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Medieval Images of Alexander of Hales

Abstract: Although Alexander of Hales, OFM (d. 1245) was a famous and influential theologian during his own lifetime and for some time thereafter, only a scant handful of medieval and early modern representations of him are known. Taking as its occasion the need for a cover illustration for a new English translation of Alexander's largest authentic work, the *Glossa in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, this chapter documents a search for medieval images of Alexander of Hales, concluding that the technically anonymous image of a teaching friar found in Vatican City, Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat. 705, f. 1ra, made before 1373 but likely dating to the late 1200s, is the oldest extant image currently known representing Alexander of Hales.

Medieval figure painting was not representative of the population. Too often, it does not show us the people about whom we are most curious. Saints are probably most well-represented. The use of their images in devotion saw to that, although those images are often far removed in time and space from the subjects they depict. After them come rulers, who were represented for propaganda purposes, their image furnishing a kind of virtual presence. Other sorts of notable but not holy people: nobles, bishops, scholars, physicians, artists, merchants, etc., were represented haphazardly, if at all.

Alexander of Hales (d. 1245) is such a person. Although he was once celebrated in a private chapel as *bienheureux Alexandre*, there was never a serious cause for his canonization.¹ His reputation was not for holiness, but for learning. In the academic year 1236–37, he became the first regent master of theology at the university of Paris to join the Franciscan order, in the process bringing the Franciscans their first university chair in theology. This rendered their private house of studies near the Porte Saint-Germain a full-fledged school. It would afterwards become the most important general studium belonging to the order.² Alexander's example was imitated and his accomplishments celebrated, but he was apparently not represented in art. Among those of us who study Alexander, there has long been a running informal dia-

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1 An earlier version of this article appeared on the *Franciscan Connections* blog. Thanks to Krijn Pansters of the Tilburg University School of Catholic Theology Franciscan Study Center and David Couturier of the Franciscan Institute at St Bonaventure University for their kind permission to publish it here. Victorin Doucet, Prolegomena to Alexander of Hales, *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, vol. 1 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951), *51–52 (Prolegomena hereafter).

2 See Bert Roest, *Franciscan Learning, Preaching and Mission c. 1220–1650* (Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 30–32.

logue about images of Alexander: where the few that exist are to be found and whether more may yet be discovered.

About ten years ago, the Franciscan philosophy scholar Lydia Schumacher, of Kings College, London, approached Philipp Rosemann, philosophy scholar at the University of Ireland, Maynooth, editor of Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations series, about forming a scholarly initiative to publish an English translation of the *Glossa in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, Alexander's pioneering lectures on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Probably delivered in the years 1224–27, they introduced the *Sentences* as a textbook to be studied alongside Scripture within the University theology curriculum.³ Thought to be lost for centuries, they were rediscovered in an Assisi manuscript by Fr François-Marie Henquinet, OFM, on 18 May 1945.⁴ By 1957, the Quaracchi editors had produced a critical edition that promised to revolutionize the study of early Franciscan theology.⁵

The study of the Franciscan school before Bonaventure has indeed moved forward by leaps and bounds in the succeeding decades, but the *Glossa* remains underutilized, probably because Latin literacy has been in a steep decline since the Second Vatican Council. By translating the *Glossa* into English, it is hoped that a new generation of students will finally be able to access one of the earliest and most formative monuments of Franciscan theology. Professors Boyd Taylor Coolman and Ian Levy, of Boston College and Providence College respectively, agreed to serve as general editors for the series. The Quaracchi editors graciously gave their consent for Dallas to republish their Latin text in a facing-page format with the translation.⁶ The first volume is scheduled to appear in late 2021 or early 2022.⁷

The series was jump-started by a translation of the *Gloss on the Sentences Book 1* by Fr Roland Teske, SJ, longtime professor of philosophy at Marquette University and a prolific translator of both patristic and medieval works, publishing translations of Augustine, William of Auvergne, Henry of Ghent and many, many others.⁸ Fr Teske's

³ See Philipp W. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: The Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Rethinking the Middle Ages 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 62–67.

⁴ François-Marie Henquinet, 'Le Commentaire d'Alexandre de Hales sur les *Sentences* enfin retrouvé,' in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, Studi e Testi 122, vol. 2 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1946), pp. 359–82; Victorin Doucet, 'A New Source of the "Summa fratris Alexandri:" The Commentary on the *Sentences* of Alexander of Hales,' *Franciscan Studies* 6 (1946), 403–17; Description in 'Prolegomena,' *77–80.

⁵ Alexander of Hales, *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1951–7).

⁶ Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations hosts a homepage for the project: <http://dallasmedievaltexts.org/alexander-hales-project/>

⁷ Alexander of Hales, *Gloss of the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Book 1, Distinctions 1–18*, trans. Aaron Gies and Roland Teske, Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations 28 (Louvain: Peeters, 2021).

⁸ A bibliography of Fr Teske's works may be found in *Tolle Lege: Essays on Augustine and on Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Roland J. Teske, SJ*, ed. Richard C. Taylor, David Twetten, and Michael Wreen (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2011), pp. 17–60.

translation was still incomplete when he died in 2013, but plenty of work had been done to make it a useful place to start. The draft translation had been intended to stand alone, and so necessarily followed Alexander's formulaic, jargon-ridden Latin very closely. To benefit from the DMTT facing-page translation format, where the Latin would always be present for reference, the translation would need to be revised to be more flowing and idiomatic. I was approached to revise and complete this translation for the first volume of the series. Of course, I was happy to accept: in a world with declining latinity, the translation of important primary sources is one of the most necessary and effective modes of teaching theology. I also foresaw that the effort to think Fr Teske's thoughts after him would be an education in itself.

With the volume's completion, a conundrum arrived: what were we to put on the cover of this monumental new translation? Inside we would place an image of Fr Henquinet's great discovery, the Assisi manuscript of Alexander's *Gloss on the Sentences*, but for the cover we hoped for something more, well, iconic. I became preoccupied with the idea of finding a new medieval image of Alexander.

A quick Google image search will show you that there are almost no medieval images of Alexander, but, as I scrolled, one thumbnail seemed to offer a striking exception. A beautiful manuscript decoration from Cambridge, University Library MS Mm.5.31, was copied as a woodcut and printed in an early modern album with a caption indicating that it represented Alexander of Hales.⁹ The painting unfolds in two panels. In the first, Alexander receives communion, meditating on a crucifix placed close by on the altar. In the second, Alexander writes. The text in question is a commentary on the Apocalypse, and the image fittingly echoes John the Evangelist eating the scroll to *prophesy again about many peoples, nations tongues and kings* (Rev. 10:11).

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⁹ 'Alexander of Hales,' image ID: H9MYG9, alamy.com. I have been unable to identify the printed album which was the source for this image.

Fig. 1: Alexander of Bremen, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, frontispiece.¹⁰

Unfortunately, the attribution in the album is false. Upon examination of the original manuscript, now online, the friar represented turns out to be Alexander of Bremen, also known as Alexander Minorita (d. 1271), the author of the Joachite commentary on the Apocalypse which it introduces.¹¹

¹⁰ Cambridge, Univ. lib. MS Mm.5.31, f. 1v: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MM-00005-00031/6>. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

¹¹ On this manuscript and its many illustrations, see: Cambridge University Library, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: 1856), p. 359; Max Huggler, *Der Bilderkreis in den Handschriften der Alexander-Apokalypse* (Rome: Antonianum, 1934), pp. 113–16; Sabine Schmolinsky, *Der Apokalypsenkommentar des Alexander Minorita : zur frühen Rezeption Joachims von Fiore in Deutschland* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1991); Alexander and Alois Wachtel, *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (Weimar: H. Boehlaus Nachf, 1955).

Fig. 2: Schedel, *Weltchronik*¹²

Fig. 3: Schedel, *Liber chronicarum*¹³

¹² Michael Wolgemut and workshop, 'Alexander von ales doctor,' in *Weltchronik*, ed. Hartmann Schedel (Nuremberg, 1493), f. 214v. Source: Klassik Stiftung Weimar: <https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/%20resolver?urn=urn:nbn:de:gbv:32-1-10016192927>. All rights reserved.

¹³ Michael Wolgemut and workshop, 'Alexänder de ales doctor irrefragabilis,' in *Liber chronicarum*, ed. Hartmann Schedel (Nuremberg, 1493), f. 214v. Image courtesy of Paul Spaeth, The Franciscan Institute, St Bonaventure University.

Given the late medieval popularity of the *Summa Halensis*, early printed books provided another possibility. Between the advent of printing in the 1450s and the close of the middle ages around 1500, the *Summa Halensis* was produced in three separate printed editions. None of these carried any illustrations of their putative author.¹⁴ However, the two most widely known medieval images of Alexander come from differing versions of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, f. 214v (1493).¹⁵ Both are from woodcuts made in the large workshop of famous Nuremberg artist Michael Wolgemut. The first, currently featured on Alexander's Wikipedia page, is from the German version. It is also used for some other notables, including Peter Abano (f. 224r), a Paduan philosopher who died in 1316. This image, with long, curly hair, an elaborate scholar's hat and a dyspeptic expression, does not seem to me to capture Alexander's dignified, direct Gregorian style at all.

The other image, from the Latin version of the *Chronicle*, is a better (to my mind) image of a secular doctor reading a codex, featuring a simple tipped felt cap and robes without the wild hair and concentrated grimace of the former image. Neither, of course, tells us anything essential about the historical Alexander, or recalls his specific life and ideas. They are, quite literally, interchangeable.

One likely place to search for an image of a non-venerated medieval person is at their tomb. Unfortunately, Alexander's funerary monument is lost to us. He was buried very prominently in the Church of the Cordeliers at Paris: 'only one tomb distant from the entrance to the choir.' It included a sculpted effigy of the master, for the anonymous 14th-century commentator who recorded the epitaph found there noted that it was written 'in the tabernacle at the head of the sculpted image.'¹⁶ The carving may have been a low-relief set into the floor, as suggested by the comment of a 15th-century Italian traveler.¹⁷ Of known images, only this one would likely

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¹⁴ Alexander of Hales, *Super Tertium Sententiarum* (Venice: Johannes de Colonia et Johannes Manthen, 1474); Alexander of Hales, *Summa Universae Theologiae: Pars 1–4* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1481–82); Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica: Pars 1–4* (Pavia: Joannemantonius de Brirretis et Franciscus Gyrardengus, 1489), thanks to Paul Spaeth of the Franciscan Institute Library at St Bonaventure University and William Short of the Quaracchi Library at Sant'Isidoro, Rome, for their help in checking the incunables. On the printed editions of the *Summa Halensis*, see Frederick R. Goff, *Incunabula in American Libraries* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1964), p. 22; Riccardo Saccenti, 'The Reception of the *Summa Halensis* in the Manuscript Tradition until 1450,' in *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought*, Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie 67, ed. Lydia Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 353–54; Irenaeus Herscher, 'A Bibliography of Alexander of Hales,' *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945), pp. 434–54.

¹⁵ Of course, if one begins the early modern period with Columbus's voyage in 1492, the *Nuremberg Chronicle* would be considered early modern.

¹⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 15327, f. 1v; Quoted in 'Prolegomena,' *29: 'In tumba que de directo distat per unam tumbam tantum ab introitu chori ecclesie fr Minorum Parisius, hec scribuntur. In tabernaculo capitis ymaginis sculpte in dicta tumba scribitur.'

¹⁷ Giovanni Francisci de' Neri Cecchi, *Il viaggio degli ambasciatori Fiorentini al re di Francia nel MCCCCLXI*, ed. G. Milanesi, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, ser. 3, vol 1.1 (1865), p. 32; Quoted in 'Prolegome-

have been what might be called a likeness, since it was sculpted soon after Alexander's death at the instance of his own community.¹⁸ However, it is irretrievably lost. If it managed to survive the fire that engulfed Les Cordeliers in 1580, when many of the medieval tombs were destroyed, it perished in the Revolution.¹⁹ There might have been more possibilities in the library, cloister or lecture hall at Les Cordeliers, had they survived, but they did not.

There is one currently known medieval representation of Alexander in a former Franciscan church. St Katherine's in Lübeck, Germany, built in early the 14th century, boasts a set of choir stalls, installed in 1329, whose backs are decorated with a large cycle of portraits depicting significant Franciscans.²⁰ One of the paintings features Alexander as a friar wearing a simple tipped red felt cap and holding a red book, surrounded by a *titulus* reading: *Magister Alexander de Hales. Hic prius inter omnes scripsit super Sententias*.²¹ As is clear from its style, the painting does not date back to the early 14th century. It dates to a reconfiguration and embellishment of the choir carried out in 1473.²² Nevertheless, this is a medieval image of Alexander which predates the Nuremberg images by 20 years.

Manuscripts are another possibility. Representations of famous scholars such as Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas decorate luxury manuscripts of their more famous works. Alexander was famous in the late 13th and 14th centuries. His long career, innovations in the curriculum and dramatic conversion to the friars made an immediate impression on his contemporaries, while the contributions of scholars who are more famous today, such as Albert, Aquinas and Bonaventure, took longer to be recognized.²³ Could it be that, as a famous scholar, he might be depicted in manuscripts written not too long after his death? Most scholastic manuscripts of real scholarly value are ugly things. They were tools in a difficult profession. Franciscan manuscripts are, if anything, even worse than aver-

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na,' 45*: 'La sepultura d'Alexandro de Ales è tra 'l coro e la chiesa, di sotto, in uno spatio in mezo, la quale è in terra.'

18 John of Garland, in a poem of 1245, recorded the fact that the funeral of Alexander took place six days after his death in the church of the Cordeliers; See 'Prolegomena,' 16*-17*.

19 Laure Beaumont-Maillet, *Le Grand couvent des Cordeliers de Paris: étude historique et archéologique du XIIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: H. Champion, 1975), p. 276, p. 283.

20 Heike Trost, *Die Katharinenkirche in Lübeck: Franziskanische Baukunst im Backsteingebeiß vor der Bettelordensarchitektur zur Bürgerkirche*, Franziskanische Forschungen 47 (Kevalaer: Butzon und Bercker, 2006), pp. 157–8.

21 'Alexander de Hales,' Choir, Katharinenkirche, Lübeck, Germany. Image credit Concord, wikimedia commons, licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexander_Hales_Katharinen.JPG. Thanks to William Short for directing my attention to this image.

22 Trost, *Die Katharinenkirche*, 167, fn. 34; citing Johannes Baltzer, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Hansestadt Lübeck*, bd. 4 (Lübeck: Nöhring, 1926), p. 113.

23 For example, Victorin Doucet, *Prolegomena to SH III*, xxxi, noted that the *SH III* alone boasts more 13th-century exemplars (36) than the *Commentarii in libros IV Sententiarum* by Albert the Great (~20).

Fig. 4: Anonymous. 'Alexander de Hales,' Katharinenkirche, Lübeck, Germany.

age. Although convent libraries certainly came by the occasional luxury manuscript, on the whole, the order's dedication to poverty is evident in the quality of its books. It was, after all, the doctrine contained in the books, and not the books themselves, that the scholars valued. Further, all of these manuscripts have been examined by some of the greatest Franciscan scholars of the past four hundred years: Lucas Wadding, Fidelis a Fanna, François-Marie Henquinet, Victorin Doucet. All searched through the same codices looking for biographical information on Alexander of Hales. Would they not have noticed and popularized any medieval image of him before now? Perhaps, but it was also just possible that images were beside the point for them. They knew, as we know, that unless they were created at a place quite close to his own place and time, such images tell us nothing about the historical Alexander

that might be included in a critical biographical sketch like that published in the Prolegomena to the *Glossa in Sententias*. So there was reason enough to hope.

During the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021, I searched the manuscript inventories for the editions of the *Summa Halensis*, *Glossa in Sententias* and *Quaestiones antiquam esset frater*, reading descriptions published by Doucet and Jacques Bougerol with notes from Fanna and Ignatius Brady recovered from the Quaracchi archives.²⁴ As I expected, there are very, very few luxury manuscripts containing works of Alexander of Hales. Yet, to my amazement, while searching through manuscripts recently digitized by the Vatican Library, I discovered an image, also noted by Doucet in his Prolegomena for *Summa Halensis*, *pars III*, never before published in a modern setting.²⁵ I believe it to be the oldest image representing Alexander of Hales.

The image comes from a manuscript that once belonged to Tomasso Parentucelli di Sarzana, a Bologna-educated fifteenth-century theologian and humanist who collected books on diplomatic missions to England, France and Germany while serving as an aide to blessed Nicolo Albergati (1373–1443). Albergati was a truly exceptional leader. A Carthusian hermit, scholar and diplomat, he was bishop of Bologna from 1417–43, in the process mentoring two popes, Parentucelli and Silvio Enea Piccolomini, who became Pius II.²⁶ After Albergati died in May, 1443, Parentucelli was appointed bishop of Bologna in his place. In 1447, he was elevated to the papacy, taking the name Nicholas to honor his mentor. Nicholas V, theologian, humanist and bibliophile, became the first Renaissance pope.²⁷ Besides his diplomatic accomplishments and a huge building campaign for which he is justly famous, he dedicated large amounts of time and money to rebuilding the papal library, which had been almost completely dispersed in the upheavals of the Great Western Schism and the Avignon papacy. Having himself discovered important copies of Lactantius, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ignatius, and Polycarp on his travels, Pope Nicholas understood the importance of recovering and preserving the literary remains of the early church.²⁸ Large teams of copyists and humanists were employed to copy and acquire manuscripts from all over Europe. At the fall of Constantinople, he dispatched a team to rescue manuscripts from its library, in the process saving many patristic

²⁴ Ignatius Brady, *Early Franciscans on Scripture*, unpublished notes, S-207 (Quaracchi archive, Collegio Sant'Isidoro, Rome); Fidelis a Fanna, *Catalogus generalis rerum omnium quas R.P. Fidelis a Fanna in diversis Europiae bibliothecis perlustrandis recensuit et adnotavit ordine alphabetico digestus*, unpublished manuscript, S223–1 (Quaracchi archive, Collegio Sant'Isidoro, Rome), pp. 10–11; 'Prolegomena' to *SH* I, pp. xii–xxi; *SH* IIa, pp. x–xvii; *SH* IIb, pp. xii–xv; *SH* III, pp. xv–xxx; 'Prolegomena,' 76*–85*; *QD* 1, 7*–24*.

²⁵ Doucet, 'Prolegomena,' p. xxvii.

²⁶ J. G. Rowe, 'Pius II, Pope,' *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1967).

²⁷ See Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 235–91.

²⁸ See Giovanni Sforza, *La patria, la famiglia, e la giovinezza di Papa Niccolò Quinto* (Lucca, 1884), pp. 160–61.

works from oblivion. His personal library, naturally, was incorporated into the collection that would become the Vatican Library, forming the kernel of the *fons Vaticanus latinus* and *graecus*.²⁹ At his death in 1455, the collection of Latin volumes in the papal library had grown from the 136 of his predecessor, Eugenius IV, to 824, one of Europe's largest.³⁰

In his days as an aide to Albergati, Parentucelli already possessed a set of volumes of the *Summa Halensis*. Vat.lat. 701, 702 and 704 contain *Summa Halensis I–III* with some redundant text. They are in the oversized 'royal' format, with pages measuring approximately 37 cm high and 25 cm wide. Marginal notes and an *ex libris* mark in Vat. lat. 702, mark them out as Parentucelli's property.³¹ There is also substantial evidence that he was intimately familiar with their contents. It is carefully described in his *Inventarium*, a list of *desiderata* for a first-class humanist library the pope sent to Cosimo di Medici, which survives in a copy dated 1465.³²

Vat. lat. 705 is a second copy of *Summa Halensis, pars III*, in a slightly smaller format (32 x 23 cm). While it lacks an *ex libris* mark identifying it with Parentucelli, Manfredi identified several comments in his hand.³³ He also designated all four as northern productions dating to the 13th or early 14th centuries. Auguste Pelzer, in his 1931 summary catalog of the *Codices Vaticani Latini*, assigned Vat. lat. 705 to the 13th century *tout court*.³⁴ All four codices feature the gothic textualis script decorated with alternating pen-flourished red and blue initials typical of the Paris book

²⁹ Stinger, *Renaissance in Rome*, pp. 283–86.

³⁰ John Monfasani, 'Popes, Cardinals, Humanists: Notes on the Vatican Library as a Repository of Humanist Manuscripts,' *Manuscripta* 62.2 (2018), p. 221. By 2011, the Vatican Library's main Latin manuscript collection, the fondo vaticano latino, had grown to 15,384 manuscripts.

³¹ Antonio Manfredi, *I codici latini di Niccolò V: Edizione degli inventari e identificazione dei manoscritti*, Studi e testi, 359 (Vatican City: Tipografica Vaticana, 1994), n. 288–90, n. 353, pp. 183–85, p. 221. Although Manfredi correctly identified the text, he did not correctly identify the parts of the *SH* contained in n. 288 and n. 289. In fact, n. 288 [=Vat. lat. 701] contains *Summa I–IIb*, n. 289 [=Vat. lat. 702] contains *Summa IIa–IIb*. The *ex libris* mark in Vat. lat. 702, f. 294v, reads: 'Iste liber est mei Thome de Sarzana qui servio domino episcopo Bononiensi.'

³² The Quaracchi editors did not include this source in their list of testimonia for the vita Alexandri in the Prolegomena to the *Glossa*. See Giovanni Sforza, *La patria, la famiglia, e la giovinezza di Papa Niccolò Quinto* (Lucca, 1884), pp. 359–81 in 373–74: 'Alexander de Hales scripsit opus insigne, comprehendens totum negocium theologicum, quod in quatuor libros partitum est, secundum ordinem Magistri Sententiarum; licet ipsum non ex toto servaverit. Primus et secundus habentur integri; tertius et quartus incompleti. Nam tertius non invenitur nisi usque ad expositionem symbolo Athanasii. Quartus autem non habetur nisi usque ad tractatum de praesentia incolusive.'

³³ Manfredi, *I codici latini*, 221. See f. 66v, 129v and compare autographs of Nicholas V in Manfredi, *I codici latini*, tables.

³⁴ Auguste Pelzer, *Codices Vaticani Latini*, t. 2, cod. 679–1134 (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1931), p. 28.

trade in this period. Each possesses a single decorated initial at the beginning of the main text.³⁵ All appear in the inventory made after Nicholas' death, 1455–57.³⁶

While paleographical and codicological features suggest a 13th-century date for Vat. lat. 705, another famous owner provides a convenient *terminus ante quem*. Using UV light, Manfredi was able to identify an *ex libris* mark at the end of the text, f. 318v, which he read: *iste liber est ad usum fratris Francisci de Fabrica sacre theologiae magister*.³⁷ Franciscus de Fabrica was a 14th-century Umbrian friar who, having served as *lector Sententiarum* at Paris, came to the Franciscan studium in Toulouse as lector, probably in 1362.³⁸ There, in May of 1363, he was given the title *magister in sacrae theologiae* by order of Pope Urban V.³⁹ This is important because it is the title by which he identified himself in the *ad usum* mark in Vat. lat. 705. Therefore, although Franciscus could very well have brought the codex with him from Paris, it was not reserved for his use there. His mark must have been made in Toulouse, where he taught from before 1363 until his accession as minister provincial of the province of St Francis (Umbria). He was appointed to that post sometime after March of 1372 and before July of 1373.⁴⁰ Those duties would have removed him from active teaching and hence the need to have a copy of the *Summa fratris* reserved for his use. The manuscript, therefore, must have been made before 1373, but its paleographical and codicological features indicate that it was made much earlier, likely in the later 13th or early 14th century. Thus, even if we assume the latest possible date for its production, it is still approximately 100 years earlier than the earliest image of Alexander of Hales heretofore known, painted c. 473 at the Katherinenkirche, Lübeck.

The image in question is an 'inhabited initial'. That is to say, it is a large capital letter, a 'T' in this case, in which a person or animal may be found. In this case, both are present. The 'T' is formed by the bodies of two fantastic serpentine beasts. The figure inside has the tonsure of a cleric and wears the hooded robe of a religious.

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³⁵ Vat lat. 701, f. 2ra, has a flourished 'Q' of four lines in red and blue. It also has a decorated initial 'I' in its flyleaves, f. 1v, taken from a legal text. Vat. lat. 702, f. 3ra, has an initial 'C' of four lines in red, blue, brown and gold leaf, inhabited with lions. Vat. lat. 704, f. 1ra, has a decorated initial 'N' of four lines in red and blue. The decoration in Vat. lat. 705 is described below.

³⁶ Manfredi, *I codici latini*, pp. xlv–xlix. The manuscripts may be viewed online at digi.vatlib.it.

³⁷ Manfredi, *I codici latini*, p. 221.

³⁸ Although the document appointing him to the lectorship in Toulouse has not survived, Nicolaus Glassberger's *Chronica, Analecta Franciscana* 2 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1887), p. 196, mentions a large outbreak ('magna mortalitate') of Plague in Toulouse in late 1361, which claimed the lives of ten masters of theology. We may therefore suspect that Franciscus was appointed in spring of 1362 to fill one of these vacancies.

³⁹ *Bullarium Franciscanum* VI, n. 866 (Rome, 1902); cited in Brigide Schwarz, *Kurienuniversität und stadtrömische Universität von ca. 1300 bis 1471* (Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 577. The medieval Fabrica is now Valfabbrica in the Province of Perugia, Umbria, Italy.

⁴⁰ He was deputed to Aragon as a visitator while still a professor in March of 1372, but named in a document as minister provincial for the province of St Francis in July of 1373, see *Bullarium Franciscanum* VI, n. 1175, 1275. He died before October of 1374. See *Bullarium Franciscanum* VI, n. 1352.

Fig. 5: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 705, f. 1r, © 2021, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana^{a)} Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 705, f. 1r, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

He is seated in a chair and reading from a lectern against a gilt background. The painting possesses no caption or *titulus* to let us know just who it represents, but there are powerful indications. The text he inhabits is that which opens the third part of the *Summa Halensis* in all of its complete manuscript copies, *tota Christianae fidei*. The text is so important, so descriptive of the *Summa*'s method and outworking, that the Quaracchi editors moved it to the beginning and gave it the title of *Prologus generalis*. Vat. lat. 705 is technically anonymous: it does not contain a contemporary ascription to Alexander of Hales or any another medieval author. However, Parentucelli certainly knew its putative author, as shown by his *Inventarium* to Cosimo di Medici and his possession of another attributed volume of *Summa III*. I believed that this image was intended to show Alexander, but I still harbored some doubts. Most troublingly, I was not sure I could be certain that the decorative elements were contemporary with the main text. Since I am not an art historian, I wrote to two experts to be sure.

Gigetta Dalli Regoli, of the University of Pisa, the Louvre and the Academy dei Lincei, is a noted expert on Leonardo Da Vinci who has also taught and published extensively in the field of medieval painting and manuscript decoration. Although she was only able to access low-resolution images, she concurred in my opinion that the production was likely late 13th or early 14th century and from the area of northern France.⁴¹ This judgment would apply to the decorations as well as the main text.

⁴¹ Gigetta dalli Regoli, email to the author, 12/10/2020.

M. Michèle Mulchahey, of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies at the University of Toronto, is a paleographer and historian whose work traces the early history of the Dominican order. She is the author, most recently, of a monograph on the early cult of Thomas Aquinas in which she tackles iconographic problems very similar to the one I was facing. Mulchahey agreed in placing the manuscript in Northern France (likely Paris) in the late 13th or early 14th centuries. Her comments on the inhabited initial, based on the high quality images available online from the Vatican Library, are worth quoting at length:

That the manuscript is a northern production is clear enough, I think, palaeographically. But I would note that the friar, in wearing grey, would tend to confirm that this is not an Italian production: Italian Franciscans tended to wear habits made of something more like hessian or burlap, and brown; it's the English and French Franciscans who are 'greyfriars', the cheaper cloth in these regions being a grey wool. I've been looking at the tonsures in author portraits of friars, too, as further confirmation of identity, if any were needed: compared to Benedictines and Cistericans and other regular religious the friars are supposed to have tonsures larger in diameter, i.e. a narrower ring of hair. This can be slightly ambiguous, insofar as the diameter also increased with one's rank in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but the small *coronae* of monks are usually a good indicator that they are not prelates. Your author here has a narrow fringe, so another tick in the friar category. His posture shows a slight variation on the typical teacher's posture, with no hand raised in the teaching/speaking gesture. So he is clearly reading, not writing, if not so clearly teaching. It is also not absolutely clear that he is seated in a proper *cathedra* and not just on a more basic seat (it is backless) with a reading stand before him. But I think all that is probably splitting hairs, and we are meant to read this as a teacher in his *cathedra* at his lectern.

All that is a long way of saying, I think you are right to conclude that this portrait is contemporaneous with the original production of the manuscript, not 15th-century embellishment done when the set was rebound. I think you do indeed have an early image of Alexander of Hales.⁴²

Mulchahey also points out that the position of the hood could be an important indicator.⁴³ As suggested by contemporary rules for novices, friars normally to have kept their hoods raised, but lowered them for moments of public address, such as preaching or teaching.⁴⁴ Therefore, a raised hood would probably indicate that the friar is reading; a lowered hood would probably indicate that he is teaching. To my eye, the

⁴² M. Michèle Mulchahey, email to the author, 12/9/2020.

⁴³ M. Michèle Mulchahey, email to the author, 2/14/2021.

⁴⁴ According to Bernard of Bessia, *Speculum Discipinae* I, c. 25.5, *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, vol. 8 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1898), p. 608: The hood is to be raised in public, whether in choir or the refectory or other place, where the Brothers are gathered together, especially among outsiders, but not so that the face is hidden: 'In omni siquidem publico loco, sive chorus, sive refectorium, sive alius fuerit locus, Fratrum congregatione praesente, et multo magis inter extraneos, operto decenter capite Religiosus incedat, nisi ob reverentiam alicuius ministerii vel personae aliter sit agendum. Non est tamen caputium, sive coram Fratribus sive coram extraneis, nimis in capite sine rationabili causa profundandum.' See also *Ibid.* 15.8, 12, pp. 596–97; 21.5, p. 603; 32.7, p. 614.

hood of the friar in question is in an ambiguous, halfway down position, which appears in contemporary illustrations of both activities.

Fig. 6: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 705, f. 1r, detail © 2021, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana⁴⁵

To draw all of this together, the manuscript decoration experts I have consulted concur in general with the judgments of Pelzer and Manfredi, the Vatican Library paleographers who described the manuscript, and with Victorin Doucet, the Quaracchi editor who composed the most recent *elenchus codicum* of the *Summa Halensis*, *pars III*, that the inhabited initial in Vat. lat. 705, folio 1r, belongs to the late 13th or early 14th century and represents a seated religious teaching. Further, Prof Mulchahey thinks it likely that the religious is a friar in a northern-style habit. He is certainly reading at a lectern, but this lectern may be a *cathedram* and he may be in the act of teaching, indicating that he is a master. The one and only Franciscan master universally associated with the text in question, the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, is

⁴⁵ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 705, f. 1r, reproduced by permission of Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, with all rights reserved.

Alexander of Hales.⁴⁶ The image derives from the late 13th or early 14th century, the period of his fame, and the milieu of Paris, the place he was most well known. Although technically anonymous, therefore, this initial is very likely the oldest surviving image of Alexander of Hales. It will therefore decorate the cover of the new translation of Alexander's *Gloss on the Sentences*.

With thousands of his pages in print and mentions in all of the relevant chronicles and history books, it seems unlikely that a picture that gives no new information about Alexander could make a difference in contemporary appreciation for him, but I believe that it may. The first visual pattern human beings learn to recognize is the face of another human being. At two months, infants can recognize the faces of their caregivers.⁴⁷ As irrational as it may seem, I feel a connection when I look at this image different in kind from that evoked by reading his manuscripts. Perhaps this new image, particularly when placed on the cover of a new series of English translations, will help a new generation of students come to appreciate the exceptional life and work of Alexander of Hales.

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⁴⁶ Some contemporaries, such as Roger Bacon, did note the fact that Alexander was not solely responsible for the text, but contemporary textual witnesses, where ascribed, were almost universally ascribed to him, apart from Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Ottob. lat. 435, ascribed on f. 2r to 'Scotus' (!) and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. lat. 359, where it is described on f. 3ra as 'edite a Fratres Minoribus,' Prolegomena to *SH* I, pp. xii, xx, xxv; See Saccenti, 'The Reception of the *Summa Halensis*,' p. 367.

⁴⁷ Faraz Farzin, Chuan Hou, Anthony M. Norcia, 'Piecing it Together: Infants' Neural Responses to Face and Object Structure,' *Journal of Vision* 12.6 (Dec. 2012) <https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2121335>.