

### **Aureoli, Petrus**

While traditionally Petrus Aureoli (ca. 1280–1322) was regarded as a precursor of William of Ockham, recent scholarship has emphasized the French Franciscan's originality (Nielsen 1999) focusing on his commentary on the *Sentences* that he lectured 1316–18 in Paris. However, Aureoli's biblical works, most of them dating from his years as *magister regens* at Paris (1318–20), recently have not gained so much attention as they did in medieval and early modern times, when his *Compendium sensus litteralis totius sacrae scripturae* was comparatively widespread (RBMA 4 and 9.1, no. 6422 lists 65 mss. besides a considerable number of printed editions). Still in a prefaced letter to the edition Strasbourg 1514 the humanist Jakob Wimpfeling recommends the *Compendium* to Johann Eck as a commentary that meets high intellectual demands (Aureoli 1514: 1<sup>v</sup>). This assessment corresponds to Aureoli's conviction that the theological content of the bible is to be grasped mainly by dialectical and rhetorical means. Referring to Augustine and Cicero Aureoli divides the biblical canon into eight parts using as a guiding principle the rhetoric of each book's doctrine (*modus docendi politice, historice, poetice, disputative, propheticae, ethice, affirmative, destinative*) (Aureoli 1896: 28–29). The

doctrine itself is then exposed in a syllogistic manner, while the exact number and style of the syllogisms depend on the integrity and shape of the respective book. Accordingly, John is limited to only one syllogism proving that Jesus was truly the son of God (232). Isaiah on the other hand is divided in two rhetorical parts, for it contains two major topics that are treated in different modes throughout the whole book (118).

Aureoli focuses his exposition on the text's literal sense, but does not grant biblical exegesis any outstanding significance compared to other parts of theology. Rather, he considers the biblical doctrines, just as every theological doctrine, an elucidation of the articles of faith (Aureoli 1952–56: 314). Therefore, by studying a biblical book one grasps the respective author's doctrine, instead of getting acquainted with God immediately (150).

Aside from the *Compendium*, six further exegetical works are handed down to us, their authenticity being partly disputed (RBMA 4: 231–35). Those works line up Aureoli's exegesis with its historical context, their scope being partly allegoric or following the conventional paths of contemporary exegesis.

**Bibliography: Primary:** ■ Petrus Aureoli, *Compendium bibliae totius* (ed. J. Wimpfeling; Strasbourg 1514). ■ Petrus Aureoli, *Compendium sensus litteralis totius divinae scripturae* (ed. P. Seeboeck; Quaracchi 1896). ■ Petrus Aureoli, *Scriptum super primum sententiarum, Prologue – Distinction VIII*, 2 vols. (FIP.T 3; ed. E.M. Buytaert; St. Bonaventure, N.Y. et al. 1952–56).

**Secondary:** ■ Friedman, R. L./L. O. Nielsen (eds.), "Peter Auriol," *Vivarium* 38 (2000). [Special issue] ■ Nielsen, L. O., "The Intelligibility of Faith and the Nature of Theology," *StTh* 53 (1999) 26–39.

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