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978-0-521-28082-2 - The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts, Volume 2: Ethics and Political Philosophy

Edited by Arthur Stephen McGrade, John Kilcullen and Matthew Kempshall

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The aim of this volume is the same as that of *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (CHLMP), to which it is a companion: to help make the activity of contemporary philosophy intellectually continuous with medieval philosophy. Direct acquaintance with medieval philosophical texts, or acquaintance as close to direct as translation from one language to another can provide, is crucial for this end. Philosophy is peculiarly resistant to summary. Even the best scholarly discourse about an Albert the Great or William of Ockham cannot provide the historical insight and incitement to further reflection that comes from reading the philosopher's own work. Our hope, then, is that this volume may both stimulate current philosophical discussion of normative issues and significantly broaden the understanding of earlier discussions.

Modern scholarship has recovered much that is philosophically illuminating from the Middle Ages. In particular, by focusing on late medieval problems and approaches that are intelligible from within the mind-set of Anglophone analytic philosophy, CHLMP has elicited increased engagement with medieval thought even from those who are not especially sympathetic to the period's dominant religious and metaphysical presuppositions. Yet at the same time as medieval thought has become more congenial to contemporary philosophers, doubts have been raised in various quarters about the intellectual and moral values of modernity and Enlightenment on the basis of which contemporary philosophy itself has developed. Few would wish to return to the thirteenth century – certainly not the editors of this volume – but the combination of resonance with contemporary philosophical method and challenge to current assumptions offered by our late medieval predecessors gives special point to the study of their contributions to moral philosophy.

In selecting texts to translate, we were guided by the philosophical and historical considerations represented in the relevant chapters of CHLMP and modified by our own research, especially by the recent work of one of us on scholastic discussions of self-sacrifice (as in Translations 5–8) and

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resistance (Translations 9–11), topics of current philosophical interest not treated in detail in CHLMP. We were also constrained by several formal considerations. As far as practicable, we wanted the translated texts to be complete works or at least topically complete segments of longer works, and we wanted to present texts that were not already available in English. We also wanted to provide examples of the major genres of philosophical writing in the later Middle Ages: commentary (both ‘literal’ or phrase by phrase commentary and commentary-with-questions, the forms in which traditional theological texts received analytic scrutiny and usually the first written forms of encounter with the challenging body of Aristotelian texts entering the Latin west in our period), quodlibetic and disputed questions (edited transcripts of formal academic exercises in which issues of particular speculative or practical importance received concentrated attention, often from leading thinkers in contention with one another), systematic summas, and the Mirror for Princes form (manuals of advice for rulers that could also contain statements of political principles and arguments of general philosophical significance). Because of these constraints and limited space, we have not been able to present the full range of medieval views on any topic. For example, although the section of Peter of Auvergne’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Politics* that we translate was important for later discussions of constitutional or mixed government, it gives little hint of the wealth of late medieval material on this subject studied in James M. Blythe’s *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Again, our translation of five questions from Augustine of Ancona’s *Summa on Ecclesiastical Power* is a sample from one of the best medieval models for theorizing about the nature of sovereignty, but we provide little that is directly relevant to the complementary topic of individual rights, aside from Ockham’s arguments against the obligation to give up a religious belief at the bare rebuke of a superior. For the extensive late medieval literature on rights, briefly discussed in CHLMP X.39, ‘Rights, Natural Rights, and the Philosophy of Law,’ the reader is referred to already translated works of Thomas Aquinas, John of Paris, Marsilius of Padua, and William of Ockham and to the studies of Brian Tierney (*The Idea of Natural Rights*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) and Annabel S. Brett (*Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Aquinas and Duns Scotus, preeminent figures of the period, are missing from this volume because their work in moral philosophy is to some extent available in translation – to a great extent in the case of Aquinas, in

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the case of Scotus to a far lesser extent than is merited by his stature and influence. Only lack of space explains the omission of selections from the writings of such acute thinkers as Boethius of Dacia, Durand of St Pourçain, Robert Holkot, Adam Wodeham, Gregory of Rimini, Thomas Bradwardine, Jean Gerson, and Nicole Oresme.

We have arranged the contents of the volume in a loosely historical order. Thematic groupings of some selections within this framework suggest the dialogical character of philosophy in the period from which the texts are drawn. A further indication of this is the extent to which, as recorded in the Index, the same concepts and theses play important roles in selections throughout the volume.

These translations can be approached in a number of ways. They can be read as responses by philosophically trained thinkers to the possibilities and problems of the world in which they lived. In some selections, engagement with practical issues is quite direct. In almost every case, there is a fresh concern with the conscience, virtues, and ultimate fulfillment of individuals or with the rational organization of communal life. The import of these contributions in relation to other factors in later medieval society is not always easy to assess. Philosophical attention to personal life in this period produced subtle analyses of the interactions of thought, will, and emotion in human conduct, analyses which both reflected and enhanced individual self-awareness – but they also gave support to the individualism involved in dissent and heresy, the gravest of all problems from a medieval point of view. Discussions of who should rule, and with what accountability, arguably contributed to the growth of responsible government, but the rationalization of political life in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which some of these discussions supported has also been seen as a source of what could later be described as oppression by state power. Judgments about the spirit of the age will benefit (in quality if not in simplicity) from attention to texts such as those presented here.

For philosophical readers not primarily concerned with the culture and politics of the Middle Ages, this volume can fruitfully be read as the response, in moral philosophy, of an intellectual community educated in Christian Platonism to the reintroduction in the west of Aristotelian treatises dealing with every major field of knowledge in a relatively naturalistic way. Engagement with the Philosopher, sometimes highly critical but usually accommodating, is especially evident in the earlier selections but is also present at the end of the volume in the reconverted Platonist, John Wyclif. Aristotle, like the world outside the academy, presented problems

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and possibilities closely intertwined. For example, the *Nicomachean Ethics* (henceforth simply '*Ethics*') could be assimilated as a source of wise counsel on how to live as a pilgrim or wayfarer in this life while moving toward the final joy of heaven, and Aristotle's reasoned exaltation of the contemplative life in Book X of the *Ethics* could even be used as a model for discussing the vision of God at the heart of that final joy. But the *Ethics* could also be read as setting out a program for happiness in this world that neither required nor allowed an other-worldly supplement. Likewise, the *Politics*, with its analytical discussions of constitutions and political practices, offered a framework for discussing how human beings might achieve well-being in their lives together, but it was far from obvious how even the best Aristotelian polity (if it could be identified) related to the authority and sacramental practices of the church. In light of these examples, it is not surprising that issues of immediate practical importance and issues raised by Aristotle were often dealt with in the same treatise or, indeed, in the same argument.

The first translation in the volume is taken from Albert the Great's *On the Ethics*, written in 1248–52, the first dialectical encounter with the whole text of Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Latin west. We have chosen to present Albert's questions on Book X because of the range of topics treated in the book: the nature and value of pleasure, civic and contemplative happiness, and the need, once an adequate conception of happiness has been achieved, to give it political expression. In Albert's nineteen lessons on Book X, most major propositions of the Philosopher's text are critically examined, with results that greatly influenced subsequent thought about the issues treated, most immediately the thought of Albert's pupil, Thomas Aquinas, but also that of Jean Buridan a century later, whose questions on *Ethics* X are presented in Translation 16.

Another important vehicle for scholastic philosophical analysis, along with commentary on Aristotle, was commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a mid-twelfth-century compilation and discussion of quotations from the church fathers which became the standard theology textbook in the later Middle Ages. It is in their commentaries on the *Sentences* that we find some of the most important philosophizing of Scotus, Ockham, and other later figures, as well as Bonaventure, who lectured on the *Sentences* at Paris at about the same time as Albert was lecturing on the *Ethics* in Cologne. Translation 2, Bonaventure's discussion of conscience and synderesis (the 'spark' of conscience, treated by medieval thinkers as a moral capacity in some way distinct from conscience) serves to introduce a topic that is important in its own right and recurs in several of our later selections.

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The next nine selections are specifically political in content, at least in their points of departure. In the first of these, the prologue and selected chapters from Giles of Rome's widely disseminated *On the Rule of Princes*, we find politics built on a foundation of ethics and presented with explicit attention to rhetoric as a necessity for practical effectiveness. Writing primarily for the instruction of a future king of France but incidentally for the enlightenment of the crown's subjects, Giles maintains that rational rule of a kingdom presupposes rational rule of self. In propounding ways of achieving either sort of rule, Giles conveys the results of reflection on a wide variety of sources in an 'easy' method of exposition appealing to the will as well as to the intellect and operating by reference to what is typical and general, a method he defended at the beginning of his work. Both in his method and in his construction of political wisdom on a foundation of personal morality, Giles presented new Aristotelian content in a traditional literary genre – the Mirror for Princes – going back to Augustine and Gregory the Great.

Formal scholastic appropriation of Aristotle's *Politics* began in earnest with the literal commentary commenced by Thomas Aquinas and completed by Peter of Auvergne. Peter's later commentary on the *Politics* in question form was also influential. Translation 4 presents portions of Peter's two treatments of sections of *Politics* III that are significant both for constitutional theory – for discussions of the comparative merits of different forms of political community and the power of the people in each of them – and for debates about urgent practical issues of the day.

Aristotle's systematic analysis in the *Politics* of the various species of human community realizable in this life raised questions that had received comparatively little attention in an earlier tradition predominantly concerned with the contrast between the (ultimately heavenly) city of God and a generic 'earthly city' driven by love of self even to the point of contempt for God. One such issue was the rationality of self-sacrifice for the well-being of one's earthly commonwealth, Henry of Ghent's topic in Translation 5. Henry's conclusion, that choosing to die for such an end is rational even if one has no hope of a future life as a reward, is the implicit basis for a broader investigation of altruism by two of Henry's late thirteenth-century contemporaries, Godfrey of Fontaines and James of Viterbo (in Translations 6–8). Here self-sacrifice in a political context is compared with the love of God above all else, which continued to be the supreme value of later as well as earlier medieval ethics. The debate between Godfrey and James about the logic – or, indeed, the 'natural' possibility – of such devotion is sparked by the clash of Aristotle's assertion

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that friendliness toward another derives from friendliness toward oneself with the pervasive Augustinian thesis that love of anything beyond oneself requires God's grace. A number of recurrent medieval themes are presented in these texts: the interplay, in discerning the good, between natural rationality and a reason enlightened by divine revelation; dispute about the present condition of the human will as perverse or weak or, on the contrary, robust and responsible; analogical use of the part-whole relation to understand the relations of individual to community and creature to God; and the use of metaphysics as a basis for ethics (in this case the metaphysics of identity and resemblance as a basis for understanding friendship, self-sacrifice for one's community, and devotion to God above all else). The combination of modern-seeming analytic method with medieval content is especially evident in these texts.

Translations 9–11, again from texts of Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and James of Viterbo, come back to earth. Aristotelian and other classical philosophical sources, along with Roman and canon law in some cases, are here utilized to address urgent practical problems, problems of obedience and resistance occasioned by controversial trends in contemporary government: arbitrariness in legislation and taxation, personal rather than legal rule. Historians of politics and political thought have yet to exploit fully the resources of such discussions.

The final translation in this political group, Translation 12, is a selection from the extensive medieval literature on the just war. The specific question posed by John of Naples, whether a Christian king could rightly use Saracen mercenaries to defend his kingdom against Christian attackers, adds interreligious dimensions to an already difficult problem. In the course of presenting eighteen arguments against employing non-Christians to fight Christians, four arguments in favor of such an expedient, and five theses aimed at adjudicating the question, John touches on many of the circumstances thought relevant to the morality of war in the early fourteenth century. The extent to which morality *was* then thought relevant to war suggests restraint in the use of 'medieval' in military contexts as a synonym for unrestrained brutality.

Translation 13, On Using and Enjoying, is from the beginning of Ockham's commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*. Here Ockham develops further some of the themes introduced in the earlier selections on self-sacrifice and also resumes the discussion of pleasure and happiness begun in this volume with Albert the Great's questions on *Ethics* X. Ockham's point of departure is Augustine's conviction that God and God alone is to be loved

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as an ultimate end, while all other things are only to be used. Ockham agrees, but by making room for acts of will between enjoying and using he, like most of the authors represented in this volume, allows for the possibility of an authentic moral life without specific religious commitments. In developing his position on these matters, Ockham outlines a moral psychology that is general in scope, thereby providing an example of work in another area where the medieval literature is vast.

The questions from Augustine of Ancona's *Summa on Ecclesiastical Power* making up Translation 14 approach questions of faith, reason, and conscience from a specifically political angle. Augustine's *Summa* is the antithesis of Marsilius of Padua's *Defender of Peace*, which had appeared a few years before it. Where Marsilius had seen the claims to comprehensive secular as well as ecclesiastical authority made by and for the contemporary papacy as the single greatest threat to Europe in his time and had accordingly propounded a political theory that foreshadowed the modern secular state, Augustine of Ancona held that universal papal power was an essential part of God's plan for the world. Yet Augustine also recognized the claims of natural law, conscience, and other sources of direction besides papal judgment, as well as the dangers of papal misgovernment and – at least as a possibility recognized in canon law – doctrinal error. Whether he was consistent in his accommodation of all these normative principles is controversial, but the attempt was important, and the stresses it involved are typical of political thought in this period.

Augustine of Ancona appealed to a traditional, biblically grounded conception of 'fraternal correction' (Matthew 18:15: 'If your brother sins against you, go and correct him privately . . .' – the beginning of a procedure that ends with 'Tell the church') to argue that, notwithstanding the papacy's transcendent authority, every Christian is bound to correct an erring pope (for the pope is every Christian's brother). The chapters from Ockham's massive dialogue on heresy presented in Translation 15 add the requirement that, for any doctrinal correction at all to be legitimate, even the correction of an inferior by a superior, the erring individual must be clearly shown that the view being corrected is indeed erroneous. This adaptation of the traditional idea is theoretically revolutionary, but its exact practical significance is unclear. It is at least another emphatic example of the questioning of authority in medieval scholastic thought.

Translation 16, Jean Buridan's questions on *Ethics* X is nominally concerned with the same Aristotelian text as the selection from Albert the Great which opens the volume. Buridan's treatment of the text is very

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different, however, in ways characteristic of changes in scholasticism during the intervening century. Most obviously, there are fewer questions in Buridan than in Albert and a more intense pursuit of those few. Buridan quickly sets aside the topic of pleasure, which had occupied Albert for nearly half of his lessons on *Ethics* X, on the ground that he had discussed it enough in his questions on Book VII. He further narrows his inquiry by taking it for granted that happiness, the second main topic of Book X, is to be found in the activity of our best power in accordance with its best virtue and by assuming that the best power is the one that is most free. This narrowing of scope, accomplished in a short paragraph, sets the stage for an intricate discussion of freedom of intellect and freedom of will as primary constituents of human happiness. In the course of this discussion Buridan refines and in places implicitly criticizes the moral psychology set forth by Ockham in Translation 13. A concern with conceptual analysis of natural processes such as Buridan exhibits here with regard to mental processes, rather than with the situation of substances and their properties in a broader metaphysical scheme, is also typical of mid-fourteenth-century Oxford and Paris philosophy.

John Wyclif, known as the Morning Star of the Reformation, can as well be called the Evening Star of Medieval Scholasticism. Wyclif broke with the analytic, nonspeculative style of philosophy just remarked on in Buridan and still prevalent at Oxford when he wrote *On Civil Lordship* in the 1370s or 1380s, but this was a break with what Wyclif saw as superficial current fashion, and it was made with appeals to patristic and earlier medieval tradition. In Translation 17, which concludes the volume, Wyclif seeks to resituate property and political power in the framework of creation and divine providence from which, as he saw it, a too prosperous church had allowed them to fall out. His central idea, also prominent in several other selections in this volume, was charity, i.e., Christian love, love of God above all else and of one's neighbor as oneself, which Wyclif held to be possible only through grace. To have charity, he argued, is to participate in God's lordship of all creation, whereas to be in mortal sin is to be a slave to sin and cut off from all meaningful authority over self or others. In comparison with the spiritual lordship over the whole world enjoyed by those with charity, civil lordship, with its essential coerciveness, is clearly secondary (indeed, relatively unreal) in Wyclif's scheme, but it is unclear what implications he intended this secondary status to have for practical politics. Whatever Wyclif's intentions, his writings were a factor in generating and sustaining a potent and fiercely resisted leveling move-

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ment in late medieval England and in the Bohemia of Jan Hus. Among the authors represented in our selections, Wyclif is the clearest example of the impact philosophical reflection could have on events in the medieval Latin west.

In order to include as much translated material as possible, and because *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* are companion volumes to CHLMP, we have kept the introductions to individual selections short and have included no explanatory notes. The relevant chapters of CHLMP listed at the end of each introduction provide discussions of the material in most selections, as well as explanatory and bibliographical notes. The Bibliography, Biographies, and Indexes of CHLMP will also help the reader pursue questions raised by these texts. We provide additional suggestions for reading on topics not treated extensively in CHLMP. The present volume, too, has a detailed Index, the main entries in which are accompanied by the corresponding Latin words whenever appropriate.

We have adopted a number of editorial conventions, including those employed by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump in the first volume in this series, *Logic and the Philosophy of Language*. When we think that our translation of a Latin expression may be unusual, technical, uncertain, or otherwise noteworthy, we print the Latin in single parentheses immediately after the translated word or phrase. We also use single parentheses around English words, phrases, or sentences as part of our punctuation of the translated text when we think that the medieval author has written something parenthetically. We have adjusted our authors' biblical references to conform to the nomenclature and divisions of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Other bibliographical references supplied by us or taken from those supplied by the editor of the Latin text are printed in single parentheses at the appropriate place in the translation. We usually expand only those references made by our authors which are to works available in English. The editions we have used provide many additional references. Our citations of Aristotle's works conform to the book and chapter divisions of the Revised Oxford Translation edited by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

When the edition from which we translated includes section numbers, we have kept these in the translation. Page, folio, or signature numbers of the editions we have used are indicated within curly brackets – e.g., {708A} – at the appropriate places in the translation.

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We indicate our own substantive additions to the text by printing the word or phrase in square brackets – e.g., [ordered].

Occasionally we have emended the Latin text from which we translated. Except for Translations 15, 16, and 17, in which the necessary corrections to our copy-texts were so numerous as to require a separate listing at the end of the selection, our emendations are enclosed within double parentheses at the appropriate place in the translation. Most emendations have this form: ((*oportet/valet*)), which indicates that we are replacing the word ‘*valet*’ in the edition with the word ‘*oportet*’ and translating accordingly. When the word or phrase we prefer appears among the textual variants in the Latin edition’s critical apparatus, we have indicated this by including ‘[var.]’ within the double parentheses. Similarly, when our emendation is based on another edition or manuscript that we have consulted ourselves, e.g., the 1473 edition of the text for Translation 14, we indicate this within the double parentheses in this way: ‘[with edn 1473].’ When our translation depends on adding or omitting a word or phrase to or from the edition, we indicate this by ‘*add*’ or ‘*om.*’ followed by the word or phrase supplied or deleted.

Our translations are based on the following editions, numbered to correspond with the numbering of the translations:

- 1 Albert the Great: *Questions on Book X of the Ethics. Super Ethica, Commentum et Quaestiones, Libri VI–X*, ed. Wilhelmus Kübel, in vol. XIV, part 2 of *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, pp. 708–92; Monasterii Westfalonum in aedibus Aschen-dorff, 1987.
- 2 Bonaventure: *Conscience and Synderesis. In II librum Sententiarum*, Distinction 39, Articles 1–2, in *S. Bonaventurae Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, vol. II, pp. 898–915; Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi): Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1885.
- 3 Giles of Rome: *On the Rule of Princes* (selections). *Egidii Romani . . . de regimine principum*, sigs. air–aiiv; oir–v. Venice: Bernardinus Vercelensis, 1502.
- 4 Peter of Auvergne: *Commentary and Questions on Book III of Aristotle’s Politics* (selections). Latin text of Aristotle, ed. F. Sussehl, *Aristotelis Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 189–98, 219–26; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1872. *Sententia libri Politicorum*, ed. Robertus Busa, in vol. IV of *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia*, pp. 413–15, 419–20; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980. *Petri de Alvernia Quaestiones supra libros Politicorum*, ed. Christoph Flüeler in vol. I of his *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter*, pp. 214–22; Amsterdam/Philadelphia: B. R. Grüner, 1992.
- 5 Henry of Ghent: *Is It Rational for Someone without Hope of a Future Life to Choose to Die for the Commonwealth?* *Quodlibet XII*, question 13, ed. J. Decorte, pp. 67–79; *Henricus de Gandavo Quodlibet XII*, Leuven University Press, 1987.