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Arthur Stephen McGrade, John Kilcullen, and Matthew Kempshall, eds. *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, vol. 2: *Ethics and Political Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 664.

The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts are meant to be companions to *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*,[1] which appeared in 1982. They have been slow in coming, however: the first volume, *Logic and the Philosophy of Language*,[2] appeared in 1988, and this second volume, *Ethics and Political Philosophy*, in 2001. The connection between the *History* and the *Translations* is somewhat loose in any case. For example, a volume on *Philosophical Theology* is planned for the *Translations* series even though the *History* notoriously avoided philosophical theology altogether.[3] And the volume now under review provides texts on such topics as self-sacrifice (in translations 5–8) and resistance to authority (in translations 9–11), which were not treated in detail in the *History*. Even so, the *History* is not entirely forgotten. For example, the *History*'s coverage of the reception of Aristotle's *Ethics* and especially the debate about the ultimate end can be profitably studied in connection with this volume's two extended treatments of book 10 of the *Ethics* (Albert the Great in translation 1 and Jean Buridan in translation 16); and the *History*'s discussion of conscience is fleshed out in translation 2, which presents Bonaventure's analysis of conscience and synderesis. It would have been useful, I think, to have another text on conscience for purposes of comparison, although as McGrade points out, Bonaventure's "conclusion that one ought (in conscience) to comply more with the command of a superior than with one's own conscience … is implicitly contested by Ockham in Translation 15" (170), which asks whether an errant individual is bound to recant at the rebuke of a superior.

My wish for another text on conscience and synderesis illustrates a general problem facing the editors. Despite the salutary rise in mainstream Anglo-American philosophical interest in medieval philosophy throughout the last half-century, coverage of medieval philosophy in English translation is dismayingly spotty. There are too many rich and sophisticated medieval discussions on a variety of problems in ethics and political philosophy for the editors to hope to give anything more than a sampling of what is on offer, and so it is likely that everyone who uses the volume will bemoan the absence or underrepresentation of some favored text, topic, or author. I, for example, would have liked to see much more about the virtues, a topic of both historical and current interest that is treated only tangentially in the selections. But a criticism that would inevitably have applied to any possible version of this volume could hardly be a fair criticism of the actual version, so I will not mount any of my own hobby-horses here.

Perhaps it is fair, however, to question one of the selections. Translation 1, Albert the Great's questions on *Ethics* 10, occupies 157 pages, almost a quarter of the 638 pages of translation. Since I find much of Albert's discussion tedious and uninspired, especially by comparison with Aquinas's masterly commentary on book 10, I cannot help thinking that so much space could have been put to better use. (Of course, this is a philosophical judgment; and like all philosophical judgments, it is open to dispute.)

In general, however, the selections are well chosen, not only individually but as forming a volume with an admirable degree of thematic continuity. Several of the selections, for example, engage with book 3 of Aristotle's *Politics*, and particularly with the question whether it is better to be ruled by the best law or by the best ruler, a question taken up explicitly by Giles of Rome in translation 3, by Peter of Auvergne in his wide-ranging commentary and questions on *Politics* 3 in translation 4, and by James of Viterbo in translation 11. This question prompts general discussions of the relationship between law and ruler and thus fits quite naturally with questions about obedience to positive (that is, ruler-made) law. Of particular interest here are translations 9 and 10, in which first Henry of Ghent and then Godfrey of Fontaines take up the issue of whether a subject is bound to obey a law (in Godfrey's discussion it is specifically a tax) when the need for the law is not evident. The introductions to the selections, which are quite useful throughout the volume, are particularly useful here, as Kempshall explains the ecclesiastical and political developments that made these questions particularly pressing for Henry and Godfrey.

Translations 5–8 provide another set of thematically unified selections that engage with the same Aristotelian text: in this case, books 8 and 9 of the *Ethics*. Aristotle seems to hold that love of others derives from self-love, yet he also holds that a virtuous person will, if necessary, sacrifice himself for the good of his friends or community. In translation 5 Henry of Ghent distances himself from Aristotle's "blaze of glory" solution—the virtuous person chooses *for himself* one last act of surpassing excellence[4]—and emphasizes instead that the virtuous person chooses to do what right reason dictates, even when that means the loss of all good through death, rather than incur the guilt and shame of vice. Godfrey of Fontaines rejects Henry's solution and argues in translation 6 for a conception of the common good (strongly reminiscent of Aquinas's) that allows him to preserve Aristotle's insight but purge it of its apparent egoism. The virtuous person who dies for his country does indeed achieve for himself a blaze of glory, but he risks his life only because he loves the common good more than his own. In the same way, even in the order of nature someone can love God more than himself, but "in doing so he loves himself more (because he also loves his own greater good) than if he did not love God in this way" (280). In translation 7 James of Viterbo criticizes Godfrey for confusing the natural order, in which (as Aristotle rightly argues) love of others derives from love of self, with the order of grace, in which love of God has motivational primacy

over love of self. Godfrey replies in translation 8 that grace perfects nature; it does not destroy nature. So it can hardly be true that the natural order of love is flatly contrary to the order of love made possible through grace.

The translators have wisely chosen to present "complete works or at least topically complete segments of longer works" (2), so that the richness of medieval philosophical discussion—its technical virtuosity, its argumentative fecundity, and the astonishing breadth and variety of the considerations brought to bear even on narrow questions—becomes evident in a way that it is not allowed to do in collections of snippets. The translations themselves are lucid, accurate, and as elegant as the often barbarous scholastic Latin permits. This volume should prove a useful resource for those interested in what medieval philosophers had to say on topics of perennial interest in ethics and political philosophy. With any luck, its merits will also inspire other volumes of translations, so that more medieval contributions to ethics and political philosophy can be recovered for a wider audience.

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Notes

[1] *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100–1600,* ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[2] *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, vol. 1: *Logic and the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[3] On this see especially Alfred J. Freddoso's review, *Journal of Philosophy* 81 (1984): 150–56.

[4] *Ethics* 9.8. Bonnie Kent offers an excellent discussion of Scotus's reaction to the issues raised by this passage in section 3.2 of "Rethinking Moral Dispositions: Scotus on the Virtues," chap. 12 of *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus* , ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).