *vesperies*, *collatio*, *principium*), see Nancy Spatz, “Imagery in University Inception Sermons,” in *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University*, ed. J. Hamesse, Kienzle, et al. (Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 1998), esp. 331–333.

²⁰ Michèle Mulcahey, for example (*First the Bow*, 403, n. 10), notes that John of Wales, a Franciscan master at Paris around 1270, wrote in his *De arte praedicandi* that the older style of homily “did not sit particularly well with modern listeners, who liked to see the clear articulation of a sermon developed from a scriptural *thema*,” as was Thomas’s practice. Indeed, by 1290, the Italian Dominican Fra Giacomo da Fusignano, prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome would write that the older style was suitable only for preaching to the ignorant.

²¹ For more on all three, see Randall B. Smith, *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner’s Guide* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2016). Henceforth, merely “*Reading the Sermons*.”

This style of preaching, which involved developing content from the divided words of an opening biblical verse, will seem odd, perhaps even a bit off-putting, to many of us today. But it was clearly not considered odd or off-putting to listeners in Thomas's time. Manuscript evidence and contemporary accounts show that the *sermo modernus* style of preaching that Thomas and his contemporaries employed was not something that was forced on the medieval congregations of the time; rather it became very popular, very fast, because there was a demand for it. All *principium* addresses at Paris in the thirteenth century were crafted in this style, as were all the prologues of biblical commentaries. They were all structured around the divisions of an opening *thema* verse and dilated according to the contemporary rules of preaching.


Thomas's two inception addresses can be found under several different titles and are sometimes confusingly called Thomas's two *principium* addresses, but they can be identified by their "incipits": the first words of the biblical verse on which each is based. The first of these, Thomas's *principium in aula* was based on the passage from Psalm 103:13 beginning *Rigans montes de superioribus*; the second, Thomas's *resumptio*, is known by its beginning phrase taken from Baruch 4:1: *Hic est liber mandatorum*.²²

²² Both addresses are sometimes found under the general heading: *Commendatio Sacrae Scripturae*, although this can vary. In the "Brief Catalogue of Authentic Works" at the back of Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, for example, #35 on p. 373 reads: "*Commendatio Sacrae Scripturae*: Two *principia* (Paris, April or May 1256)." And then: "These two *sermones* were discovered by Ucelli in Florence, Bibl. Cent. MS Conv. Sopp. G. 4. 36 (Santa Maria Novella), and immediately recognized as *principia*, i.e., inaugural lectures. The first *Commendatio S. Scripturae* is based on the text 'Rigans montes de superioribus,' etc. (Ps. 103:13), and was presented by Thomas on the second day of his inception as master in theology in the spring of 1256 (Tocco, *Hystoria*, c. 16). The second *sermo* compliments the first and is more traditional as a *commendatio*. It is a division of all the books of Scripture, based on the text of Baruch 4:1, 'Hic est liber mandatorum,' etc. Mandonnet, assuming that Thomas was a *cursor biblicus* at Paris for two years before reading the *Sentences*, claimed that the second *sermo* was Thomas's *principium* when he began cursory reading of the Bible in 1252. However, we have argued that Thomas was never *cursor biblicus* at Paris, and that the *sermo secundus* was delivered by Thomas on the first *dies legibilis* following inception, i.e., at his *resumptio*, "in which lecture he brought to completion his incomplete inaugural lecture given *in aula*." For an invaluable discussion of the two addresses and their place in the context of the entire inception ceremony, see Weisheipl, 96–110, esp. 103–104 for Weisheipl's argument that *Hic est liber* was also part of the master's inception ceremony and thus *not* from an earlier period when Thomas was a *cursor biblicus*.

In the "Brief Catalogue of the Works of Saint Thomas Aquinas" by Giles Emery in Torrell, *St. Thomas*, 338, *Rigans montes* and *Hic est liber* are described, in agreement with Weisheipl's judgment, as "two *Principia*, i.e., inaugural lectures . . . held on the occasion of the *inceptio* of the new *magister in actu regens* in Paris between 3 March and 17 June 1256."

In the "Corpus Thomisticum," that invaluable on-line resource containing the complete works of Aquinas in Latin (corpusthomisticum.org), one will find the first *principium* address under the title "Principium Rigans montes" in the "Opuscula theologica," while the second *principium* address, "Hic est liber," is found further down, in the "Opera probabilia authenticitate" section under "Sermones" with the heading "Principium biblicum."

Finally, one will find English translations of both *principia* addresses on Thérèse Bonin's invaluable website "Thomas Aquinas in English: A Bibliography" (www.home.duq.edu/~bonin/thomasbibliography.html) under the general heading "Commentaries on Scripture," by clicking on the link "*Commendatio Sacrae Scripturae* (2), Thomas' inaugural lectures," which will take one to an online version of Ralph McInerny's English translations of both *principia* which appeared first in: *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 5–17. On the linked website,

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The situation is somewhat different with Bonaventure's inception *principium* and *resumptio* addresses, but no less confusing. Whereas *Rigans montes* and *Hic est liber mandatorum* have appeared in lists of Thomas's authentic works since his death, it was until recently assumed that Bonaventure's two inception addresses were lost. In the 1974 celebration commemorating the seventh centenary of Bonaventure's death, Bonaventure scholar Ignatius Brady bemoaned the fact that two important texts of Bonaventure's had not yet been discovered: his *principium biblicum* and what he (Brady) called his "*principium magisteriale* or *aulicum*, which he described as a "*recommendatio s. scripturae* or *recommendatio sacrae doctrinae* given in brief form by the doctorandus in the aula/hall of the bishop and repeated at length soon after his promotion."²³ Brady went on to lament that, although we possess these lectures for other great medieval theologians such as John of La Rochelle and Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure's remained missing.

Since Brady gave that address, scholars have clarified that the *recommendatio s. scripturae* or *recommendatio sacrae doctrinae* given in brief form by the doctorandus in the aula/hall of the bishop was not repeated. Rather, the new master delivered a second address at his *resumptio* which contained another "commendation" of Sacred Scripture, this second one containing a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible, which is what Brady may have been referring to by the term "*principium biblicum*." Most importantly, since Brady's address, Bonaventure scholar Joshua Benson was able to identify a manuscript containing Bonaventure's inaugural *principium* and *resumptio* addresses. Most startling was the fact that this manuscript showed that the text we have traditionally come to now as the *De reductione artium ad theologiam* had been, in its original version with a different opening paragraph, Bonaventure's *resumptio*.²⁴

Inception and the Three Duties of the Master

Study of these prologues and *principia* addresses provides important insights into how medieval theologians were trained and what habits of mind they developed. The methodology and habits of mind involved in engaging in "disputed questions" was naturally also quite important, but this element of the pedagogy and practice of the medieval university has long been known and studied. Understanding the culture of preaching, prologues, and *principia* at Paris will provide us with a complementary set of perspectives on the habits of mind they brought to their work.

At the end of the twelfth century, Peter Cantor (d. 1197) had identified the three duties of the medieval master as *lectio* ("reading," i.e., "lecturing" or commenting on texts, especially

however, one will find, somewhat oddly, the second of the two *principia* ("Hic est liber") listed first, and the first of them ("Rigans Montes") below it.

²³ See Ignatius Brady, "The *Opera Omnia* of Saint Bonaventure Revisited," in *Proceedings of the Seventh Centenary Celebration of the Death of Saint Bonaventure*, ed. Pascal Foley (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1975), 47–59; quoted from Joshua C. Benson, "Identifying the Literary Genre of the *De reductione artium ad theologiam*: Bonaventure's Inaugural Lecture at Paris," *Franciscan Studies*, vol. 67 (2009): 149–150.

²⁴ See Joshua Benson, "Bonaventure's *De reductione artium ad theologiam* and Its Early Reception as an Inaugural Sermon," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 85, no. 1 (2011): 7–24.

the Bible), *disputatio* (disputation), and *praedicatio* (preaching).²⁵ This threefold distinction became classic in the thirteenth century. The inception ceremony at Paris served as the capstone of the prospective master's education by requiring the candidate to demonstrate all three basic duties of the master: *disputatio*, *praedicatio*, and *lectio*. The candidate had to engage in a complex series of disputed questions (*disputatio*) on the first and second days, after which he would deliver his *principium in aula*, a sermon in praise of Scripture (*praedicatio*). Finally, in his *resumptio*, the newly incepted master was required to give the same kind of introductory lecture he would subsequently give at the beginning of each course in which the students had to undertake an in-depth reading and study of a biblical text. The goal of this *lectio*, this first lecture of a course, was to prepare the students to read with interest and understanding. This normally meant laying out at the beginning of the course a *divisio textus* of the book about to be commented upon. In the master's *resumptio*, he demonstrated his ability to do this (and showed his acquaintance with all the Scriptures) by laying out a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible.²⁶

To get a sense of what the inception ceremony was preparing the young master for, one might first glance at any of the works normally associated with medieval thinkers crafted in the style of the medieval *disputatio*. To get a sense of the other two duties of the master, however, we need to look at a medieval biblical commentary, a product of *lectio*, paying special attention to the prologue, which would have been written in the style common in medieval preaching.

These written prefaces (also called *principia*, as we have seen) served both protreptic and preparatory purposes: they prepared the students by revealing the “skeleton” of the work and also exhorted them to take up the study seriously. The master provided his students, who were faced with a mass of intimidating and confusing verbiage, with a useful *ingressus* into the material, especially a suitable *divisio textus* of the work. But even this was not enough. He also had to inspire them, by explaining what wisdom was to be attained by their study of the book on which he intended to lecture.


What Should a Good Prologue Do?

In one sense, a prologue, from the Greek *pro* (before) and *logoi* (words), is simply some words found before the body of a text. But if the preface was written by the author himself, why not simply begin the book and put whatever is in the prologue in chapter 1? Why call it a “prologue”? What purpose does a prologue serve?

One obvious answer is that a prologue should introduce the book to the reader. What I am calling a “Prologue” is sometimes called an “Introduction.” But substituting words in this way does not get us any closer to answering the question; it merely shifts the debate, so

²⁵ Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum* 1: *In tribus igitur consistit exercitum sacrae scripturae: circa lectionem, disputationem et praedicationem* ... (In these three consists the exercise of Sacred Scripture: lecture, disputation, and preaching). See *Verbum Abbreviatum Petri Cantoris Parisiensis. Verbum abbreviatum. Textus conflatus*, ed. M. Boutry, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, 196 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).

²⁶ Note in Peter Cantor's original comment that all three duties were related to the “exercise” (*exercitum*) of sacred Scripture.

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that now we have to ask: “What would a good ‘introduction’ be?” Or, taking a cue from the name of the medieval *principium*: How best to *begin*? How does one set a good foundation for reading and reading well?

In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Alasdair MacIntyre compares the major presuppositions of what he calls “the encyclopedic stance” of modern thought – that truth “not only is what it is, independent of standpoint, but can be discovered or confirmed by any adequately intelligent person, no matter what his point of view” – with that of an earlier, classical view of the philosophic craft which held that a prior commitment was required on the part of the student who aspired to study and study well.²⁷ The kind of transformation required, argues MacIntyre, was of the sort “which is involved in making oneself into an apprentice to a craft,” the craft in this case being philosophical enquiry.²⁸ It was essential, therefore, that the enquirer learn first “how to make him or herself into a particular kind of person” before he or she could move forward “towards a knowledge of the truth about his or her good and about *the good*.”²⁹

The customary modern way of writing a prologue reflects the modern “encyclopedic” stance toward education, which presupposes that anyone with sufficient background information, no matter what his or her point of view, prior ideological commitments, or manner of life, can read and learn what a text intends to teach. It is for this reason that many modern prologues tend to read like encyclopedia articles. We get a biography and background of the author; information about the historical, literary, intellectual, and cultural context within which the author worked and wrote; details about the manuscript tradition of the text, if they are relevant; comparisons with or comments about other works by the same author; and perhaps comments about the work’s reception and interpretation through the ages. These are the categories commonly found in most encyclopedia articles. Such details are useful if one is doing a research paper on the author or the work. Such prologues rarely appear to have taken as their primary goal exciting the reader about the work.

A notable exception would be C. S. Lewis’s introduction to Sr. Penelope Lawson’s translation of Athanasius’s *On the Incarnation*. Since one cannot find this translation of *On the Incarnation* without Lewis’s introduction, even on-line, it seems clear that Lewis’s introduction remains a principal draw to this particular translation.³⁰ One can even find Lewis’s introduction published separately from the translation. Some of this popularity can be explained by Lewis’s large following, but not all of it. Why, then, has this little introduction retained its popularity?

Lewis was by training a scholar of medieval and renaissance literature and thus was deeply imbued with the spirit of those two historical periods. Two of his many books could be considered “introductions” and both very successful: *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* and the revealingly titled *A Preface to*

²⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 60.

²⁸ MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 61.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ This introduction appears many places on the web, and the volume has been re-printed by St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, but the original copy in the United States was Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. by a religious of C.S.M.V. (New York: Macmillan, 1946). It was published with Lewis’s introduction two years earlier in England by Centenary Press.