CHAPTER 3

Henry of Gorkum’s *Conclusiones Super IV Libros Sententiarum*: Studying the Lombard in the First Decades of the Fifteenth Century

*John T. Slotemaker*

1 Introduction

Henry of Gorkum was born around 1378 in Gorinchem, in the Low Countries. Gorinchem, which is located about 35 miles (56 km) south of Amsterdam, was granted city rights in 1322. Henry began his studies at the University of Paris in 1395 as a member of the English nation and became a master of arts there in 1398. Having attained the degree of *magister*, he served as the regent of the university until 1401. Anton Weiler argues that between 1402 and 1409 Henry probably studied theology at the University of Paris.1 Following this period of theological studies, Henry served as the procurator of the English nation at Paris between 1410 and 1419, when he left for Cologne.

Henry’s commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard is an *abbreviatio* that presents short summaries (ca. 600–900 words) of each distinction of all four books of the *Sentences*. The work became increasingly popular in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, being printed either as an independent commentary consisting of the abbreviations alone (following the traditional incipits of the distinctions in the Lombard’s text) or within an edition of the *Sentences*. Because Henry’s commentary has been relegated to the category of an *abbreviatio* it has attracted little attention from scholars, particularly regarding its philosophical and theological content.2 This neglect has been

---


2 A distinction should be made between the twelfth- and thirteenth-century abbreviations of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* (for example, the abbreviation by Master Bandius or the *Filia Magistri*) and those of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (for example, John Eck’s
addressed, albeit indirectly, in the recent work of Maarten Hoenen, whose studies of the *abbreviatio* literature is giving these commentaries the proper attention that they deserve within the development of medieval thought.3

The best guide to interpreting Henry's *abbreviatio* is to place it within the historical and textual tradition within which it was produced. Thus, the present paper will first consider Henry within the context of the University of Cologne, summarizing both the institutional context within which Henry worked and the other works he wrote while at Cologne. Secondly, it will briefly examine the textual tradition of Henry's *Conclusiones* as found in the manuscript and incunabula tradition. Thirdly, it will consider the methodology of the *Conclusiones*, looking at what Henry chose to treat in his summaries of the Lombard and what information this gives the historian regarding both the intent of the work and its theological content. The argument of this chapter is that Gorkum's *Conclusiones* belong to the *modus expositionis* tradition of textual analysis, which was common to the realist masters (*antiqui*) working in Cologne at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and as such was developed as a pedagogical tool for students studying the Lombard's *Sentences*.

2 Henry of Gorkum and Cologne

2.1 Cologne and the Bursae

Henry of Gorkum was a Thomist who has the distinction of being one of the first theologians to write a commentary (or summary) of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. He was influential in the fifteenth-century Thomistic renaissance that had its beginnings in the late fourteenth century and exerted such a significant influence on the German universities. The origins of this

---

3 For the relevant studies by Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen, see footnotes 8, 44, 50, and 51 below.