

A biographical introduction to Paul of Venice

Paul of Venice, Paolo Nicoletto Veneto, emerges a towering if tractable figure of 15th-century Italy. Partly owing to the active life of the man, partly due to the scarcity of historical materials, partly because of lacunae in late mediaeval research, biographical accounts tend to be incomplete and sketchy. Even where information is available its consists largely in factual data listed in academic and civic registers¹⁾, in the official records of the Augustinian order²⁾ and in the chance allusions of random manuscripts³⁾. Nor has historical speculation over the past four centuries served to alleviate the difficulties surrounding Paul. To be sure, the investigations of Tiraboschi⁴⁾, Rossi⁵⁾ and Momigliano⁶⁾, of Duhem⁷⁾,

¹⁾ Of the former, see G. ZONTA and G. BROTTTO, *Acta Gradium Acad. Bymn. Patav.*, nos. 17, 19, 530; of the latter, *Arch. di Stato*, Venezia, Cons. Rogatorium II, 20. Thanks are due Dottore Francesco Del Punta, University of Milan, for many valuable conversations on Paul of Venice.

²⁾ *Analecta Augustiniana* xix (1944) 106, register of the Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine, Rome.

³⁾ See below especially notes 18, 20, 22, 29, 49 and 52.

⁴⁾ Girolamo TIRABOSCHI, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Vol. II (Milan: Nicolo Bettoni e Comp., 1833) Cols. 618-622.

⁵⁾ Giuseppe ROSSI, *Alcune ricerche sul Paolo Veneto* (Torino: 1904).

⁶⁾ Felice MOMIGLIANO, *Paolo Veneto e le correnti del pensiero religioso e filosofico nel suo tempo* (Torino: 1907).

⁷⁾ Pierre DUHEM, *Etudes sur Leonardo Di Vinci* (Paris: 1909) pp. 319-325. *Le Système du Monde*, Vols. IV, X (Paris: Hermann, 1954, 1959); Vol. IV, pp. 280-289; Vol. X, pp. 377-439.

⁸⁾ Giovanni GENTILE, *Studi sul Rinascimento* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1923) pp. 76-86.

⁹⁾ Jozef GARBACIK, « Paolo Veneto, filozof-dyplomata i jego pobyt w Polsce w r. 1412 » in *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Zeszyt 4 (Kraków: 1960) pp. 17-31.

Gentile ⁸⁾ and Garbacik ⁹⁾, of Perini ¹⁰⁾, Randall ¹¹⁾ and Emden ¹²⁾ has done much to probe the Italian, British and Polish facets of Paul's career. However, these studies have led in some cases to historical difficulties even more enigmatic than the original problems themselves.

Amid the budget of scattered information on the one hand and the near wealth of concerted speculation on the other, this article will (i) recount Paul's career on the basis of the available factual data, (ii) indicate the dates of several of Paul's writings and (iii) raise a problem about Paul's place in the tradition of later mediaeval logic.

One of the first questions which one encounters in connection with the central figure of this investigation is basic. Not only his date and place of birth but this very name has been the topic of historical debate. Tiraboschi first formulated the question ¹³⁾. He pointed out that there were three philosophers who flourished in the same century and who were known by the name 'Paolo'. What's more, all of these men received the honorific title 'monarch'. The first, whose country is uncertain, but whose education and religious habit bestowed at Venice mark him as the main person of this discussion was commonly known as Paolo Veneto. The second, thought to have been from Venice, was called, with more reason says Tiraboschi, purely Veneto. The third, born in Pergula, stayed a long time in Venice. Now, the problems connected with these three men named 'Paolo' are more involved than the mere assigning of proper names. In many cases their writings came together and were confused. Thus, it is important to distinguish with accuracy the one from the others.

Fortunately, since Tiraboschi drew together a century or more of Italian scholarship, historical research has clarified the positions and some of the works of the latter two figures. To take the last first, recent investigation has shown that Paul of Pergula flourished between 1400 and 1451, which means that he was a man consi-

¹⁰⁾ P. David Aurelius PERINI, *Bibliographia Augustiniana*, IV (Florence: 1938 and 1963) pp. 39-47.

¹¹⁾ John Hermann RANDALL, Jr., *The School of Padua* (Padova: Antenore, 1961).

¹²⁾ A. B. EMDEN, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, P to Z (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1949).

¹³⁾ Tiraboschi, Col. 618.

derably younger than the prime personage of this study ¹⁴). The second, known also as Paulus Albertini, was born a year after Paul of Venice's repose and lived well into the fifteenth century ¹⁵). Lately, A. B. Emden records that there was still a fourth Paolo who flourished in the century under consideration : that is, Paolo Francesco Veneto, an Augustinian and relative who accompanied the Paolo we are seeking to identify to England ¹⁶).

Yet no sooner is discussion about this first of the four Paoli opened than several problems arise. P. Gandolfi ¹⁷) argued that the author in question was from Padua, had completed several works and seems to be, more than the others, the clergyman who was born in Udine, capitol of Frioul, in northeastern Italy. To support his argument, he recalls an epitaph which he says was recorded in the unedited works of Marcandova :

Vir Patavi perit hic ; Utinum tulit ; ivit ad urbem
Adricam puer ; hinc nomine Paulus habet, etc. ¹⁸)

In light of more recent studies, this quotation would seem to provide a description of the man whose identity remains to be disclosed. But the ways of Italian scholarship can be labyrinthine, and the position of Gandolfi was challenged.

P. Giacinto della Torre examined the codex quoted by Gandolfi and found no such epitaph ¹⁹). Rather, he found a different one which says that Paolo was born in Venice :

Deditus Augustine tibi sacer Religione ipse
fui, Venetae genuistis aquae, etc. ²⁰)

Surely, if this text applies at all, it means that Paul was born in Venice and not in Udine. And there is reason to count such a speculation plausible ; for others have claimed that Paolo was born elsewhere. In fact, Mattia Palmieri wrote early in the fifteenth

¹⁴) Sister Mary Anthony BROWN, O.S.F., *Paul of Pergula: Logica* (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1960) Introduction.

¹⁵) Tiraboschi, Cols. 620-621.

¹⁶) Emden, p. 1945, new entry.

¹⁷) P. GANDOLFI, *Gandolfi de CC. Script. August.*, p. 286; *August., Scritt. venez. pref.*, p. 47, quoted in Tiraboschi.

¹⁸) Tiraboschi, Col. 619.

¹⁹) *Idem.*

²⁰) *Idem.*

century this description, « Paulus Cretensis disputator subtilis in Italia agnoscitur » ²¹⁾).

Amid this welter of alternatives, Tiraboschi introduces still more considerations ²²⁾. He points out, contrary to the testimony of Gandolfi, that the original epitaph quoted was not found in the codex of Marcandova ; but it was inserted by Giovanni Candido in his commentary on the history of Frioul. However, because this writing was discovered soon after the death of Paolo, it merits belief. Also, since the epitaph appears to mark the tomb of the man it describes, most modern scholars have accepted the opinion that Paolo Nicoletti Veneto was born in Udine.

The problems of name and birthplace resolved — with all the uncertainties of historical knowledge — the date of Paul's birth remains in question. Rossi and Momigliano place it as late as 1375 ²³⁾. Nardi makes it 1372 ²⁴⁾. Duhem fixes it at 1370 ²⁵⁾. Emden sets it around 1369 ²⁶⁾. While the first alternative is possible, it would seem to be late ; for it would entail Paul's entrance into the Augustinian order at the age of twelve and his departure for study under the leading Oxford scientists at fifteen. Again, although Nardi's careful insight is not to be disregarded in setting a birth-date his conjecture would add only three years to Paul's youth before he was studying the most subtle logic and physics which the middle ages produced. With Emden, it seems most plausible to treat 1369 as the approximate year in which Paul of Venice was born.

Paul became a Hermit of Saint Augustine at S. Stefano Convent, Venice ; he was then assigned as a student to the Padua Convent on December 9, 1387 ²⁷⁾. In less than three years he was sent by his order to Oxford. The delegation by the Prior General is dated August 31, 1390. And Paul's stay in England must have extended for at least three years because there is a record that the English Prior Provincial Fr. Thomas Winterton received the

²¹⁾ *Ibid.*, Cols. 619-620.

²²⁾ *Idem.*

²³⁾ Garbacik, p. 21.

²⁴⁾ Bruno NARDI, « Paolo Veneto » in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Rome, 1935) p. 242.

²⁵⁾ Duhem, p. 370.

²⁶⁾ Emden, p. 1944.

²⁷⁾ *Ibid.*

sanction of the Prior General for having loaned Paolo Nicoletti and his relative Paolo Francesco 69 ducats from the funds of the English province, collected for the expenses of the recent General Chapter at Wurzburg December 8, 1393.

Paul's sojourn in England was not unknown to Antonio Cittadini of Faenza who at Ferrara in 1476 wrote a polemical commentary on the *Logica Parva*. In the beginning of his work he states :

Fuerunt autem quidam non auctoritate indigni, hunc libellum in Britannia, ubi olim et dialecticae et philosophiae studia floruerunt, in antiquissimis litteris compertum esse, ut ex illis constaret, prius opusculum hoc extractum fuisse quam Paulus Venetus natus esset. Quod eo magis a non nullis creditur, quod certum est Paulus apud Britanos visendorum gymnasiorum gratia aliquando commoratum esse, ac postea in Italiam referentem multos libros secum detulisse, quorum auctores Italis penitus erant incogniti ²⁸).

In addition to this testimony one can cite several British scientists whose thought Paul is conversant with, as well as the fact that he readily employs in his works examples which allude to England ²⁹). There can be little doubt that Paul of Venice spent approximately three years in England in the very early part of his academic life ³⁰).

Some time between 1395 and 1408 the Hermit of Saint Augustine returned to Padua where he became a lecturer in philosophy ³¹) ; and by the latter date, he completed his *Summa naturalium* ³²). In May of the same year he was raised to the degree Doctor of Arts and Theology. The next five years saw a rapid progress in Paul of Venice's religious, social and intellectual life.

²⁸) Bruno NARDI, *Saggi sull'Aristotelismo Padovano*, « Paolo Veneto e l'Averroismo Padovano » (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, no date) p. 76.

²⁹) See *Logica Magna* (Venice, 1499) part I.

³⁰) I have not been able to find evidence that Paul studied in France.

³¹) Gentile holds that Paul was a lecturer not in Padua University but in the Convent School.

³²) This work is called variously *Summa totius philosophiae naturalis*, *Summa philosophiae*, *Philosophia naturalis*, *Summa Summulae*. Although its precise contents at the date of completion are not known, it later comprised: a) *In octo physicorum libros*, b) *De caelo et mundo*, c) *De generatione et corruptione*, d) *Metheororum seu Metheorologicorum*, e) *De anima* and f) *Metaphysicorum*.

On May 1, 1409, Pope Gregory XII appointed him Rector and Vicar General of the Hermits of Saint Augustine. But Paul had to resign this post very soon because Venice ceased to regard Gregory XII as Pope and recognized instead Alexander V. Paul then became Provincial of Lombardy. On June 30, the same year he finished his *Expositio super octo libros physicorum Aristotelis* and was granted the title Doctor of Medicine³³).

In January of the next year, 1410, Paul embarked on one of the journeys soon to be a normal part of his career — a diplomatic mission to Hungary³⁴). Again, in July of the same year, he traveled to Ulm, Germany. King Sigismund of Luxembourg was disseminating unfavorable propaganda against the Venetian government; and Paul's missions were so successful in combatting this offensive, that he was amply rewarded by the Government of Venice in the first case by a stipend of 100 ducats and in the second by a supplement for the building of Padua Cathedral.

1411 saw a break in Paul's diplomatic activities. He succeeded to the chair of philosophy in Padua University held by Blaise of Parma who was dismissed because his classes were empty³⁵). And on October 15, 1411, he was elected to the Professorship of the Studium Generale³⁶). He held one of the two opposing chairs then common in the universities of northern Italy. His opponent was Antonio of Urbain³⁷).

But the political situation in central Europe was worsening during this period in which (1) Venice was at war with Germany over the disposition of Dalmatia; (2) Poland was having difficulties with Hungary and (3) there was a power struggle between Sigismund of Luxembourg and Jagiello of Poland. While the third of these problems was settled by treaty the day before Paul was named as a delegate, the first two remained. On January 21, 1412, Paul was sent by the Council of Venice to meet with Jagiello. Early in the year Paul arrived in Cracow where he met one Peter Bicerano, a Venetian agent sent to Cracow. He also met the Augu-

³³) DUHEM, *Le Système*, p. 282.

³⁴) Garbacik, p. 17.

³⁵) Lynn THORNDIKE, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Vol. IV, p. 70.

³⁶) Momigliano, p. 32.

³⁷) *Idem*.

stinians and the Paduans living there. Possibly, he called on Peter Wysz and Andrew Laskarz, the former a colleague and the latter a pupil ; both were Poles who has studies in Padua.

Whatever acquaintances the Augustinian may have made, one thing is clear. He left through his works a lasting imprint on the University of Cracow :

Donc on est forcé d'admettre que le milieu cracovien subissait à cette époque une forte influence de la pensée d'Averroes et des penseurs arabes en général de Gilles de Rome, d'Albert le Grand et de Paul de Venise qui était ambassadeur en Pologne au début du XV^e siècle et que l'érudition générale, aussi bien dans les sciences humaines par exemple une connaissance des dialogues tardifs de Platon que dans les sciences exactes surtout en astronomie et en médecine, était considérable ³⁸).

In view of the influence of Paul's work on later Cracowians, it is reasonable to infer that he used his diplomatic missions to establish rapport with members of the University community as well.

But the primary purpose of his trip to Poland was governmental ; and in the middle of March, 1412, the emissary went to Korzycach, Hungary, where he was to meet Sigismund and Jagiello. The latter had agreed to act as a mediator between the German and Venetian sides of any dispute. He also advised the Council of Venice to send a very special mission to Hungary as its representative. In mid April, Venice decided to send Thomas Mocenigo and Antonio Contareno to Hungary ; and by the end of the March the Venetian delegation had moved to Hungary. In the meantime, Paul stayed with King Jagiello and possibly accompanied him to Waradyn and Budapest. But after the official delegation arrived, he departed for Italy. On May 10, 1412, Paul reported about this journey to the Council of Venice.

While the outcome of Political negotiations between the various states is of little importance for this paper, it must be pointed out that Paul, whose name became closely associated with Venice, was well received on his embassies. He apparently gained the con-

³⁸) Stephan SWIESZAWSKI, « Pour mieux connaître l'ambiance philosophique en Pologne Médiévale » in *Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego* (Lublin: 1961) pp. 85-118.

fidence of Jagiello who requested that Paul be sent again should the occasion arise. Still unedited are the orations which the ambassador delivered on these journeys ³⁹). Despite this measure of success, it is perplexing to find Paul next admonished by the Council of Ten for interrupting his duties at Padua by lecturing elsewhere. This occurred on January 16, 1415 ; and Paul was summoned to Venice the same year and forbidden to leave the city. In the area of ecclesiastical affairs, another problem was afoot. The papacy of John XXIII was being challenged by Alexander V ; and Paul was granted permission to leave Venice but on the express condition that he not attend the Council of Constance.

The professor resumed residence in Padua in 1416 sometime after the middle of May ; and he continued living there for the next three years. In 1417 the Venetian Republic in recognition of Paul's international reputation as a philosopher granted to the friars of Saint Stefano's Convent the privilege of wearing the black biretta — symbol of the Patricians ⁴⁰). Against the background of political and ecclesiastical upheaval it is difficult to assess the significance of this honor. However, there can be little doubt that the Paduan master was devoting his energies to academic matters during this period. Some idea of his influence can be gleaned from Léopold Mabillean's words :

Les principaux logiciens d'alors sont Blaise de Parme, écrivain obscur et subtil, qui obtint si peu de succès dans l'université qu'on l'en chassa ; Paul de Venise, le plus célèbre de tous, dont les œuvres restèrent classiques et prévalurent pendant deux cents ans de manuels de logique pour les étudiants de son temps. La noblesse de Venise commence à se livrer avec ardeur aux études. Paul de Venise compte dans son auditoire Niccolo Conale, docteur ès arts, Barbone Morosini, docteur ès arts et ès lois, Lodovico Foscarini, Zaccaria Trevissano, Giovanni Marino, Filippo Paruta, Ermolao Barbero, qui deviendra patriarche d'Aquilée,

³⁹) Perini, « Eiusdem Pauli Veneti orationes divinae ad Pontificem Gregorium XII, ad Regem Ungariae, ad Regem Poloniae, ad Ducem Austriae, ad D. num Nicolaum Contarenum, ad fratres diversos, in laudem in cod. 1139 (S. 48) Bibl. Angelicae, membr., in 4 ff. 139, misc. in quo fol. 11, 13 est oratio funebris habita in eius obitu » p. 46.

⁴⁰) Momigliano, p. 38.

etc., tous appartenant aux plus anciennes et aux plus puissantes familles de la République ⁴¹⁾).

Although his mark on the university remained long afterward, Paul's teaching activities were not confined to Padua ⁴²⁾. In 1419 he is recorded to have been teaching also at the Venice Convent. In 1420 he taught at Siena. Again, in May of the same year he was elected to the position of Prior Provincial of Siena and Marche Tarvisine. Further, this year marked the date of a serious controversy with one Francesco Porcerio, against whose doctrines Paul wrote a polemic, which now is lost. The accused was tried for heresy, found guilty, turned over to the secular arm and burned. Finally, 1420 was the year in which Paul received the title mentioned earlier « Monarch of the Arts ». This honor was not sufficient to save him, however, from the consequences of renewed trouble with the Venetian government. On August 8, 1420, he was banished to Ravenna for five years. The reason for the exile is unknown ; and there is not sufficient evidence to make speculation even possible. But according to Momigliano, Paul disregarded the restrictions placed upon him ⁴³⁾.

The year 1421 saw Paul re-elected Provincial of Marche Tarvisine. On December 31 of the same year an edition of the hermit's works was completed at Rimini for Jean de Belario : it contains the *Summa naturalium*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *Super logica Aristotelis* and *De caelo et mundo* ⁴⁴⁾. In May of the year 1422, Paul was Regent at the Siena Convent. Two years later he was deputed to lecture at Bologna, and he moved to Bologna in March and to Perugia in November. He was granted permission to visit Rome on August 1, 1426, for the purpose of arguing in favor of the canonization of Bernardine of Siena.

The Augustinian master returned to Siena in 1427 where he was Professor of Philosophy and where he became Rector of the University in 1428. His *Expositio super universalia Porphyrii et*

⁴¹⁾ Léopold MABILLEAU, *Etude Historique sur la Philosophie de la Renaissance en Italie* (Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1881) p. 99.

⁴²⁾ The study of Paul's *Logica* was made compulsory at Padua in 1496. See F. VAN STEENBERGHEN, *Le Cardinal Nicolas de Cues* (Paris: 1920) p. 12.

⁴³⁾ Momigliano, p. 51.

⁴⁴⁾ DUHEM, *Le Système*, p. 282.

artem veterem Aristotelis is dated March 11, 1428 ⁴⁵). Paul's commentary on *De anima* is probably from this later period ⁴⁶). A request for repatriation was granted Paul in June of 1428; and he resumed his lecturing at Padua. Approximately one year later, Paul died ⁴⁷). He is buried at Padua.

A very interesting document held in the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow, is the *Oratio de obitu illustris philosophi Pauli* ⁴⁸). It was written and delivered in Paul's honor by his former student Cristoforo Barzizza. He relates some information not found in other sources, for example that Paul taught theology in Florence and in Parma. He places a great emphasis on Paul's commentary on *De anima*. Finally, he remarks that the master's major work is his Logic, completed in two versions *Logica Parva* ⁴⁹) and *Logica Magna* ⁵⁰). A preliminary reading of these two texts reveals a doctrinal discrepancy over the topic of abstract terms. The former presents a terminist, the latter a realist, position on this recurrent problem of mediaeval logic.

This issue was raised by an early commentary on Paul's *Logica Parva* published by one of his followers at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Mengus Faventius writes :

As to the divisions of supposition, note that there have been four opinions concerning the number of the division.

⁴⁵) PERINI, *ibid.*, p. 42 suggests that this work is called *Quaestio de universalibus*; but the one is an *expositio* and the other is a *quaestio disputata*.

⁴⁶) NARDI, *Saggi*, agrees with Duhem that the commentary on *De anima* displays the complex and mature thought of Paul and that it is a late work, p. 77.

⁴⁷) Barbacik, Perini and Randall state that Paul died in 1429. However, Momigliano, p. 66, Gentile, p. 106 and Emden, *idem*, set the death date at 15 June 1428.

⁴⁸) This oration is part of Manuscript number 173 in the Jagiellonian Library, Cracow. Garbacik based much of his study on this text which contains a wealth of information about fourteenth century university life in Cracow.

⁴⁹) A Maier lists a manuscript completed before 1420. Codex 2130. *Biblioteca Vaticana*, « Codices Vaticani Latini », 1961. Perini, *ibid.*, lists a 1416 edition of the *Logica Parva*, p. 41, as well as a 1416 edition of the *De sophismatibus*, p. 44.

⁵⁰) A. MAIER, *ibid.*, lists a manuscript completed before 1443, codex 2132. The present author used this text in preparing an edition, translation and commentary on the theory of supposition in the *Logica Magna*.

(First opinion). One opinion posits only personal supposition and rejects all the others. This is the opinion of Petrus Mantuanus as is evident from his logic.

(Second opinion). Another opinion admits only two forms of supposition, viz. material and personal supposition : of this opinion is the Magister (viz. *Paulus Venetus*) in his *Logica Parva*.

(Third opinion). A third opinion admits three kinds of supposition ; viz. material, personal and simple supposition. Of this opinion is the Magister (Paul of Venice) in his *Logica Magna*. And this is the common opinion though there is a difference among those who hold it, mainly between the terminists and the realists, as I shall presently explain...

(Fourth opinion). The fourth opinion posits four kinds of supposition, viz. material, personal, simple and natural supposition. This opinion is held by Saint Vincent, O.P. ; he says that it (the division) is in agreement with the mind of the Commentator (viz. Averroes) and Albertus (viz. Magnus) and foremost of St. Thomas ⁵¹).

In addition to what Faventinus tells us, the first and last opinions are not those of Paul of Venice because of evidence within the *Logica Magna* itself. The second part of the chapter « On Suppositions » rallies a battalion of arguments against the view, identified in the gloss, of Peter of Mantua. Nowhere in the tract is « natural supposition » so much as mentioned. This leaves the second and third opinions to represent the mind of Paul of Venice.

Was Paul of Venice a terminist or a realist ? The question cannot be answered in this article. The *Logica Parva* appears to make no provision for referents of abstract terms. The *Logica Magna*, on the other hand, offers a vision of subsisting objects of such terms : « species signifies specific nature beyond the soul ... because this nature is the reason why species is strictly what it is, such as humanity, assinity and the like » ⁵²). Can the *Logica Parva* be

⁵¹) Mengus Faventinus, commentary on the *Logica (Parva)* of Paul of Venice (Venice, 1511), f. 33rb, quoted in Philotheus Boehner, « A Medieval Theory of Supposition », *Franciscan Studies* 18, 1958, pp. 262-263.

⁵²) Paul of Venice, *Logica Magna* « De suppositionibus », edited and translated by Alan R. PERREIAH, *Is There a Doctrine of Supposition in the Logica Magna* ?, Indiana University, 1967.

brought into line with the *Logica Magna* ? Did Paul of Venice shift from nominalism to realism or vice versa ? What developments in 15th-century logic reflect his change of viewpoint ? What light may the, probably, late *Quaestio de Universalibus* throw on this issue ? — There are but a few of the questions written across the encyclopedic yet technical tomes of the influential schoolman Paul of Venice.

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