

# Medieval influences in the Coimbra Commentaries: An inquiry into the foundations of Jesuit Education

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Artículo

**MEDIEVAL INFLUENCES IN THE COIMBRA  
COMMENTARIES**  
**(An Inquiry Into the Foundations of Jesuit Education \*)**

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I

1. Between 1592 and 1606 a group of Jesuits at the 'Collegium Conimbricensis', the College of Arts in the Portuguese city of Coimbra («in Conimbricensi liberalium artium Academia Societati»<sup>1</sup>) published several commentaries on Aristotle in order to reinforce and standardise the study of Christian Philosophy, following Ignatius Loyola's prescription that Aristotle should be studied on Philosophy courses<sup>2</sup>. This *Cursus* was also conceived to give a «philosophical canon to the aspirations of Portuguese culture and at the same time has assured the education of youth against the doubts of the century»<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> These are Pedro da Fonseca's exact words, written (October 1591) for the first volume of the whole series.

<sup>2</sup> Here is the list of all the titles published by the CONIMBRICENSES: *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1592); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in Quatuor libros de Caelo Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Meteororum Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Aristotelis qui Parva Naturalia appellantur* (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); *In libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum, aliquot Conimbricensis Cursus Disputationes in quibus praecipua quaedam Ethicae disciplinae capita continentur* (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in duos libros De Generatione et Corruptione Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1597); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. In tres libros de Anima Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1598); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in universam Dialecticam Aristotelis* (Coimbra: D. G. Loureiro, 1606). Other editions: *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Meteororum Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Lugduni 1608); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Aristotelis qui Parva Naturalia appellantur* (Lugduni 1608); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in Quatuor libros de Caelo* (Lugduni 1608); *In libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum, aliquot Conimbricensis Cursus Disputationes* (Lugduni 1608); *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu In tres libros de Anima Aristotelis Stagiritae* (Coloniae 1600); *Commentarii Conimbricensis in Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis* (Lugduni 1594: rep. Hildesheim-Zürich-New York, 1984); *Commentarii Conimbricensis in Dialecticam Aristotelis* (Coloniae 1607); *Curso Conimbricense I. Pe. Manuel de Góis: Moral a Nicómaco, de Aristóteles*. Introdução, estabelecimento do texto e tradução de António Alberto de Andrade (Lisboa 1957).

<sup>3</sup> DIAS, J. S. da S. - *Correntes de Sentimento Religioso em Portugal (Séculos XVI a*

The first Commentary in the series, the *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Physicorum* by Father Manuel de Góis, on the eight books of Aristotle's *Physics*, was published in Coimbra at the University publishing house of António de Mariz. Baltazar Álvares and Sebastião do Couto were the other authors involved, respectively of the Commentary in *de anima* (1598) and of that in *dialecticam* (1606), but Manuel de Góis seems to be in a way the leader of the task. He wrote all the other titles, including a *Commentary on Ethics* and several *Commentaries on Natural Philosophy* (*physicorum, de caelo, meteororum, parva naturalia, de generatione et corruptione*), which were very important in the series.

It is obvious that we are not looking at an original initiative of the Company, whose study of Aristotelian Philosophy took various forms: suffice to think of Bento Pereira's or Francisco de Toledo's works. However, such an initiative was not totally alien to the Portuguese philosophical tradition, as is shown, first by the creation of a College of Arts (1547) in accordance with the Humanist spirit; secondly, by the fact that from 1559 several Aristotelian texts were prescribed for Portuguese Arts students (*Categoriae, De interpretatione, Analytica priora, Analytica posteriora, Topica, Elenchi, Ethica, Physica, De coelo, De generatione, De anima and Metaphysica*); thirdly, by the relation between *latinitas*, cultural *mimesis* and scholarly editions, as shown e.g. by Peter of Perpignan, S. J., who recommended the use of 'interlinearis' editions<sup>4</sup>; and finally by Pedro da Fonseca, who in 1564 published his famous *Dialectical Institutions*<sup>5</sup>, certainly after to have taught at the College of Arts between 1555 and 1561. Furthermore, we know by now that his relation to Aristotle's logic was not strange to Ramism, and we also know that the French scholar Nicolas Grouchy (1548-1550) translated the *Organon* into Latin for his Portuguese students<sup>6</sup>.

Perhaps an Aristotle's scientific book at the very beginning of such an editorial plan was part of the mood of the moment, but Coimbra commentators took a philosophical, metaphysical and religious approach to

XVIII) (Coimbra 1960) 438. See also: GOMES, P. - *Os Conimbricenses* (Lisboa 1992); RIBEIRO, S. - *História dos Estabelecimentos científicos, literários e artísticos de Portugal*, vol. II (Lisboa 1872); RODRIGUES, F. - *A formação intelectual do jesuíta - leis e factos* (Porto 1917).

<sup>4</sup> See PETER OF PERPIGNAN - *De ratione liberorum instituendorum Graecis et Latinis* (Paris 1565) chap. VII; cf. *Petri Ioannis Perpiniiani Soc. Iesu aliquot epistolae* (Paris 1683) 120.

<sup>5</sup> FONSECA, P. da - *Instituições Dialécticas*. Ed. J. F. Gomes (Coimbra 1964). See also PEREIRA, M. B. - *Ser e Pessoa* (Coimbra 1967); COXITO, A. A. «Pedro da Fonseca: a lógica tópica», in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 38 (1982) 450-59. See also PEDRO da FONSECA *Commentariorum Petri Fonsecae Lusitani, Doctoris Theologi Societatis Iesu, In Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae Tomi Quatuor* (Coloniae 1615; rep. Hildesheim 1964); MARTINS, A. M. - «Fonseca (Pedro da)», *Logos. Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Filosofia*, 3 (Lisboa 1990) 656-665, with more bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> SOARES, N. de N. C. — «O 'Cliché' na pedagogia e na Literatura de Quinhentos», in *Confluências* 14 (1996) 197.

Aristotle's *Physics* rather than a scientific one. This is not to imply that there were no connections at all between Galileo and Jesuitic Natural Commentaries read in the Collegio Romano<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, everybody is surely well aware of Descartes' confession to Mersenne regarding Coimbra Commentaries<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, the Coimbra Commentaries were frequently reprinted and widely used throughout Europe, becoming a standard Scholastic reference even in the 17th century<sup>9</sup>. Are we to explain such a success, as Wallace did, by their conservative tone and «great attention paid to speculative issues important for theology and less to empirical detail»<sup>10</sup>? Was it due, instead, as Andrade claimed, to their modernity and editorial advantages?<sup>11</sup> The Commentaries unusual success must certainly be explained, but this task will only be possible after the critical edition is completed.

Meanwhile, we must remember that if a medieval tone is the backbone of the Commentaries, they are already facing systematizations and manuals (see e. g. an Index ending the Commentary, an important although unsatisfactory tool for a contemporary reader<sup>12</sup>. Needless to say this is a very important feature in any academic work because in a Commentary one finds not only the author's theses but also refutations of opposite schools). The academic context is sufficient to account for the composition of our Commentaries. For instance, at the beginning of his work on *Ethics*, justifying the reason why some of his own commentaries (*Ethics*, *Meteoros*, *Parva Naturalia*) omit the Aristotelian context, Góis displays a real sense of pedagogical timing<sup>13</sup>. This is not to say that the difference between syntheses and extensive commentaries (such as Pomponazzi's or Cremonini's) lies entirely in the incorporation by the latter of materials

<sup>7</sup> LOHR, Ch. - «Les jésuites et l'aristotélisme du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle», in GIARD, L. (dir.) - *Les Jésuites à la Renaissance. Système et production du savoir* (Paris 1995) 81.

<sup>8</sup> DESCARTES, R. - Descartes à Mersenne (Leiden 30 Sept. 1640): AT III, 185; see also GILSON, E. - *Index Scolastico-Cartésien* (Paris, 1913); ID. - *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien* (Paris, 1930); DES CHENE, D. - *Physiologia. Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought* (Ithaca & London 1996) 10; SCHMITT, Ch. B. - *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge & London 1983).

<sup>9</sup> TRENTMAN, J. A. - «Scholasticism in the seventeenth century», in KRETZMANN et al. (ed.) - *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge London New York 1984) 834; ANDRADE, A. A. de - *Introdução in Curso Conimbricense I Pe. Manuel de Góis...*, XIV-XVII.

<sup>10</sup> WALLACE, W. A. - «Traditional Natural Philosophy», in SCHMITT, Ch. B. & SKINNER, Q. (ed.) - *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge London New York 1988) 229; LOHR, Ch. - *op. cit.* 82.

<sup>11</sup> ANDRADE, A. A. de - *Introdução*, XIII, XXII- XXXI.

<sup>12</sup> It is also possible to find alphabetical indexes in medieval texts, see e. g. *Scriptum Petri Hispani cum aliis multis questionibus et notabilibus bonis super dietis universalibus Isaac*, fol. 44r-46r (ms. from 14th century: Erfurt, Amplon. F 172).

<sup>13</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In libros Ethicorum...*, Prooemium (ed. Andrade, p. 58): «Omisimus autem... interpretationem Aristotelici contextus, non quod eum negligendum putemus: sed quia non quid ab alijs scriptum sit, aut scribi a nobis possit: sed quid Philosophiae auditoribus, certo annorum spatio eis praescripto, enarrari queat, perpendimus.»

«from medieval and Renaissance authors including those of anti-Aristotelian sympathies»<sup>14</sup>. Evidently, it is impossible to say that these texts represented a new style of writing, but we may surely believe that they also contributed to the Humanistic process that would make Medieval universities tremble. We are dealing with printed books and texts edited in the context of a University, a feature Walter Rüegg would have considered an ally of Humanism<sup>15</sup>. Moreover Jesuit Colleges were a new type of school<sup>16</sup>, designed to answer urgent sociopedagogical needs<sup>17</sup>.

2. The Jesuits were given the College of Arts in 1555; the College had been founded in 1547 to bring Portugal into the Humanist movement<sup>18</sup>. The Jesuits had first come to Portugal as missionaries in 1540<sup>19</sup>, and the climate of the Counter-Reformation directed them to teaching. In 1551 Ignatius Loyola asked Father Simão Rodrigues to set up colleges in the southern town of Évora, in Lisbon and elsewhere. Two famous scholars were appointed to lead this process, Cipriano Soares, well known as a dialectician, and Manuel Álvares, the author of a Latin Grammar widely read throughout Europe<sup>20</sup>. Both were ordered to leave Coimbra and to found in Lisbon a first Jesuit school (Colégio de Santo Antão, 1553). In the same year King John III authorised the building of another school in Évora, which between 1556-58 became first a Faculty of Arts and then a University. The plan of the courses were then defined as follows: a first academic year dedicated to the study of Dialectics; a second, again to Logic and then to *Physics* and *Ethics*; during the third year the student had to read *Metaphysics* and *Parva naturalia*; finally for six months, attention was paid to *De anima*. A similar program (not very different from the Roman style<sup>21</sup>) was followed in Coimbra in the College of Arts<sup>22</sup>. However, in the Coimbra Faculty of Theology four major courses were offered along with three smaller ones: on the one hand, Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Prima), Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* (Véspera), *Holy Scriptures* (Terça) and Duns Scotus (Noa), and

<sup>14</sup> WALLACE, W. A. - *op. cit.* 225.

<sup>15</sup> RÜEGG, W. - «O Alvorecer do Humanismo», in Hilde de RIDDER-SYMOENS (coord.) - *Uma História da Universidade na Europa. Vol.I: As Universidades na Idade Média*, transl. (Lisboa 1996) 466-468.

<sup>16</sup> GIARD, L. - «Le devoir de l'intelligence, ou l'insertion des jésuites dans le monde du savoir», in *Les jésuites... LVII*.

<sup>17</sup> ID. - *ibid.* LIX, LXII.

<sup>18</sup> See DIAS, J. S. da S. - *A Política Cultural da Época de D. João III* (Coimbra 1969) 582-565; BRANDÃO, M. - *O Colégio das Artes*, 2 vols. (Coimbra 1924-33); STEGMÜLLER, F. - *Filosofia e Teologia nas Universidades de Coimbra e Évora no século XVI* (Coimbra 1959); POLGÁR, L. - *Bibliographie sur l'histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus 1901-1980*, 6 vols. (Roma 1981-1990) vol. II: 503-507.

<sup>19</sup> DIAS, J. S. da S. - *Correntes...* 655-658.

<sup>20</sup> DIAS, J. S. da S. - *A Política...* 892-894; PADLEY, G. A. - *Grammatical Theory in Western Europe 1500-1700. The Latin Tradition* (Cambridge 1976) 28-29, 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> ANDRADE, A. A. de - *Introdução*, XXVIII - XXIX.

<sup>22</sup> STEGMÜLLER, F. - *op. cit.* 85-86.

on the other hand, Durandus, Scriptures, and Saint Thomas or Gabriel Biel<sup>23</sup>. It is thus wrong to say, as Charles Lohr did, that «in Iberian universities metaphysics was taught not as the culmination of the arts course, but in theology.»<sup>24</sup> At least Portuguese practice was different!

It is important to link at least these two aboved-mentioned Coimbra educational institutions, for it would surely have been impossible for the masters of the College to be unaware of the subjects studied at the University nearby. Indeed, this link has to be geographically wider, since we know, for example, that Pedro da Fonseca taught in Évora after studying in Coimbra<sup>25</sup>.

Father Manuel de Góis (1543-97) taught two courses in Coimbra College of Arts during 1574-78 and 1578-82<sup>26</sup>. However, in order to complete his huge contribution to the *Cursus Conimbricensis* he must have used manuscripts of several Coimbra or Évora colleagues, such as Pedro Luís, Lourenço Fernandes and Inácio Tolosa, along with some foreign printed editions brought into Portugal. A preliminary study of Góis' way of working, as far as the *Ethics* was concerned, was undertaken by Andrade<sup>27</sup>; his analysis may be taken as an example, still to be developed, for future editions. Andrade concluded that a common manuscript of the *Ethics* would have been shared by the Évora and Coimbra masters<sup>28</sup>. It can be noted, for example, that in the 'Preface' which Fonseca wrote to the whole *Cursus* he mentions «communes Philosophiae comentarii manuscripti»<sup>29</sup>, which are surely, at least in the very early days of the College, a rough collection of some master's contributions. The instructions Father Nadal gave to the University of Évora (1561)<sup>30</sup> enable us to say that in the Sixties there was still considerable liberty as to the texts chosen within the schools of the Company. As a second conclusion, regarding the College's library, Andrade insisted upon the liberty our commentators had displayed with regard to printed works. Furthermore, their type of pedagogical approach would inevitably lead Philosophy to an exegetical programme focused on those attending the *Cursus*. As far as later medieval metaphysicians were concerned such a programme had a hermeneutical penchant. Is it possible to measure the extension of that program as far as Medieval Philosophy is concerned? We shall follow here only a case-study.

The way the Coimbra Commentaries deal with Aristotle pays a clear

<sup>23</sup> CARVALHO, J. de - *Obra Completa* III (Lisboa 1982) 307-28; DIAS, J. S. da S. - *A Política...* 669-676 and 678-680.

<sup>24</sup> LOHR, Ch. H. - «Metaphysics», in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance...* 609.

<sup>25</sup> GOMES, J. F. - «Introdução», in *P. da Fonseca - Instituições Dialécticas*, XXIII-XXIV.

<sup>26</sup> COXITO, A. A. - «Góis (Manuel de)», in *Logos...* 2, 873-881.

<sup>27</sup> ANDRADE, A. A. de - *Introdução*. LXXVI-CVI.

<sup>28</sup> ANDRADE, A. A. de - *Introdução*. LXXX.

<sup>29</sup> See *Curso Conimbricense I. Pe. Manuel de Góis. Moral a Nicómaco...* 2.

<sup>30</sup> See LUKÁCS, L. (ed.) - *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu* (Róma 1965) foll., t. 3, text 155, n<sup>o</sup> 38, p. 78.

tribute to the spirit of Renaissance Philosophy in which Aristotelianism is a multifaced prism. How then is this compatible with Loyola's order that Jesuit scholars should follow Aristotle along with Thomas Aquinas? After studying two related cases —Prime Matter and the role of the Medieval theologian Henry of Ghent (III)— we shall conclude that to comment on Aristotle was an occasion for teaching contemporary oriented Philosophy, convinced that, as happens with any cultural production of the 16th century, scholarly and literary practices were strongly entangled.

But first we shall say something on how Fonseca was related to the *Cursus* (II), in order to show also how quickly we have been jumping to barely established conclusions.

## II

1. To Father Fonseca as well as to Fathers Marcos Jorge, Cipriano Soares and Pero Gomez, was given the task of publishing in 1561, a «curso de scriptos» (written course) in order «to avoid the work of writing, too much». In a letter of January 14th 1562, Fonseca writes to Father Jerónimo Nadal telling him of his own plan to achieve that target<sup>31</sup>. He first insisted on working on the Complete Aristotle, a task of great importance because the use of Aristotelian anthologies, as Jacqueline Hamesse has shown<sup>32</sup>, was encouraged even by the Jesuits (let us not forget that this is the age of Greek commentaries but also of *sententiae, dicta* and *auctoritates*, tables of contents, etc.<sup>33</sup>). He decided also to read Philosophy in its entirety, thus explaining the quotation of different ancient and recent authors. I must read —Fonseca writes— *all the books of Aristotle* that I have not yet read or paid due attention to, I must *take note of all doubts and good explanations with two or three great interpreters in order to explain one passage by another*; Father Cipriano —Fonseca goes on— must pay special attention to *Aristotles' mathematics*, that is, examples of Geometry, demonstrations in Cosmology, Astrology, and Perspectives, subjects we can find in *de coelo* and *meteoros*; he should concentrate on the theories of the planets in chapter IV of Sacrobosco's *The Sphere* (a local tradition<sup>34</sup>), and finally he should

<sup>31</sup> See GOMES, J. F. - *Introdução*, XXVI-XXVIII.

<sup>32</sup> See HAMESSE, J. - «Les florilèges philosophiques, instruments de travail des intellectuels à la fin du Moyen Age et à la Renaissance», in BIANCHI, L. (ed.) - *Filosofia e teologia nel Trecento. Studi in ricordo di E. Randi* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1994) 503-533; ID. - «La diffusion des florilèges aristotéliens en Italie du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle», in ROCCARO, G. (ed.) - *Platonismo e Aristotelismo nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia (secc. XIV-XVI)* (Palermo 1989) 39-54.

<sup>33</sup> ZIMARA - *Tabulae dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averrois* (Venice 1562); SCHMITT, Ch. B. - *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, 34-63.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. ALBUQUERQUE, L. de - «Sobre a Influência de Sacrobosco em Portugal», in *Crônicas da História de Portugal* (Lisboa 1987) 18-27; BALDINI, U. - «As Assistências Ibéricas da Companhia de Jesus e a Actividade Científica nas Missões Asiáticas (1578-

read Pliny and others on *meteoros*, winds, «de origine fontium» and so on; Cicero's philosophy has fine ways of speaking and dealing with a subject; as to Father Jorge, he could read *some questions of Scotus and others*, taking notes of difficulties and solutions, as well as Seneca's *natural questions*, Alexander Aphrodisias and another similar ancient authors<sup>35</sup>.

As we all know, this plan was not implemented, and all the three Jesuits were no longer involved in the Course which was actually published. Instead, at the very beginning of his *Commentary on Physics*, Father Góis gave us a possible introduction to the entire *Cursus*. How did he then conceive Philosophy? Note the differences between his and Fonseca's own approach. First, after insisting upon the Aristotelian definition «cognitio rerum per suas causas»<sup>36</sup> he divided Philosophy into two parts — Naturalis, Moralis, and Dialectica, on one side<sup>37</sup>, and Metaphysica, Physiologia and Mathematicae on the other, the latter being the side he prefers<sup>38</sup>. The Prooemium, in which he discusses these divisions, was written in a medieval scholarly fashion. However, article 2 of question 1 was created —he says— because of recent philosophers' opinions which were in total disagreement<sup>39</sup>, and a similarly modern motivation informs the discussion of

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1640). Alguns Aspectos Culturais e Institucionais», in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 54 (1998) 234-235; BENSÁUDE, J. - *Histoire de la Science Nautique Portugaise à l'époque des Grandes Découvertes* (Lisboa 1924).

<sup>35</sup> See GOMES, J. F. - *Introdução*, XXVII-XXVIII: «Ocurrióme para esto que ya que V. R. me daua mayor parte del assumpto, et repartia el trabajo con el P. Cypriano y con los Padres Marcos Jorge e Pero Gómez, seria bueno que los que podemos tomásemos cada día algún tiempo, para cada uno uer cosas que puedan ayudar, y preparar la materia para quando se hiziere: que yo tomasse dos horas, el P. Cypriano una, y el P. Marcos Jorge media, con esta continúa proporción de tiempo, cada uno conforme à sus occupaciones, dexando el P. Pero Gómez con las que tiene, porque harto haraa agora en acudirles. Assimismo me parecia que yo fuesse en este tiempo uiendo todos los libros de Aristoteles que no tengo uistos y pueden seruir (ó no tam uistos) apuntando las dudas y buenas exposiciones con dos ó tres graues intérpretes como por cifras, exponiendo unos lugares por otros, etc; porque esto es lo que ayudará más al que toma el principal assumpto; y que el P. Cypriano attendiesse especialmente à las cosas de mathematicas que ay en Aristóteles, como son exemplos de geometria, demonstraciones, lugares que hablan de lo que pertence à cosmographia, astrologia y perspectiua, como ay muchos en los libros de coelo y metéoros; y allende desto hiziesse por traer algo de las theóricas de los planetas al 4º cap. de la sphaera de Sacrobosco que acá se lee, quanto buenamente se pudiesse hazer, y se compadeciesse con el tiempo que se daa à estas cosas. Finalmente que leyesse en Plinio y otros algunos lo que puede seruir para materia de metéoros, como de uientos, de origine fontium, etc.; passando también las obras de philosophia de Cicero, y apuntando los modos de hablar y tratar que cómodamente podemos tomar dél; y que el P. Marcos Jorge podria uer algunas questiones (que sabe seran altercadas en el curso) por Scoto y otros que le pareciesse, apuntando breuemente lo que ay de dificultad ó de resolución, y leyesse las questiones naturales de Séneca, Alexandro aphrodiseo, et de alguno otro antiguo que hiziesse al caso.»

<sup>36</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, Prooemium (ed. Andrade, p. 8).

<sup>37</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 10).

<sup>38</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.* p. 14 f.).

<sup>39</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 20).



article 5<sup>40</sup> and of the last paragraph of the Prooemium<sup>41</sup>. Indeed, Philosophy is here taught as if it was controversy. The authors' predilection for the theoretical side of Philosophy (*scientiae contemplatiuae*) is totally founded on *abstraction* (of matter and movement), that is to say, on the formal way (*scibilitates*) a science considers its subject<sup>42</sup>. This seems to be the reason why the second tripartite division is correct<sup>43</sup> even if abstraction in Mathematics is to be divided further<sup>44</sup>. Indeed, one recognises here also the epistemological problem of intermediate sciences, but it is clear that Father Góis prefers to insist rather on Physics and Metaphysics, the latter having the higher mission or «duty of presiding over all arts, to form and defend the Republic of the Sciences, and to give to each discipline its own subject of study»<sup>45</sup>. Surely Charles Lohr ignored this confession.

The Prooemium ends with the division of Philosophy according to Aristotle<sup>46</sup>. Given the fact that we are dealing with the *Physics* Prooemium, let us pay attention to Góis' scheme in that domain<sup>47</sup>. The following plan

<sup>40</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 32).

<sup>41</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 52).

<sup>42</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 24): «Tot sunt scientiae contemplatiuae, quot abstractiones a materia et a motu: hae vero tres omnino sunt; ergo totidem erunt contemplatiuae scientiae. (...) [I]tasce abstractiones necessario comitantur diuersi modi (scibilitates vocant) sub quibus scientiae subiectae per se attingunt...»

<sup>43</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, a. 3 (*ibid.*, p. 26): «Quarum prima ad Philosophum Naturalem pertinet, secunda ad Mathematicum, postrema ad Metaphysicum. Enim vero Philosophus Naturalis considerat, v. g. hominem ut ex animo constat et corpore affecto qualitatibus sub sensum cadentibus, quod materia sensibilis dicitur; nec tamen materiam singularem scrutatur, cum singularia non per se spectent ad scientiam. Mathematicus affectiones triangulorum, aliaque id genus contemplatur, quae licet re ipsa in materia sensibili haereant; non ea tamen quatenus in eiusmodi materia sunt, expendit. Metaphysicus in cognitione primae causae, et intelligentiarum, atque aliarum rerum, quae neque in materia consistunt, neque illam in suo conceptu includunt, versatur. Porro quod de abstractione a materia diximus, similiter de separatione a motu intelligi debet. Liqueat igitur tres esse abstractiones, atque adeo totidem inspectricis Philosophiae partes; neque alias praeterea inuehere opus esse; cum omnia, quae in scientiae contemplationem veniunt, sub aliqua e tribus praedictis notionibus ab intellectu percipiuntur. Atque haec ratio a D. Thoma loco cit. breuiter perstringitur.»

<sup>44</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, a. 4 (*ibid.*, p. 30): «Ex quo planum euadit cur Mathematicae plures sint, Physiologia vero una, itemque una Metaphysica; videlicet quia harum quaelibet unam dumtaxat; illae duplicem vendicant abstractionem. Ac nos hactenus de ijs tantum Mathematicis egimus, quae syncerae, puraeque Mathematicae dicuntur. Sunt vero praeter has aliae, quae mixtae nuncupantur, propterea, quod inter Physiologiam, et pure Mathematicas mediae sint, eorumque obiecta partim ad Naturalem Philosophum, partim ad Arithmeticum, vel Geometram spectent; ut Musica et Perspectiva. Numerus enim Sonorus, circa quem Musica versatur, ex parte quidem numeri Arithmeticum quidpiam est; ex parte Sonori, Physicum.»

<sup>45</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, a. 5 (*ibid.*, p. 34).

<sup>46</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 48): «Quae autem in ijs tractantur, ad quinque genera, seu capita reduci possunt. Pars una, epistolarum, Poeticae et Rhetoricae scriptionem continet. Altera, disserendi praecepta. Tertia, Civilem et Moralemque doctrinam. Quarta, rerum Naturalium. Quinta, Transnaturalium scientiam.»

<sup>47</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (*ibid.*, p. 50-52).

was almost completely achieved, although not in a uniform way<sup>48</sup>. The whole field of Physiology is divided into ten parts: 1) the eight books of *Physica*; 2) *de Caelo*; 3) *de Generatione*; 4) *Metavororum* and an absent book on metals and stones, that can be substituted —he says— by Theophrastus, Plinius and Albert the Great; 5) *de Anima*; 6) the complement of *de Anima* (*de senso, somnu, vita et morte*, etc.); 7) *Animalium historia*, in spite —he adds— of its historical rather than scientific character; 8 - 10) the three parts of *de partibus animalium*.

It would be possible (although not very wise to lean on entirely or exclusively) to compare Fonseca's plan already mentioned with Góis' Prooemium. Manuel de Góis also aims to give students a systematisation of the Complete Aristotle, and he was fairly successful as regards Physiology. According to Góis, however, there was currently no prohibition on replacing Aristotle in matters he has not dealt with. If a scientific concern is to be preferred to the historical one, Aristotle seems to be mainly a path to attain a global view of reality in its various dimensions.

2. Two things are to be concluded. It is by now obvious that *Metaphysics* or «*Transnaturalium scientia*» was to be offered within the frame of the *Cursus*. As António Martins has noticed, one should not think that Fonseca's *Commentary* on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was to be placed among the Coimbra Commentaries, thus explaining the fact that no commentary on the *Metaphysics* was written within such an editorial project. In his *Commentary* on the *Nichomachean Ethics*, one year after his *Physics' Commentary* and sixteen years after the publication, by Fonseca, of the first volume of his *Commentary on Metaphysics*, Manuel de Góis repeated at least three times his intention of writing a text on *Metaphysics*<sup>49</sup>.

As far as Fonseca's contribution is concerned, we are struck by the fact that the Coimbra *Commentary* on Aristotle's *Dialectics* appeared only in 1606, two years after the publication by Gaspar Coelho of an 'unauthorised' edition that seems to have been launched by an unusual publishing campaign. This fact, along with the contested originality of Fonseca's *Dialectical Institutions* conceived as an introduction to Philosophy, seems to indicate, as A. Martins has noted, a divergence among Coimbra Jesuits about on how to deal with Logic<sup>50</sup>.

This is not too much to speculate if we assume that some kind of a wider philosophical divergence explains the reason why Fonseca was not connected to the *Cursus Conimbricensis*. Perhaps this supposition is not totally unavailing, as we possess a letter, written by Father Francisco de

<sup>48</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, (*ibid.*, p. 48); cfr. supra n. 46.

<sup>49</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In libros Ethicorum...*, Disp. I, introd. (ed. Andrade, p. 67), Disp. IV, q. 2, a. 1 (*ibid.*, p. 143), Disp. VII, q. 3, a. 2 (*ibid.*, p. 225).

<sup>50</sup> See MARTINS, A. - «Conimbricenses», in *Logos...*, vol 1: 1113.

Gouveia (1596) to the General of the Jesuits, where we may notice a sort of ideological difficulty related to the composition of the *Commentary on Metaphysics*<sup>51</sup>: (1) Manuel de Góis was ordered to write the whole Arts Course («todo el Curso de Artes»); (2) in some of his texts prepared for the Press he was not already considering a study of Metaphysics *but he also follows common opinions acknowledged in the Schools*; (3) he planned to harmonize Metaphysics with Logic in a brief and more acceptable way; (4) the order to compose the compendium on *Metaphysics* was given by the Father General to Fonseca, and Góis was asking through Gouveia for advice regarding whether he eventually ought to consider *Metaphysics*; (5) Fonseca was a slow worker and Father Gouveia was afraid that the Course would be incomplete («imperfecto»); (6) Gouveia seems to suggest that the Father General could allow both to write their own Commentaries and then he would decide which one would be more suitable; (7) but Gouveia also mentions to the General the opinion of an aid, Father Manuel Roiz, who thinks Manuel de Góis was the man to take the job, given the fact that Fonseca had a few uncommon opinions that Góis, being more orthodox, rejected in what he was publishing.

As we know, Fonseca was not so slow that he could not accomplish his *Commentary on Metaphysics*. From that letter it seems to us that his metaphysical views had given rise to a certain opposition or perplexity in some Company circles. Was the opposition objective? In a letter where he rejected this censorship it is possible to read at least one of the opinions in dispute, dealing with God's efficient causality, but it is also clear that Fonseca says he has never taught such a thing, namely, he has never said that God the Creator acquired «simpliciter et absolute» a positive mode and he has never defended a virtual distinction between the act of God's will and His act of Creation<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> See GOMES, J. F. - *Introdução*, XLIX, n. 1: «Otra dificultad se ofrece sobre los Comentarios de la Metaphysica porque el Pe. Manuel de Goes tenia a su cargo hazerlos por le estar encomendado cõponer todo el Curso de Artes y ja en los Phisicos y en los de Coelo y en los de Generatione y de Anima que tiene para imprimir se remitte a la Metaphysica, y va siempre cõ las opiniones comunes y recebidas en las escuelas y [?] uniformidad de las opiniones en toda esta obra y en la Logica e ade ser mas breve porque se ade remetyr a la Metaphysica y est ade ser mas accepto en las escuelas. Por otra parte tengo entendido que el Pe Fonseca cõ licencia de V. P. determina hazer cõpendio de su Metaphysica pera se leer en nuestras escuelas y el Pe Goes dessea saber la determinacion de V. P. pera cessar de su intento y disponer las cosas de otra manera, no haziendo mencion de Metaphysica. Por otra parte el Pe Fonseca es muy vagaroso en su cõposicion y asii se puede temer que ni el acabe ni el otro cõponga por su respecto y quedemos con el curso imperfecto. Vea V. P. se sera conveniente que cada uno haga sus comentarios y despues se vera quales se devã leer en las escuelas. Porque el Pe Fonseca tiene muchas opiniones cõtra la comun, y el Pe Goes va cõ las recebidas en las escuelas y refuta en lo que esta ynpreso algunas opiniones del Pe Fonseca sin nombrarle por le guardar el devido respecto. El P. Manuel Roiz que fue assis-tente desea mucho que el Pe Goes componga la Metaphysica por las razones que apuntè».

<sup>52</sup> See GOMES, J. F. - *Introdução*, L, n. 1: «Qãto a lo 2º, la censura que agora viene

3. As far as those at the Collegium Conimbricensis were concerned, good Catholic faith ought to be acquired after Aristotle's text had been soundly interpreted. What does this mean? Coimbra's approach to later medieval metaphysics was not really in total agreement with Loyola's prescription. The masters enjoyed considerable liberty in their task of creating a Christian philosophy. This certainly explains a certain Scotist mentality and anti-Nominalist spirit present in their textbooks. In order to explain Aristotle, medieval philosophers (some of them newly published) would also have had a role. This fact, along with the reaction of many philosophers against the humanist reading of Ancient Philosophy, explains the reason why medieval assumptions, problems and terminology seem to be revived here.

Indeed, Eckhard Kessler has noted an absence of dogmatism in Psychology, thus asserting that «in many questions that were controversial between Thomist and Scotists of the time —e. g., the distinction between the agent and possible intellect, the necessity of the intelligible species, the intellection of singulars and the manner in which the intelligible species is produced— both positions were considered at least defensible if not equally probable, and no dogmatic decision was arrived at»<sup>53</sup>. The same was noted by Randles on the substance of the sky<sup>54</sup> and P. Porro has also paid attention to Sebastião do Couto's hesitation as regards the Aristotelian category «quando»<sup>55</sup>. In his Commentary, Father Góis observes that it is preferable not to assert something when any doubt seems to occur<sup>56</sup>. If Dominican Thomism was still taught at Vespers between 1541 and 1565,

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suppone que en ambos modos de declarar la causalidad eficiente de Dios (...) se cõcedia simpliciter et absolute, aliquem modum positivum advenire Deo ex tempore cum incipit agere ad extra, y que en la 2ª declaraciõ de la dicha causalidad no se ponía distinció virtual sino entre el modo positivo de cõcurrir y el acto de la divina voluntad; lo qual no es assi porque expressamente se dezía que no solo aquel modo positivo se distingua virtualiter del acto de la voluntad divina, pero tambien que el mismo modo solum virtualiter erat novus sive ex tempore, y no simpliciter et absolute... En lo qual me escrivio el Pe Nunes em portugues, lo que se sigue — Aca entre todos està tan claro como la luz del dia (...) como yo en mas de cinco o seis lugares de mis escritos, avemos dicho discretis verbis quod activus influxus Dei non est actu novus seu temporalis seclusa operatione intellectus, atque adeo non est simpliciter et absolute novus sed sola virtute, et (quod hinc fit) tantum secundum quid novus. Por donde no se podia cõ ningun color o aparencia escrivir a Roma que solum constituebamus virtualem distinctionem inter activum influxum Dei et actum divinae voluntatis, ipsum autem activum influxum ponebamus actum novum et temporalem, sive actu advenientem Deo ex tempore.»

<sup>53</sup> KESSLER, E. - «The Intellective Soul», in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*... 607.

<sup>54</sup> RANDES, W. G. L. - «Le ciel chez les jésuites espagnols et portugais (1590-1651)», in *Les Jésuites*... 137.

<sup>55</sup> PORRO, P. - *Forme e Modelli di Durata nel Pensiero Medievale* (Leuven 1996) 459-460.

<sup>56</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo librõs Physicorum*... (ibid., p. 52): «Nobis visum est in re omnino dubia potius sententiam suspendere, quam aliquid asseuerare.»

after that period such a predominance was superseded by what was called an eclectic Thomism<sup>57</sup>. This explains the importance for instance of Giles of Rome, an influence yet to be studied. However, other authors were well also known and deserve further attention. For instance, when dealing with the problem of the eternity of the world in his rejection of Aristotle's position, Manuel de Góis does the same also with Aquinas soft interpretation of Aristotle. This is interesting enough because it corresponds exactly to the position of Henry of Ghent against Bacon's, Bonaventure's and Aquinas' hesitations over how to interpret Aristotle<sup>58</sup>. However, if Henry thought that it was theoretically wrong to defend both the theological doctrine of Creation and the philosophical doctrine of the eternity of the world, Góis admits such a logical possibility<sup>59</sup>. Needless to say this was the Duns Scotus' and William of Ockham's strategy<sup>60</sup>.

### III

1. The accommodation of new materials and new religious imperatives shaped this period as a «complicated and confused one, and the diversity of the philosophical materials, collected from different schools and traditions, makes it burdensome to exhume the position of a given author» and this may be «the reason why philosophical discussion declined in manuals and textbooks»<sup>61</sup>.

How is it possible to advance in such a dramatic trend? It is correct to say that as medieval philosophers had worked out their doctrines by doing commentaries, Coimbra commentators did the same? The answer seems to deserve a considered judgement. We propose to open a direction by alluding to one case.

2. Let us choose the already mentioned Henry of Ghent as a possible example, since in 1518 there appeared a printed edition of his two major works<sup>62</sup>. In addition to this we may remember that Henry was Thomas Aquinas' first true critic, and from the 13th to the 18th century his influence never really decreased. He was criticized by the early Thomistic school, thoroughly read in 14th and 15th centuries, edited in the 16th and

<sup>57</sup> DIAS, J. S. da S. - *Correntes...* 441.

<sup>58</sup> See MACKEN, R. - «La temporalité radicale de la créature selon Henri de Gand», in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 38 (1971) 211.

<sup>59</sup> MARTINS, A. - «O Conimbricense Manuel de Góis e a Eternidade do Mundo», in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 52 (1996) 498.

<sup>60</sup> CARVALHO, M. S. de - «Para a História da Possibilidade e da Liberdade», in *Itinerarium* 40 (1994) 145-180.

<sup>61</sup> PARK, K.; KESSLER, E. - «The Concept of Psychology», in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy...* 462-63.

<sup>62</sup> Edited by I. Badius, Paris. See LEBEL, M - *Josse Bade, dit Badius (1462-1535). Humaniste, éditeur-imprimeur et préfacier* (Leuven 1988).

again in the 17th century, adopted by the Servites in that same century, and in March 12, 1649 at Heidelberg University he was formally considered by Hoest von Landenburg a «modern» author<sup>63</sup>. Our Coimbra Commentator gives him the significant title (since Henry was engaged in Tempier's Condemnation of 1277) «Doctor Sorbonicus, auctoritatem Parisiensis articuli»<sup>64</sup>.

Coimbra was certainly aware of Henry's work mainly of his 15 *Quodlibets*. All of these were quoted<sup>65</sup>, whereas of the *Summa's* 75 articles only 20 were mentioned, and even then in an incomplete form. Should we explain this by the fact that only the «de Deo section» of Henry's *Summa* was written, and the Coimbra Commentaries were intended to be a philosophical rather than a purely theological work?

In the whole *Commentary on Ethics* Henry of Ghent is only quoted twice. This seems to indicate that the Coimbra Commentaries ignored his real and historical importance for Moral Philosophy. We may suppose that they did not thoroughly study his *Quodlibets*, although they must have known them. In the two quotations we find an interesting case confirming our suspicion. When dealing with passions (D. VI, q. 1, a. 2) Góis does not hesitate in taking sides with Henry of Ghent instead of with Aquinas. The question was if concupiscence and irascibility were two really different potencies. Saint Thomas was said to promote a real distinction (and this position —Góis points out— is almost a commonplace amongst philosophers from Aristotle to Henry<sup>66</sup>). Manuel de Góis then adds another last, familiar question: which one has more dignity? In *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 15 —Góis answers— Henry of Ghent prefers concupiscence whereas Saint Thomas in *De Veritate* q. 25, a. 2 seems to embrace a different opinion and gives his preference to irascibility. It is true —he goes on— that we may understand Thomas' choice, but Aristotle in the eight book of *Historia Animalium* gives rational strength to Henry's position<sup>67</sup>. But are Góis' philosophical rea-

<sup>63</sup> CARVALHO, M. S. de - «Henrique de Gand (†1293). A propósito da edição dos seus 'Opera Omnia'», in *Humanística e Teologia* 12 (1991) 2-3 (of the off-print).

<sup>64</sup> See HACHMANN, B & CARVALHO, M. S. de - «Os Conimbricenses e Pedro da Fonseca como leitores de Henrique de Gand», in *Mediaevalia. Textos e Estudos* 3 (1993) 208.

<sup>65</sup> See ID. - *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In libros Ethicorum...* (ed. Andrade 178): «Recte diuiditur appetitus sensituius in irascibilem & concupiscibilem, vt in duas potentias realiter distinctas. Haec est contra Gabrielem in 3. d. 25. 26. q. 1. art. 3. dub. 1. vbi putat duplicem hunc appetitum differre sola ratione per ordinem ad diuersos actus: est tamen philosophorum communis, Aristotelis 1. Magnorum Moral. cap. 13. Platonis 4. lib de Republica, vbi vtrumque appetitum a ratione & inter se distinguit, aiens consulatui in vrbe respondere in homine rationem, Quaestuario cupiditatem, Auxiliario irascendi appetitum. Est etiam D. damasceni lib. 2. fidei Orthod. cap. 12 D. Gregorij Nysseni lib. 4. philosophiae cap. 8. D. Thomae 1. p. q. 81. art. 2. Henrici Gandauensis quodlib. 8. q. 15. D. Bonauenturae in 3. d. 33. art. 1. q. 3. M. Alberti 3. de anima tract. 4. cap. 2 & in summa de homine tract. de irascib. quaest. 2.»

<sup>67</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In libros Ethicorum...* (ed. Andrade 182): «Haec dubitatio ita explicanda est, vt dicamus ex parte obiecti, atque adeo simpliciter appetitum concupiscibilem

sons here adduced really related to Henry's *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 15? If one reads Henry's question—which by the way does not ask about the superiority of any appetite—one has to give a relatively negative answer. It is true that Henry says what his Portuguese interpreter actually reads<sup>68</sup>, but Góis misses all the context, both metaphysical and historical, that Henry was dealing with. Without any allusion to Avicenna's *Metaphysics* (here an authoritative text for Henry<sup>69</sup>), the student would also receive no information on the relation between rationality and sensibility, above all he would not be able to appreciate how the discussion was deeply entangled with Henry's important philosophy of free will<sup>70</sup>.

It is fair to say that if a Renaissance Portuguese student was not informed on Henry's philosophy he would be at least prepared to identify a controversy and to quote a correct text and authority suitable to neutralize it. Shall we say then that the Commentary's main concern is Aristotle and not a medieval metaphysician? We propose to answer this question by alluding to a problem, instead of by studying the role of an author. Again, for Henry's sake we have chosen the Aristotelian theme of Prime Matter. The first and more important of Henry's allusions to this problem appears in *Quodlibet* I, q. 10, which, by the way, is precisely the question Góis quotes when asking if matter, by divine power, was possible without any substantial form<sup>71</sup>. This is indeed a better use of Henry's work than that one we just have mentioned. We were struck by the fact that, like Henry, our Commentator also links this theme with the problem of the distinction between essence and existence<sup>72</sup>. Incidentally, we do not want to deny a direct knowl-

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nobiliorem esse irascibili: quandoquidem ille fertur directo & immediate in bonum pertinens ad conseruationem animalis: hic vero immediate tendit in remouens prohibens. Item (quod in idem recidit) quia potentia, quae proxime ordinatur ad finem, excellentior est, quam quae occupatur circa media: at concupiscibilis proxime ordinatur ad finem, quia tendit in bonum sensibile secundum se; irascibilis in id, quod vtile est, & conducens ad illud obtinendum. Concedi tamen potest iuxta aliam considerationem irascibilem concupiscibili praestare, quatenus immoderata affectio irae, minus perniciosa est, quam concupiscentia, vt D. Thomas ratione suadebat.»

<sup>68</sup> HENRICUS de GANDAVO - *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 15 (ed. Badius: Paris 1518) fol. 327 r T - v: «Quae in hoc ex parte obiecti differunt, quod concupiscibilis dicitur esse circa bonum ut est delectabile, quia appetit in ipso bono delectari. Irascibilis vero dicitur esse circa bonum arduum quia appetit in ipso superare omnia contraria. Est enim irascibilis vindex concupiscibilis. (...) secundum hoc concupiscibilis sit (...) principalis potentia et irascibilis sit quaedam vis in ipsa et ex ipsa orta...»

<sup>69</sup> AVICENNA - *Liber de Philosophia Prima* VIII, 7 (ed. S. Van Riet: Leuven-Leiden 1980) 433.

<sup>70</sup> See TESKE, R. - *Henry of Ghent, Quodlibetal Questions on Free Will*. Translated from the Latin with an Introduction and Notes by R. J. Teske, S. J. (Milwaukee 1993).

<sup>71</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. IX, q. 6, a. 1 (ed. Coimbra 1592 p. 178).

<sup>72</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. IX, q. 6, a 2 (ed. Coimbra 1592 p. 180): «... persuasum habent existentiam non a sola forma provenire sed tam materiam quam caetera entia ut unumquodque ab alio distinguitur, ita aliquam sibi propriam existentiam vindicare (...). Existentia cuiusque non distinguitur ab essentia, nisi ut mo-

edge of Henry by the Portuguese Jesuits, but one must remember that such an allusive style may also be explained by the dissemination of anthologies, the kind of texts we referred to above.

We shall be dealing then with chapters 8 and 9 of *Physics* Book I (191 a 23 - 192 b 2), two and half pages of The Revised Oxford Translation<sup>73</sup>, which were divided by Góis' into twelve texts, with 13 smaller sections, occupying 57 pages of the Coimbra edition. According to Ross' revised text «the whole substance of book 1 (...) is the establishment of matter, form, and privation as the factors involved in all change. Aristotle's chief claim is that he has for the first time exhibited clearly the distinction between matter and privation, and the necessity of both to any account of change...»<sup>74</sup>. In his analysis of chapters 8 and 9, Ross pinpoints the Aristotelian discussion of the difficulties felt by the Ancient philosophers, as well as his reflections on the first principles of nature<sup>75</sup> —Ross' study could have had its counterpart in the *explanatio* of the Coimbra edition<sup>76</sup>— and he also understands his duties as a Commentator<sup>77</sup>, first by doing philological and historical research (*Quellengeschichte*), searching for the literal meaning and elucidating cross-references, and, secondly, by insisting again on analytical work well founded in critical philological and philosophical training.

The 57 printed pages of Coimbra are in contrast to the 10 pages Ross dedicated to both chapters. Still, although if Ross may share some of the Coimbra concerns, he would not follow the Portuguese Jesuits. These Commentators preferred to deal with the following 12 questions: does matter exist within (insit) physical things (qu. 1)<sup>78</sup>; if matter can be correctly defined, known and named (qu.2)<sup>79</sup>; how matter is related with potency (qu. 3)<sup>80</sup>; if matter tends towards form (qu. 4)<sup>81</sup>; if matter belongs to the essence of natural composites (qu. 5)<sup>82</sup>; if by divine power there can be matter without form (qu. 6)<sup>83</sup>; if privation is or is not a being (qu. 7)<sup>84</sup>; if

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dus rei a re, ergo ut unumquodque essentiam ab alio distinctam habet ita et distinctam sibi que propriam existentiam...»

<sup>73</sup> *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation, edited by J. Barnes (Princeton 1991) Vol. I: 326-328.

<sup>74</sup> *Aristotle's Physics*. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by David Ross (Oxford 1979) 24.

<sup>75</sup> ARISTOTLE - *Physics*, ed. D. Ross, 346-348.

<sup>76</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, explan. (ed. Coimbra 1592 p. 154-157).

<sup>77</sup> ARISTOTLE - *Physics*, ed. D. Ross, 494-499.

<sup>78</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 1 (ed. Coimbra 1592, p. 157-160).

<sup>79</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 2 (*ibid.*, p. 160-164).

<sup>80</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 3 (*ibid.*, p. 164-168).

<sup>81</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 4 (*ibid.*, p. 169-171).

<sup>82</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 5 (*ibid.*, p. 171-177).

<sup>83</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 177-183).

<sup>84</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 7 (*ibid.*, p. 184-187).



privation is the true principle of natural things (qu. 8)<sup>85</sup>; if, besides matter, substantial form is needed in whatsoever natural things (qu. 9)<sup>86</sup>; if the definition of substantial form is a correct and true one (qu. 10)<sup>87</sup>; if from substantial form and matter a one is formed (qu. 11)<sup>88</sup>; and finally, if all or only natural forms derive from matter by subjective potency (qu. 12)<sup>89</sup>.

Since Philosophy is here presented to students as a series of controversies aspiring for solution, it is obvious that it is not exclusively the distinction between matter and privation and their importance to any account of change that occupies our Jesuit, but mainly the vast and complex historical controversy over the metaphysical and theological relationship between Matter and Form. We may even conjecture by the size of these 12 questions which were considered to be the more significant: there are questions answered in one or two pages (qu. 10, 8), the discussion of the two last questions occupies almost twenty pages. Being the culmination of book I, this fact means that anthropology in its own right (the question was about human soul) was within the domain of *Physics*. It is by now clear to us that this huge shift from the study of the factors involved in change to a theological and metaphysical discussion of the matter/form relationship was almost completely undermined by what is now called medieval philosophy. However, this is done without any explicit awareness of historical difference.

It is only fair to conclude that Aristotle is not the only «*maître à penser*» and that to comment on him meant at least taking him as an occasion for doing Philosophy. What kind of Philosophy? Let us follow question 6, a very important one as it exemplifies this close relation between Philosophy and Theology and between Medieval and Sixteenth Century Philosophy. As we have already said, the author asks whether by divine power there can be matter without form. We are facing a problem that goes back at least to medieval Augustinian tradition<sup>90</sup>. The question's structure, in four articles, is a medieval one: the first article lists the thinkers and their arguments for both parts —Hugues, Peter Lombard, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Durandus, Capreolus, Caietanus, Giles of Rome, Herveu of Nedellec, also «*aliique permulti*» against Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Richard, Gabriel, Gregory, and also «*aliique non pauci*». Furthermore, it displays five arguments against the possibility of matter existing without form by divine intervention, and three other arguments in favour of that possibility. It is important to observe that authors and arguments are textually separated,

<sup>85</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 8 (*ibid.*, p. 187-189).

<sup>86</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 9 (*ibid.*, p. 189-191).

<sup>87</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 10 (*ibid.*, p. 192-193).

<sup>88</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 11 (*ibid.*, p. 193-201).

<sup>89</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 12 (*ibid.*, p. 201-211).

<sup>90</sup> See McALEER, G. J. - «Augustinian Interpretations of Averroes with Respect to the Status of Prime Matter», in *The Modern Schoolman* 73 (1996) 159-172.

and the effect of such a procedure is a summary sistematization of the arguments in dispute.

Article 2 explains further both sides («utriusque sententiae fundamenta paulo explicatius proponenda sunt»<sup>91</sup>). Was it admissible among students to work only with the first and easier presentation? We do not know. Students have their own way of challenging the teacher's recommendations! Nevertheless, it is in article 2 that we find Henry's position against the alleged «Thomisticae opinionis fundamentum»<sup>92</sup>. Significantly, ancient authors like Plato, Dionysius and Boethius are quoted in order to deepen the Thomistic positions, but the reason why Góis does not follow such a position is because he has specific views about the essence/existence relationship as well as about the difference between creation and conservation. Is all existence —he asks— received through form? A theological and a metaphysical reason are here entangled in order to admit the possibility for matter to exist without form. First: matter was created by God and from that point of view matter may exist without form<sup>93</sup>; second: existence is form's last actuality<sup>94</sup>. The first reason is only discussed in article 3 where one finds an allusion to the beginning of *Genesis*. However, what is really significant here is the fact that another shift seems to have happened, in fact a really modern one, a subtle movement from metaphysics to physics without losing theology on the horizon. That is the case of questioning if the difference between creation and conservation was compatible with the admission of the possibility of matter existing without form<sup>95</sup>. Coimbra doctrine on the difference between creation and conservation has a few distinctions which we shall omit here to concentrate only on the part associated with the form/matter relationship<sup>96</sup>. Father Góis writes that

<sup>91</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 179).

<sup>92</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 180).

<sup>93</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6, a. 3 (*ibid.*, p. 181): «...asserendumque posse materiam divina virtute sine omni forma substantiali consistere, id quod fiet adhibente Deo maiore concursu, quo quidquid forma materiam actuando praestat, ipse in genere efficientis causae suppleat».

<sup>94</sup> See GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 180-181).

<sup>95</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (*ibid.*, p. 181): «Sed opponet aliquis: Id quod Deus creat immediate conservat sicut enim nihil cum Deo etiam ut instrumentum, concurrit ad creandum, ita neque ad conservandum. Cum igitur Deus materiam creet, eandem per se immediate conservabit ac sine ullo formae concursu quem erga materiam omni forma spoliata compensari oporteat. Respondendum tamen etsi cum Deo creante nihil efficienter concurrat, quia conferre esse ex nihilo infinitam virtutem arguit, nihil tamen ob stare quominus ad esse rerum, quae creantur, concurrat creatura in alio causae genere, quomodo in prima rerum molitione cum Deus corpora coelestia et elementa creavit tam materia ad eorum formas excipiendas, sustentandasque quam formae ad materiam actuandam et fovendam concurrerunt».

<sup>96</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. VIII, c. II, q. 1, a. 4 (*ibid.*, p. 711): «Nam conservatio qua forma materiam conservat et eiusdem materiae creatio non possunt inter se re ipsa non distingui. Quod ita probatur: Forma eatenus materiam conservare dicitur, quatenus eam actuat, haec vero actuatio non est aliud quam modus quidam quo forma sese in materiam insinuat, sequé illi donat, qui modus, ut in 2. libro disserimus, est

there is a certain real distinction between creation and conservation, the latter being the physical structure of all creatures constituted by matter and form. Form conserves matter, although form itself is distinguished from matter and from creation since creation is creation of matter. This theological frame does not ignore a physical one. Theology must study matter as a certain kind of being independent of form, but in our physical world matter is nothing without form, since the law of conservation belongs to form. Real things are concrete things, having their own specific time. Conservation is thus the first law of the physical world *qua* physical, to which we must add a triple bond of essence, existence and duration<sup>97</sup>. It is true that essence has preeminence, but since existence is understood as a being outside its own causes (*extra suas causas*)<sup>98</sup> this indicates that essence and existence cannot be separated, and that Creation is thus not only related to existence but concerns also essence<sup>99</sup>. Since there is no real distinction between essence and existence but only a modal one<sup>100</sup>, then a program of a metaphysics of essence is also a metaphysics of existence, thus explaining article 4, wherein we may find a clear negation of the basis of strict essentialism<sup>101</sup>.

Calling existence form's last actuality (*postremam actualitatem*) is

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idem re cum forma et ex consequenti realiter a materia dissidet cum (...) alia res sit materia alia forma. Quo patet conservationem qua forma materiam conservat, distingui re tum a materia tum a creatione quare est idem re cum materia creata.»

<sup>97</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. IV, c. 14, q. 2, a. 2, (*ibid.*, p. 549): «... collige essentiam, existentiam et durationem, quae tria in qualibet re creata nexu quodam inter se colligata reperiuntur, eum servare ordinem ut essentia prior sit, secundum locum habeat existentia, tertium ac postremum duratio.»

<sup>98</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. IV, c. 14, q. 2, a. 2, (*ibid.*, p. 549): «... respondemus existentiam dici postremam actualitatem et modum rei, quia unaquaeque forma et perfectio habet sese ad existentiam ut potentia ad actum quatenus potest secundum se existere et non existere neque potentialitatem exiit dum non stat actu sub existentia. Hoc vero modo etiam duratio ad existentiam comparata est in potestate ad illam, ut ad ulteriorem gradum, quatenus sumpta secundum suam essentiam est indifferens ut ponatur in rebus. Quo sit ut existentia maneat ultimus modus rei utpote cui ipsa quoque duratio praeconcepitur et a qua existens dicitur commodata invicem mutua appellatione ut sicut existentia a duratione durans ita duratio ab existentia existens nuncupetur.»

<sup>99</sup> See CARVALHO, M.S. de - «Inter Philosophos non mediocris contentio. A propósito de Pedro da Fonseca e do contexto medieval da distinção essência/existência», in *Mediaevalia. Texto e Estudos* 7-8 (1995) 559.

<sup>100</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. 9, q. 6, a. 2, (*ibid.*, p. 180): «Existentia cuiusque non distinguitur ab essentia nisi ut modus rei a re...»

<sup>101</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. 9, q. 6, a. 4, (*ibid.*, p. 183): «Nam si natura communis per se extra singularia existeret, esset ac non esset singularis; non esset quia ita supponitur: esset quia existere in rerum natura sicuti operari et produci non convenit superioribus nisi per inferiora, quandoquidem ut existere est ultima cuiusque rei actualitas, ita non nisi ultimo perfectis et terminatis in sua serie qualia sunt sola singularia primo convenire debet caeteris vero ipsorum merito ac beneficio. Quod vero ad suppositi rationem attinet repugnat etiam dari naturam absque supposito cui innitatur quia subsisteret per se tanquam a nullo dependens, quod in rebus creatis nulli praeterquam supposito convenit simulque non subsisteret utpote suppositi adminiculo carens...»

equivalent to understanding existence as duration (*sicut existentia a duratione durans ita duratio ab existentia existens*)<sup>102</sup> — an idea widespread among the Company<sup>103</sup>, which our Commentator could have found in Giles of Rome or in Duns Scotus<sup>104</sup>. Existence is also the basis of all second acts<sup>105</sup>, a perspective which amounts to a significant change in understanding time, from something of an abstract nature to something as the duration of the thing itself. The theoretical principle here at stake is the identification with existence, and certainly this is not what Aristotle had thought, he himself being more inclined to measure movement itself or the duration of movement rather than being concerned with permanence of real things.

#### ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the Coimbra Commentaries, a group of eight commentaries of Aristotle, published in the Portuguese town of Coimbra between 1592 and 1606, that knew a large editorial success through Europe. The reception of the Medieval philosopher Henry of Ghent is considered as a case-study but attention is also paid to geographical, cultural and scholarly humanistic conditions that helped the Commentaries to create their own philosophical style.

#### RESUMEN

El artículo versa sobre los Comentarios de Coimbra, un grupo de ocho comentarios de Aristóteles, publicados en esa ciudad portuguesa entre 1592 y 1606, y que alcanzaron un gran éxito editorial en toda Europa. El autor analiza la aceptación por los Coimbraenses de las tesis del filósofo medieval Enrique de Gante, prestando además atención a las condiciones geográficas, culturales y humanísticas que contribuyeron al estilo filosófico propio de los Comentarios.

<sup>102</sup> There is a difference, see GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. IV, c. 14, q. 2, a. 2, (*ibid.*, p. 548): «... durationem differre ab existentia non quidem realiter (...) sed tamen ex natura rei (...); ex natura rei distingui ab existentia continuitatis motus. Primum quia ratio existentiae in eo tantum consistit ut res sit extra suas causas, duratio vero significat protensionem seu moram rei in suo esse...»

<sup>103</sup> See PORRO, P. - *op. cit.* 468.

<sup>104</sup> *ID.*, - *ibid.* 464.

<sup>105</sup> GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. VII, c. 2, q. 2, a. 2, (*ibid.*, p. 684): «... existentia sit fundamentum omnium actuum secundorum, nihil posse ex se ullam edere actionem nisi existat.»