

Peter of Auvergne

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# Peter of Auvergne

University Master of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century

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## Foreword

The second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century at the University of Paris was a magic moment in the history of Europe. Few moments in its history proved as decisive in the shaping of this institution. A brief period of a few decades was decisive not only for the university, but for the entire city. Paris became the most important center of higher education in Europe. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, when a new university was to be established in central Europe, its founders looked to the University of Paris as a model.

As one of the oldest universities in Europe, the University of Paris formed the typical structures for such institutions: the creation of distinct faculties; offices such as Rector, Dean, and Chancellor; the division of teaching into lectures and tutorials involving discussion; and the degrees of Bachelor and Master. Though all of these structures and offices have altered greatly over the course of time, they are still discernible today.

Arts and Theology were especially important to the character of the university in Paris. The curriculum developed by the Faculty of Arts during the 13<sup>th</sup> century was based for the most part on the study of philosophical works. Aristotelianism was prevalent in the university course of study until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Courses of instruction created in Paris were adopted in other universities, and debates conducted in Paris were taken up throughout Europe.

The Theological Faculty in Paris was especially famous and attracted the most distinguished scholars of the time. The high point not only for the history of philosophy but also for that of theology was the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This period was regarded as so overwhelmingly important that earlier history was seen merely as a preparation and later history as only an echo. Paris, as the capital of higher education, was perceived, often unjustifiably as we now realize, to outshine other educational centers.

It seems almost an afterthought to remind ourselves that during these decades, such prominent personalities as Albert the Great, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent and Meister Eckhart were teaching at the Theological Faculty, sometimes simultaneously. These famous masters often held a teaching chair for only a few years, however, after which they moved on to new employments, sometimes quite far from the 'center'. At that time there were very few academics who taught for two

or even three decades in Paris and who left an enduring mark on the institution. One of the few was Peter of Auvergne.

Peter may already have been a Master at the Faculty of Arts in the late 1260s, when Thomas Aquinas was teaching in Paris for the second time. Peter continued to teach there for some 30 years before he moved to the ‘other’ faculty in 1296 as a Doctor of Theology and taught there until 1302. For more than three decades, Peter of Auvergne taught at what was then the most famous university in the Western world. Simply on the basis of his enduring presence during a period that was so decisive for the university and for the history of philosophy and theology, Peter is worthy of notice.

Not only is such an enduring presence surprising, but, as the articles in this volume demonstrate, by continuing to teach for so long at the university, Peter contributed to its fame, left as lasting an influence on Aristotelianism as only a few other medieval philosophers, and – though teaching there only briefly – became a notable voice at the Theological Faculty.

Nonetheless, Peter of Auvergne is not remembered as a famous University Master. This author was rediscovered in the 1930s by Edgar Hocedez. The little that was known about him can be found in what was then the most comprehensive survey of medieval philosophy, Bernard Geyer’s ‘Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie’ (1927), in which Peter is mentioned in an extremely brief section, eight lines long, closing with the words: “Näheres über seine Lehrrichtung ist nicht bekannt.” (S. 504).

During the past 80 years Peter of Auvergne has been more thoroughly studied; in the process, little by little, an extensive and broadly disseminated oeuvre has come to light. The Census, compiled by Lidia Lanza and Marco Toste and appended to this volume, provides a comprehensive overview of his currently known manuscript tradition and of research that has been performed to date. Peter of Auvergne’s oeuvre may be divided into philosophical and theological works (an asterisk denotes an unedited or only fragmentally transcribed work; editor and publication year are included for critically edited texts; bibliographic information for all can be found in the Census).<sup>1</sup>

A. Philosophical Works: Works on Logic: \*‘Eleven Sophismata’, the ‘Questions on Porphyry’s Isagoge’ (Ed. Tinè 1997), the ‘Quaestiones super librum

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1 Doubtful are attributions of the commentary on the \*‘Glossa cum quaestionibus in Doctrinale Alexandri de Villa Dei’, the \*‘Quaestiones super librum sex principiorum’, the \*‘Quaestiones de universalibus’, the \*‘Quaestiones super Analytics priora’ the \*‘Quaestiones super libros Posteriorum Analyticorum’ and the \*‘Quaestiones super Sophisticos Elenchos’ (Ed. Ebbesen 1977). The

Praedicamentorum' (Ed. Andrews 1987) and \*'Super librum Perihermeneias'. Metaphysics: the \*'Quaestiones in Metaphysicam' survive in three different versions.

Natural Philosophy: Question commentaries are to be distinguished from literal commentaries, often on the same works. Among the question commentaries are various versions of 'De caelo et mundo' (Ed. Galle 2003 and Ed. Musatti 2000, though Musatti's edition treats only in part the work of Peter). In addition there are many treatises from the collection 'Parva naturalia', the 'Quaestiones super librum De sensu et sensato' (Ed. White 1986), the 'Quaestiones super librum De memoria et reminiscencia' in two versions (Ed. White 1986), and the 'Quaestiones super libro De somno et vigilia' (Ed. White 1986). Besides these we have the generously reproduced and distributed literal commentaries, \*'Expositio in libros III–IV De caelo et mundo', \*'Sententia super libros Meteororum', \*'Sententia super libro De somno et vigilia', \*'Sententia super librum De longitudine et brevitate vitae', \*'Sententia super librum De iuventute et senectute', \*'Sententia super librum De respiratione et inspiratione', \*'Sententia super librum De morte et vita', \*'Sententia super librum De motu animalium', and the 'Sententia super librum De vegetabilibus et plantis' (Ed. Poortman 2003), most of which have not been critically edited, but are available in early print editions. Attribution of the 'Quaestiones super libros Physicorum' (Ed. Delhaye 1941) and of one additional, as yet unedited version of the same work, which also indicates some relationship to Peter, is doubtful. Attribution of the \*'Quaestiones super librum De generatione et corruptione' and the \*'Quaestiones super librum De motu animalium' must also be regarded as uncertain. Works from the realm of practical philosophy include the *quaestiones* on the first and second book of the 'Nichomachean Ethics' (Ed. Celano 1986) and both commentaries on Aristotle's 'Politics': the 'Scriptum super libros III–VIII Politicorum' (Ed. Lanza – at Press) and the \*'Quaestiones super libros Politicorum' (Ed. Toste – in Preparation).

B. Theological Works: Of the theological works only six \*'Quodlibeta' survive. Peter's \*'Sentence Commentary' is witnessed and probably survives in excerpts. (Ed. Doucet 1954).

By all indications, Peter commented on a great many of the works of Aristotle which were part of the teaching material at the Paris Faculty of Arts. Most of the question commentaries are transmitted in few copies, but they nevertheless bear witness to a remarkable dissemination and reception on into the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in Paris and at other universities. His literal

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\*'Quaestiones super librum De causis', should be regarded as spurious. In addition, the 'Quaestiones super De anima' as well as the 'Quaestiones super librum De iuventute et senectute' and the 'Two questions on De animalibus' should probably be withdrawn from the list of works by Peter of Auvergne.

commentaries on many Aristotelian works of natural philosophy and Aristotle's 'Politica' were more effectively disseminated and more influential.

During those famous decades at the University of Paris, the commentaries on the Aristotelian works were as much a fundamental requirement as a focus for conflict. Peter had witnessed the Condemnations of 1277 (see the article by Luca Bianchi on this subject), although he seems not to have been as affected as were his polarizing colleagues Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. All Peter's works are clearly associated with his teaching activities at the University of Paris. No philosophical treatises, independent from the academic curriculum, are known to exist. It is difficult to discern Peter's profile, what distinguishes him as a philosopher. This may be due to the fact that his work is still not well enough known or that only some of his commentaries have thus far been edited. However, the main reason may be found in the fact that he was much more a commentator than an author. Peter was influential since his commentaries enjoyed such a pronounced long-term impact, traceable into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He truly flourished as one of the most influential commentators during the most important phase of medieval Aristotelianism. That his name was eventually forgotten, even as his works remained in use, is evidence that this learned man was not much interested in gaining attention as a prominent author, but was motivated to make central philosophical works understandable by commenting upon them.

The volume you have in hand is a product of the research project 'The political philosophy of Peter of Auvergne', generously supported by the Swiss National Foundation from 2005 through 2010 as Projects no. 107943 and 117723. The primary goal of this project was to prepare critical editions of the two commentaries on Aristotle's 'Politics': the question commentary which was previously unedited (or rather only edited as a sample of some questions) and is based on three extant manuscripts, and the extensive, highly influential and broadly transmitted literal commentary, often referred to in the manuscripts as the 'Scriptum'.

This volume was produced as part of the above mentioned research project and is a result of the international conference 'Peter of Auvergne. University Master of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century', held at the University of Fribourg, September 2–4, 2008. For a number of reasons, publication has taken an unusually long time and this book, originally planned and advertised for publication in early 2013, was not yet ready to print at that time. The editor would like to thank all authors, not least of all for their patience, and would like to apologize for the fact that the most recent research developments could not be included.

In addition to the authors, I would like to thank all those persons and institutions that have helped bring this book to press: the Swiss National Foundation for supporting these projects, the members of the 'Hochschulrat' of the University of Fribourg, the Medieval Institute and especially Martin Rohde for his patient and friendly support, the Codices electronici AG which financed the work of translation, and my old friend Roberto Lambertini for help and assistance.

Fribourg, July 4, 2014

*Christoph Flüeler*



# Peter of Auvergne, Master in Arts and Theology at Paris

*William J. Courtenay (Madison, Wisconsin)*

The main elements in Peter of Auvergne's biography are well known and have been repeated frequently, largely following the thorough exploration and analysis of Edgar Hocedez in 1933, which corrected a number of points in earlier accounts.<sup>1</sup> I will be making some minor adjustments, correcting some details in his and subsequent accounts, as well as attempting to place Peter more precisely within the academic environment of the faculties of arts and theology in the late thirteenth century.

The principal problem in reconstructing Peter's life, of course, is that there were several Parisian masters by the name of Peter of Auvergne in the late thirteenth century. The Auvergne is a large region and 'Peter' is the second most common first name in the period, exceeded only by 'John'. In addition to the Peter of Auvergne who was regent master in the faculty of medicine in 1274<sup>2</sup> and the Peter of Auvergne who was elected rector of the faculty of arts and thus of the university in June 1296,<sup>3</sup> historians, including myself, are comfortable in assuming that the Peter of Auvergne

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- 1 Lajard, Félix, *Pierre d'Auvergne*, in: HLF 25 (1869), pp. 93–114, with appendix by Le Clerc, Victor, pp. 114–118; Hocedez, Edgar, *La vie et les œuvres de Pierre d'Auvergne*, in: *Gregorianum* 14 (1933), pp. 3–36, exercised admirable caution in drawing conclusions where the evidence was insufficient. The most recent biographical sketch is by Galle, Griet, *A Comprehensive Bibliography on Peter of Auvergne*, in: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 42 (2000), pp. 53–79, at 53–54.
  - 2 *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (subsequently cited as CUP), Ed. Denifle, Heinrich, and Châtelain, Émile, vol. I, Paris 1889, nr. 451, p. 516; Wickersheimer, Ernest, *Dictionnaire biographique des médecins en France au Moyen Age*, Paris 1936, p. 614. It should be noted, however, that there are numerous examples in the fourteenth century of medical doctors later becoming doctors of theology. This pattern may date back to the thirteenth century.
  - 3 CUP II, nr. 590, p. 65.

who as master of arts authored numerous commentaries on Aristotle in the 1270s and 1280s is the same individual who became a doctor of theology in or by 1296 and authored six Quodlibeta before his appointment as bishop of Clermont 1302. Any of the three could have been the Peter of Auvergne who owned a house in the rue St. Victor adjacent to the Cistercian convent of St. Bernard in 1282–1283.<sup>4</sup> And, with the exception of the doctor of medicine, either of the others could have been the one appointed rector in 1275.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, two Peters of Auvergne are mentioned in the necrology of the Collège de Sorbonne, one of whom left 100 pounds in money and books to the college and whose obit was remembered on March 30,<sup>6</sup> and another who left ten pounds to the college and was remembered with a mass on October 8.<sup>7</sup> The early history of the college, however, identifies the first as the Peter of Auvergne active at the Sorbonne in the second decade of the fourteenth century, who, if that later account is accurate, could not be the theologian and bishop who died in 1304.<sup>8</sup> Hocedez concluded that the Peter of Auvergne remembered on March 30 was the same one who was rector in 1296 and executor on the estate of Nicholas of Bar in 1311.<sup>9</sup> But the other reference in the Sorbonne necrology or anniversary calendar to a Peter of Auvergne could either be the same individual or the Peter of Auvergne with whom we are concerned. The October 8 date was the date of a mass to be celebrated during Peter of Auvergne's lifetime, to be shifted

4 CUP I, nr. 511, p. 597.

5 CUP I, nr. 460, pp. 521–530, at 530. Probability, however, points to the rector in 1275 being the Peter of Auvergne with whom we are concerned. While reelection as rector was not unusual, it normally happened within a five-year period after the first election, if fourteenth-century patterns are any guide – a very big ‘if’. The span of twenty-one years between 1275 and 1296 suggests that these rectors were two different individuals.

6 Glorieux, Paléon, *Aux origines de la Sorbonne*, vol. I: Robert de Sorbon, Paris 1966, pp. 161–162.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 174.

8 *Domus et societatis Sorbonicae historia*, part III, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris, no. 1022, p. 76: *Obiit noster Petrus de Alvernia post annum 1310. Dies notatur in necrologio Prioris ad III Kal. Aprilis, annus vero colligitur ex eo quod executor factus cum Ioanne de Mariolo testamenti Nicolai de Barro Ducis [on March 12, 1311], transegit anno praedicto pro reducenda fundatione ab eodem facta duorum beneficiatorum in sorbonia [...].* The terms of Nicholas’ will are recorded in a document edited in Glorieux, Paléon, *Aux origines de la Sorbonne*, vol. II: *Le cartulaire*, Paris 1965, pp. 519–522.

9 Hocedez, *La vie et les oeuvres* (note 1), pp. 11–12.

later to the anniversary of his death.<sup>10</sup> Thus nothing prevents this Peter of Auvergne being identical with the theologian and bishop, but nothing proves it either. And beyond the probability that Peter of Auvergne, regent master in theology, had been a *socius* of the Sorbonne, which we might have assumed in any case, this entry in the necrology, without any further information, tells us nothing.

There is also some uncertainty about the town and family from which Peter came. In his appointment on June 18, 1296, as canon with expectation of a prebend at Notre Dame in Paris, he is referred to as Petrus de Croc, which Hocedez, Glorieux, and others have assumed to be the small town of Crocq in the département of Creuse, on the western edge of the diocese of Clermont, in the direction of Limoges.<sup>11</sup> But the name is sometimes spelled Cros, which corresponds to two other towns in the diocese of Clermont and Limoges as well as a noble family of the region. The town of Crocq has the better evidential base, but the issue of social background is worth more attention than it has received. Insofar as Peter already held a canonical prebend in the cathedral chapter at Clermont before incepting as a doctor of theology at Paris, that appointment in this period of the thirteenth century bespeaks significant social status in the region of the Auvergne, independent of his achievements at the University of Paris.<sup>12</sup> Thus he probably came from

10 Glorieux, *Aux origines de la Sorbonne* (note 7), I, p. 174: *Missa de Sancto Spiritu fiet pro magistro Petro de Alvernia socio nostro, quamdiu vixerit, ista die* [October 8]. *Post vero obitum suum fiet eadem die annuatim eius anniversarium, qui legavit domui decem libras par.*

11 The occasional rendering of his name as Petrus Crocus or Petrus de Croco also points to Crocq, which in Latin is Crocum. In all probability the rendering of his name as Petrus de Croso (du Cros) is based on a confusion with the name of a noble family from the same region, one member of which, Pierre du Cros, was a nephew of Pierre Roger (later Clement VI) and played a prominent role at the University of Paris, including being provisor of the Sorbonne before becoming bishop of Auxerre and later a cardinal.

12 Peter of Auvergne had recently become doctor of theology when on June 18, 1296, Boniface VIII appointed him canon with expectation of prebend at Notre Dame in Paris, and allowed him to keep his canonical prebend at Clermont. Thomas, Antoine, *Extraits des Archives du Vatican pour servir à l'histoire littéraire du Moyen-Âge, première partie*, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* II/2 (1882), pp. 113–135, see pp. 117–120: *magistro Petro de Croc, [83] quod theologice facultatis magisterium laudabiliter obtinuisse dinosceris [...] Volentes [...] tibi gratiam facere specialem canonice ecclesie Parisiensis cum [...] prebendam [...] tibi cum vacaverit; non obstante [...] quod in ecclesia*

a prominent family of the region, as was true for many Parisian scholars from the Auvergne in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

## I. Peter of Auvergne as Master of Arts

Since we have no precise information on when Peter of Auvergne became a master of arts at Paris, assuming that he would have been in his early twenties at the time of inception, there is little point in conjecturing when he might have been born. Nor do we know when he began to combine his activities as regent master in arts with his studies in theology. Because he continued and completed Thomas' commentaries on 'De caelo', the 'Politica', and the 'Parva naturalia' left unfinished at the time of the angelic doctor's death in 1274, it is generally assumed that Peter was already an arts master in Paris at the time Thomas composed his commentaries at Paris, namely 1269 to 1272, and that he may either have studied with Thomas or followed his lectures on Aristotle during those years. It may well be that Peter's close connection with Thomas' literary 'Nachlaß' led to the mistaken notion that Peter was a Dominican.

The relation of Peter of Auvergne and Thomas Aquinas poses an interesting issue inasmuch as the third quarter of the thirteenth century was a time of vehement opposition at Paris between secular masters, particularly theologians, and the mendicant orders, particularly the Dominicans. In addition to the extra-university issues, such as preaching wherever and whenever, licenses to hear confessions and whether they should be repeated to one's parish priest, and burial of lay persons in convent cemeteries, there were the intra-university issues of obedience to the rector and corporation,

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*Claromontensi canonicatum et prebendam nosceris obtinere.* The papal letter was included, but without text, in: Les registres de Boniface VIII, Ed. Digard, George et alii, vol. I, Paris 1907, nr. 11116, col. 399, which states that Peter was to remit all other benefices once he had secured a canonical prebend at Paris.

- 13 Prosopographical studies of students and masters at the University of Paris in the early fourteenth century are revealing in this regard. See, for example, Courtenay, William J., *Foreign Scholars at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Crisis of 1313*, in: *History of Universities 15* (1997-1999), pp. 47-74; id., *Parisian Scholars in the Early Fourteenth Century: A Social Portrait* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4<sup>th</sup> series, 41), Cambridge 1999, pp. 92-123, esp. 114-115, 118-119.

particularly in obeying calls for suspension of lectures, and the number of professorial chairs in theology. The 1250s and 1260s were particularly volatile decades in the ongoing dispute between seculars and mendicants, and the 1260s were in all probability the years in which Peter began his studies at Paris and became regent master in arts.

What changed the terms of that conflict, or at least the context of debate, was not simply or primarily the silencing of William of St. Amour or the growing prominence of Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas, but conflicts over the interpretation of Aristotle within the faculties of arts and theology in the 1260s. Although the evidence is not as extensive or detailed as we would wish, it appears that several of the intra-university issues that pitted secular and mendicant masters against each other were resolved in the late 1250s or early 1260s. The Dominicans were allowed to retain two chairs in the faculty of theology, that is, to have two regent masters simultaneously, but they gave up the right to have two bachelors beginning their lectures on the 'Sentences' in the same year. They alternated, as was the case with the other orders, which had only one chair, so that in one year the master occupying the French Dominican chair could field a candidate, and in the following year that right would pass to the master occupying the non-French chair. More importantly, the increasing disputes over the interpretation of Aristotle and concerns over orthodox teaching, particularly in the faculty of arts, gave enhanced importance to the new translation of Aristotle's writings by the Dominican William of Moerbeke, and to commentaries on the Aristotelian and other texts by Albert the Great and, from 1269 on, those of Thomas Aquinas.

How long before 1270 Peter was at Paris is unknown. He would have belonged to the Bourges province of the French nation in the Faculty of Arts, which included all students and masters who came from central and southern France as well as students and masters from Spain and Italy. These would have been his most immediate associates, although he would of necessity have interacted with other masters in the French nation in the 1270s and 1280s. The two most controversial masters of arts in the 1270s, however, belonged to other nations: Siger of Brabant, who was a master in the Picard nation, and Boethius of Dacia, who was a master in the English nation. Henry of Ghent may still have been teaching in the Faculty of Arts in 1270, although he soon incepted in theology, and in any event would have belonged to the Picard nation. Peter would have determined and been licensed in arts under a master from his own nation, if possible under a master from the Bourges province of the nation.

We know too few names of Parisian arts masters in this period to conjecture as to whom his teachers might have been, and I am inclined to view his relationship with Thomas not as a pupil/master relationship, although there are examples in the fourteenth century of secular students studying with a master outside their nation, and examples of a secular theologian being promoted by a master in a religious order, but no one who was not a regent master in arts could promote in that faculty.<sup>14</sup> Consequently Peter was, at most, an auditor of Thomas, as was the case with Henry of Harclay, a secular theological student at Paris at the beginning of the fourteenth century, who attended and reported on the lectures of Duns Scotus, a Franciscan.<sup>15</sup> I suspect that Peter's connection with Thomas began when Peter was already a master of arts, and Peter may well have been one of those to whom or through whom Thomas directed his efforts toward masters and students in the Faculty of Arts on behalf of a better understanding of Aristotle, an understanding not leading in the direction of an unorthodox interpretation of Christian doctrine or away from true philosophy as Thomas understood it.

While many of the leading figures in the faculty of arts in the 1260s were in the Picard nation (Henry of Ghent, Siger of Brabant), Peter's master must have been in the French nation, preferably from the Bourges province. Peter of Limoges would be a good candidate, and although it is certain he was a master in arts at Paris and student in theology during the 1260s, he is known primarily for his theological work 'De oculo morali' and his sermons.<sup>16</sup>

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- 14 For the latter, Bernard Macro, a secular theologian from the diocese of Amiens and thus a former member of the Picard nation, studied with and incepted under Gerard of St. Victor (CUP II, nr. 743, pp. 202–203). On promotions outside one's nation, see Courtenay, William J., Michael de Montecalerio: Buridan's Opponent in his 'Quaestio de puncto', in: AHDL 72 (2005), pp. 323–331.
- 15 Balić, Carolus, Henricus de Harclay et Ioannes Duns Scotus, in: *Mélanges offerts à Étienne Gilson (Études de Philosophie Médiévale. Hors série)*, Toronto/Paris 1959, pp. 93–121, 701–702; Maurer, Armand, Henry of Harclay: disciple or critic of Duns Scotus?, in: *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung. Vorträge des II. Internationalen Kongresses für Mittelalterliche Philosophie, Köln, 31. August – 6. September 1961 im Auftrage der Société internationale pour l'étude de la philosophie médiévale (S.I.E.P.M.)*, Ed. Wilpert, Paul in collaboration with Eckert, Willehad Paul (*Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 2), Berlin 1963, pp. 563–571; Henry of Harclay, *Ordinary Questions I–XIV*, Ed. Henninger, Mark (*Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* 17), Oxford 2008, pp. xvii–xxiv.
- 16 Glorieux, Palémon, *La faculté des arts et ses maîtres au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Études de Philosophie Médiévale 59)*, Paris 1971, p. 290; Weijers, Olga, *Le travail intel-*

Other masters in the French nation were Berthaud of St. Denis,<sup>17</sup> John of Ulliaco,<sup>18</sup> and specifically in the Bourges province at this time, Adenulph of Anagni,<sup>19</sup> Arnulph of Provence,<sup>20</sup> and Gerard of Brolio.<sup>21</sup>

There were, in fact, probably around fifty or more regent masters in the four nations of the Faculty of Arts in the 1260s, with the French and Picard nations being the two largest groups and probably therefore the most powerful. Among the few in the period from 1265 to 1275 whose names we know are Siger and Simon of Brabant, Henry of Ghent (although we think of him as regent in theology after 1275), all of whom were members of the Picard nation; Alberic of Reims and Peter of Auvergne in the French nation, and Boethius of Dacia in the English nation. Although the disputes among the nations in the Faculty of Arts between 1265 and 1275, particularly between masters in the French and Picard nations, have often been viewed as an ideological dispute over the interpretation of Aristotle, René-Antoine Gauthier was undoubtedly correct in viewing the conflict as territorial and political.<sup>22</sup> It is possible that the 1266 statute under the papal legate, Simon de Brie, which stipulated a three-month term in office for a rector, may have been an innovation in order to reduce the political importance of the office and therefore the competition among the nations in the Faculty of Arts to control it. The fact that Simon had to intervene again in a disputed election in 1275 and solved it by appointing a third person, Peter of Auvergne, to be rector, shows that personal and political considerations were still intense, and remained so into the early modern period. It is important, however, to keep in mind the temporal and administrative limits of the office of rector. While the rector was the titular head of the

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lectuel à la Faculté des arts de Paris: textes et maîtres (ca. 1200–1500): P (*Studia Artistarum* 15), Turnhout 2007, pp. 196–199.

- 17 Glorieux, *La faculté des arts* (note 16), p. 112; Weijers, Olga, *Le travail intellectuel à la Faculté des arts de Paris: textes et maîtres* (ca. 1200–1500): A–B (*Studia Artistarum* 1), Turnhout 1994, p. 85.
- 18 Glorieux, *La faculté des arts* (note 16), p. 406.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 69; Weijers, *Le travail intellectuel* (note 17), pp. 32–33.
- 20 Glorieux, *La faculté des arts* (note 16), p. 98; Weijers, *Le travail intellectuel* (note 17), p. 70.
- 21 Glorieux, *La faculté des arts* (note 16), p. 143; Weijers, Olga, *Le travail intellectuel à la Faculté des arts de Paris: textes et maîtres* (ca. 1200–1500): G (*Studia Artistarum* 6), Turnhout 1998, pp. 75–76.
- 22 Gauthier, René-Antoine, *Notes sur Siger de Brabant. II: Siger en 1272–1275. Aubry de Reims et la scission des Normands*, in: *RSPTh* 68 (1984), pp. 3–49.

faculty of arts who summoned and oversaw meetings of that faculty and of the University as whole, received the oath of those incepting in arts, and represented the University *ad extra*, he shared power with the proctors of the four nations, and all statutory decisions required the majority vote of the masters. Given those limitations and the brevity of his term in office, it hardly constituted a position of great or lasting power – another example supporting the truism that even today in academic meetings the amount of time and energy devoted to issues is usually in inverse proportion to their significance.

The years of Thomas' second sojourn at Paris, 1269–1272, were anxious years at Paris both in arts and in theology, within which the interpretation of Aristotle played a crucial role. James Weisheipl hypothesized that Thomas' commentaries or *sententiae* written on various Aristotelian texts were in direct response to the needs of masters and students in the faculty of arts for a proper guide to the interpretation of Aristotle. Weisheipl described it as an apostolate, a mission on Thomas's part. To the extent the demand was coming from the faculty of arts, which immediately after the death of Thomas sought access to his unfinished commentaries, we can assume that Peter of Auvergne was probably among those seeking Thomas's insights in understanding both Aristotle and his commentators. Thomas and Albert were also sent lists of suspect articles being taught in the schools at Paris and asked for their opinion on their orthodoxy. In some cases, as with the list of articles taken from the 'Sentences' commentary of Peter of Tarentaise, the response of Thomas was to show that they could be interpreted in a way consistent with orthodoxy. In other cases the reports of Albert and Thomas found certain articles erroneous or heretical, although final judgment was left to the bishop of Paris, usually acting with the chancellor on the advice of masters of theology. A reduced number of articles from one such list were condemned by Etienne Tempier in 1270 – a prelude to the famous condemnation of 219 propositions in 1277.

Despite the soundness of Gauthier's conclusion that the conflict in the faculty of arts in 1275 was territorial and personal, not ideological, it may not be entirely accidental that the master of arts most closely associated with continuing in the commenting work begun by Aquinas was Peter of Auvergne, a master in the French nation and a member of the Bourges province, whose composition included students and masters from Italy who may have had links to Italian mendicants, such as Thomas.

In addition to Peter's role in completing some of the unfinished commentaries of Thomas, Peter contributed numerous questiones on Aristotle's

works, composed as lectures or disputed questions, as well as other works in the area of philosophy.<sup>23</sup> Considerable progress has been made in recent years in the editing of Peter's works in logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, and political thought, acknowledging his place among the *modistae*, and in understanding his similarities and differences with Thomas.<sup>24</sup> Many of these are issues that are addressed in other papers in this volume and lie outside the biographical context.

## II. Peter of Auvergne as Doctor of Theology

Peter probably reigned several years in arts before beginning his studies in theology. It seems likely that he had recently been licensed and become a doctor of theology in 1296, which, if he went through the program in theology in the shortest possible time, would mean he began his theological studies in the early 1280s. But, as is becoming increasingly evident, students in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries usually took longer to complete their studies in theology than was required. In the case of Peter of Auvergne we simply do not know when he began his theological training or how long he took.

We also have no detailed information on the program of studies in the faculty of theology in the second half of the thirteenth century. The 1215 statutes of Robert of Courçon, papal legate, which were still current in 1265, specified eight years of theological study and a minimum age of 35 before becoming a master of theology, but they say nothing about the texts to be

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23 For the lists of works, manuscripts, and editions, see Glorieux, *La faculté des arts* (note 16), pp. 275–278; Galle, *Comprehensive Bibliography* (note 1); eadem, *A Comprehensive Bibliography on Peter of Auvergne: Supplement*, in: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 47 (2005), pp. 87–96; Weijers, *Le travail intellectuel* (note 16), pp. 95–127.

24 See especially Flüeler, Christoph, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter, Teil 1* (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie 19.1), Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1992, pp. 94–97; Marmo, Constantino, *The Semantics of the Modistae*, in: *Medieval Analyses in Language and Cognition* (Historisk-filosofiske meddelelser), Ed. Ebbesen, Sten and Friedman, Russell L., København 1999, pp. 83–104.

studied or the stages or steps in the program.<sup>25</sup> Manfred Gerwing assumed the eight years meant pre-baccalaureate study, and he combined that with the baccalaureate program as described in statutes from the mid fourteenth century to arrive at a sixteen-year program.<sup>26</sup> But that is a conjecture based on insufficient thirteenth-century evidence and an unwarranted assumption that the theological program described in statutes from the following century applied in the 1280s. We know that by 1250 Peter Lombard's 'Libri Sententiarum' had become, alongside the Bible, the principal text to be commented on by bachelors preparing for the doctorate in theology, but we do not know the length of time devoted to that exercise. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Parisian theological statutes from the second and third quarters of the fourteenth century are of little help in determining the requirements of the theological program in the period of Peter of Auvergne except to say that a certain number of years attending lectures on the Bible and the 'Sentences' preceded a bachelor's own lectures on those texts. Nor do we know if there was a waiting period between the completion of those lectures and receiving the license and inception into the magisterium, and if so how long. Realistically we have to assume Peter's studies took some ten, perhaps fifteen years, which would place the beginning of his theological studies no later than 1285, probably in the early 1280s. But it is also possible for him to have begun his theological studies even earlier and to have moved at a slower pace because of his teaching and writing activities in the faculty of arts.

Under whom did Peter of Auvergne study theology? Fortunately, thanks to the research of Glorieux and others, we are far better informed on the names of regent masters in the faculty of theology in the 1280s and early 1290s than we are for the faculty of arts. Although it is often stated that Peter studied under Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines based on his referring to them in his 'Quodlibeta' as *magistri nostri*, that is not a valid inference. Peter was not describing them as his teachers but as important masters among the secular theologians at Paris, just as Dominicans would describe Thomas as *doctor noster* or Augustinian hermits later would describe Giles of Rome the same way. Peter could certainly have attended lectures and

25 CUP I, nr. 20, pp. 78–80. Simon de Brie reaffirmed them in 1265; CUP I, nr. 405, p. 445.

26 Gerwing, Manfred, *Vom Ende der Zeit. Der Traktat des Arnald von Villanova über die Ankunft des Antichrist in der akademischen Auseinandersetzung zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts* (BGPhMA, n.f. 45), Münster i.W. 1996, pp. 449–555, at 453.

disputations by Henry of Ghent, but all things being equal, Peter would have sought promotion in the faculty of theology under a master who had belonged to the French nation, not the Picard, although he was technically free to study under any regent master, even one belonging to a religious order.<sup>27</sup> The most likely master under whom he would have studied would have been Peter of Limoges, who taught in the faculty of theology from the mid 1280s to the late 1290s. Although known to have been a fellow of the Sorbonne and to have possessed contemporary works in scholastic theology that he donated to the library of the Sorbonne, Peter of Limoges left no 'Sentences' commentary, no *summae* in theology, and no disputed or quodlibetical questions of his own. So, while he is a likely candidate for being Peter of Auvergne's official master, we have no way of tracing influence or compatibility of positions.

After a number of years of study Peter would have commented on one or more books of the Bible (which and for how long we do not know) and lectured on the 'Sentences'. Two commentaries have been attributed to a Peter of Auvergne. One of these is found in the Library of the University of Prague (now Prague, Národní knihovna), Ms. 2297 [XIII.D.5], ff. 1–17, and described by Hocedez from the first folio of that manuscript as the questions of Peter of Auvergne, O.P., on the first book of the 'Sentences'.<sup>28</sup> That short group of questions is now attributed to the Dominican Bernard of Auvergne.<sup>29</sup> Another group of questions is found in Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, A 913, ff. 1r–12r, interspersed among questions from Dominican authors of the early fourteenth century. Inasmuch as the person

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27 See above, note 14.

28 Hocedez, *La vie et les oeuvres* (note 1), pp. 8–9.

29 Stegmüller, Friedrich, *Repertorium commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, Würzburg 1947, nr. 98, p. 51; Friedman, Russell L., *The Sentences Commentary, 1250–1320. General Trends, the Impact of the Religious Orders, and the Test Case of Predestination*, in: *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Current Research*, Ed. Evans, Gillian Rosemary, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2002, pp. 41–128, at n. 57. Bernard of Auvergne's 'Contra Henricum de Gandavo' can be found in Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, A 943, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 15849 and lat. nouv. acq. 1465, Prague, Národní knihovna české republiky, 2453 [XIV.B.14], Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, 662, and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 471; see Stegmüller, *Repertorium* (see supra), no. 99; Doucet, Victorin, *Commentaires sur les Sentences. Supplément au Répertoire de M. Frédéric Stegmüller*, in: *AFH* 47 (1954), p. 18.

who assembled these questions accused Durandus of occasionally copying questions from Peter of Auvergne, Peter's questions predate Durandus, i.e. predate 1309.<sup>30</sup> The brevity of the questions is not unusual for the late thirteenth century, but the fact that all the other questions belong to Dominican theologians raises the question of whether this is our Peter of Auvergne, even though his role as a continuator of some of Thomas's Aristotelian commentaries might seem a sufficient link. As far as I am aware, no one has yet done a comparative study of these questions against related questions in Peter's 'Quodlibeta' to see if similar or dissimilar positions are held. Without further investigation, it is impossible to prove that these questions belong to our Peter of Auvergne and not to the Sorbonne theologian of the same name who was active at Paris into the second decade of the fourteenth century, contemporary to Durandus of St. Pourçain.

Peter of Auvergne joined the Paris *magisterium* in theology by or in 1296. It is probable that he was licensed late in 1295 and incepted early in 1296. When Boniface VIII in June 1296 made Peter a canon of Notre Dame with expectation of prebend, it was in response to a petition from Peter or his patron, probably occasioned by his recent inception as a master of theology.<sup>31</sup> The sequence of his six 'Quodlibeta', the last of which dates to 1301, also suggests that 1296 is the beginning date for his regency in theology. Peter's letter of provision as a canon in the cathedral chapter at Paris was not an appointment to a chair in the faculty of theology, as has been suggested.<sup>32</sup> There was no set number of chairs of theology attached to positions as canons of Notre Dame, and what Peter was granted in 1296 was only an expectation of a canonical prebend which, as Hocedez realized

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30 Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, A 913, f. 4v, on inserting a text from Durandus: *Hoc oportuit facere in hac questione, ne multoties idem scriberetur; quia ille Durandus est quidam latrunculus Petri de Alvernia, sicut sunt communiter omnes Gallici, utpote homines nullius inventionis existentes!*

31 For details, see above, note 12. When in April 1297 Peter was awarded possession of a prebend at Paris as a result of litigation at the papal court, Peter also received papal support for his claim to the office of archdeacon of Brie in the diocese of Soissons, which lay within the gift of the king and had apparently been granted to Gerard of Collanduno, doctor of canon law (Les registres de Boniface VIII (note 12), cols. 674–75, where Peter is called "de Alvania"). Whether Boniface's declarations bore actual results is another matter.

32 Schabel, Chris, The 'Quodlibeta' of Peter of Auvergne, in: Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century, Ed. id. (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition 1), Leiden/Boston 2007, pp. 81–130, at 82 and 84.

as far back as 1193, Peter did not secure until after 1298.<sup>33</sup> The canonical prebend at Notre Dame, like the one at Clermont, represented financial support, and in the case of Paris, increased status. It had nothing to do with his teaching position.

Throughout the period of Peter's studies in the faculty of theology and his six years as regent master, the most prominent or productive secular regents in that faculty, such as Gerard of Abbeville, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and Peter of St. Omer had previously belonged to the Picard nation in the faculty of arts. Considering the tensions between the French and Picard nations in the 1260s and 1270s, and role Siger of Brabant's teaching played in the crises of the 1270s, some of those divisions may have carried over into relations among secular masters in the faculty of theology in the 1280s and 1290s even though Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines were intellectually far removed from Siger. Godfrey of Fontaines and Peter of St. Omer continued to teach during the period of Peter of Auvergne's regency in theology, joined by Simon of Guiberville in 1299, who later became chancellor. To the extent that present research on the theological thought of Peter permits, he shows compatibility with positions of Thomas and Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines, as well as important differences. Some of Peter's quodlibetal questions have been edited, and thanks to the recent study by Chris Schabel we now have a fuller account of the structure and content of Peter's 'Quodlibeta'. More work clearly needs to be done, but two questions that have been studied are worth comment.

In the first year of Peter's regency he addressed the sensitive issue of whether a pope could resign his office, a question raised by the abdication of Celestine V and the election of Boniface VIII in 1294. Peter Olivi had addressed the question in the summer of 1295 and concluded that papal resignation (and thus the election of Boniface) was legitimate. Two Parisian masters in 1296–1297 in quodlibetal disputations arrived at the same conclusion, one of them Godfrey of Fontaines and the other Peter of Auvergne.<sup>34</sup> Not surprisingly Giles of Rome joined that consensus in 1297.

Contrary to the impression given by John Eastman, Godfrey and Peter were probably not in a minority among their theological colleagues.<sup>35</sup> The

33 Hocedez, *La vie et les oeuvres* (note 1), pp. 14–15.

34 Peter of Auvergne, *Quodlibet I*, q. 15: *Utrum Summus Pontifex possit cedere vel renuntiare officio suo in aliquo casu*, was probably disputed in December 1296.

35 Eastman, John R., *Papal Abdication in Later Medieval Thought* (Texts and Studies in Religion 42), Lewiston, NY 1990, pp. 58–62.

idea that the faculty of theology had, in response to a request from Philip the Fair, made a determination in 1297 against papal resignation and the legitimacy of Boniface's election is pure fiction, unsupported by the documents.<sup>36</sup> In all probability Godfrey's and Peter's position was shared by others; at minimum there is no evidence to the contrary.

Papal legitimacy was not the only current issue disputed by Peter and his fellow regents in theology. Peter was undoubtedly among the masters of theology, along with the chancellor, Peter of St. Omer, who condemned Arnold of Villanova's 'De tempore adventus Antichristi', completed in 1299, leading to Arnold's arrest and imprisonment by the official at Paris on December 25, 1299.<sup>37</sup> Peter of Auvergne was also present along with the chancellor at the palace of the bishop of Paris on October 12, 1300 when Arnold lodged his appeal to the pope.<sup>38</sup> Peter mentioned Arnold's views and these events several times in his fifth 'Quodlibet' disputed in December 1300.<sup>39</sup>

It is less clear where Peter of Auvergne stood on other issues, such as mendicant privileges or the authority of doctors of theology to interpret scripture, issues that in 1290 had led to the confrontation between Henry of Ghent and the papal legate, Benedict Gaetani, and the latter's angry response to the theologians followed by his suspension of Henry's right to teach.

As is well known, Peter's regency as master of theology at Paris came to an end in 1302 through his appointment by Boniface VIII as bishop of Clermont on 21 January 1302 and his installation as bishop on 25 March 1302, an appointment that may have had the support of Philip the Fair, despite

36 See Courtenay, William J., *Learned Opinion and Royal Justice. The Role of Paris Masters of Theology during the Reign of Philip the Fair*, in: *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Society*, Eds. Karras, Ruth M., Kaye, Joel and Matter, E. Ann (Middle Ages Series), Philadelphia 2008, pp. 149–163, 280–285. See also Leclercq, Jean, *La renonciation de Célestin V et l'opinion théologique en France du vivant de Boniface VIII*, in: *RHEF* 25 (1939), pp. 183–192; Marmursztejn, Elsa, *L'autorité des maîtres. Scolastique, normes et société au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Histoire)*, Paris 2007, pp. 11, 37–39.

37 CUP II, nr. 615, pp. 86–87. For a full discussion of the content and controversy surrounding Arnold's treatise, see Gerwing, *Vom Ende der Zeit* (note 28), pp. 76–253, 449–489.

38 CUP II, nr. 616, pp. 87–90.

39 Peter of Auvergne, *Quodlibet* V, q. 4: *Utrum angelo bono revelanti aliquid bonum de adventu Christi vel Antichristi futuris credendum sit*; q. 15: *Utrum Antichristus sit venturus in brevi*; q. 16: *Utrum expediat scire determinatum tempus adventus eius*; q. 17: *Utrum Antichristum venturum esse determinatio et signato tempore sit error in Scriptura Sacra*.

Peter's quodlibetal conclusion in 1296 on the right of a pope to resign.<sup>40</sup> 1302 is an important turning point in the intellectual history of the University of Paris. It marks the supposed end of Peter's residency at Paris and the beginning of John Duns Scotus' Parisian lectures on the 'Sentences'. But whether Peter left Paris for good in 1302 is not certain. It is possible that after his consecration as bishop in Clermont, Peter returned to Paris and his episcopal townhouse for part of the 1302–1303 year. He was certainly in residence at Paris in June 1303 when he joined 21 other bishops (most of whom had residences in Paris) in signing their adhesion to Philip the Fair's call for a council against Boniface VIII.<sup>41</sup> Peter probably returned to Clermont in 1303, where he remained until his death on September 25, 1304.

However contextually important the details of Peter's career as a master of arts and a master of theology, more important is the content of the philosophical and theological works he wrote, and their impact on his and subsequent generations. It is those issues that will be the subject of presentations in the remainder of this volume.

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40 Registres de Boniface VIII (note 12), vol. III, cols. 247–248 (an. 7, ep. 357). An original bull of Boniface's approval of Peter's election and recommendation to the king is found in Paris, Archives Nationales, J. 702. He was still bishop elect on June 8, 1302 (Registres de Boniface VIII, vol. III, col. 497) and the first papal letter addressed to him as bishop of Clermont was on November 24, 1302 (Registres de Boniface VIII [see supra], vol. III, col. 556). For his confirmation in office see GChr, vol. II, col. 233.

41 Picot, Georges, Documents relatifs aux États Généraux et Assemblées réunis sous Philippe le Bel (Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, 36. Première série, Histoire politique), Paris 1901, pp. 53–55. The document with 40 seals is found in Archives Nationales, Paris, J. 478, n. 1; cf. Dupuy, Pierre, Histoire du différend d'entre le pape Boniface VIII et Philippes le Bel roi de France, Paris 1655, p. 112.



# Peter of Auvergne and the Condemnation of 1277

*Luca Bianchi (Vercelli)*

In his renowned book ‘Maître Siger de Brabant’, while describing how the papal legate Simon of Brion settled the conflict between the two factions which in 1272 had caused the scission of the Parisian Faculty of Arts, Fernand Van Steenberghen wrote:

Le légat désigne lui-même, à titre exceptionnel, le recteur et les autres officiers de la faculté des arts. Il choisit comme recteur maître Pierre d’Auvergne, connu pour la modération de ses idées et pour l’orthodoxie de son enseignement. Ptolémée de Lucques l’appelle ‘très fidèle disciple’ de Thomas d’Aquin et lui attribue l’achèvement de plusieurs écrits que le saint docteur avait laissés incomplètes.<sup>1</sup>

Further on in the same book, published in 1977, Van Steenberghen repeats literally what he wrote as early as 1942 in his first essay on Siger, and explains the latter’s ‘intellectual evolution’ as a result of Peter’s influence:

On sait que, le 7 mai 1275, un acte d’arbitrage du légat pontifical Simon de Brion rétablit l’unité et la paix à la faculté des arts de Paris, troublée par une scission de plus de trois ans. Cet événement heureux a dû favoriser le rapprochement des maîtres de la minorité (dont Siger était le chef) et de la majorité. Des relations personnelles entre Siger et le nouveau recteur de la faculté, Pierre d’Auvergne, expliqueraient de la manière la plus naturelle un changement d’attitude de la part de Siger, sous l’influence de celui que Ptolémée de Lucques appelle le *fidelissimus discipulus* de S. Thomas.<sup>2</sup>

According to Van Steenberghen, Peter therefore played a decisive role in the institutional and doctrinal conflicts of the 1270s: as a distinguished

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1 Van Steenberghen, Fernand, *Maître Siger de Brabant (Philosophes Médiévaux 21)*, Louvain/Paris 1977, p. 130.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 401; cf. Van Steenberghen, Fernand, *Siger de Brabant d’après ses œuvres inédites (Les Philosophes Belges 12–13)*, Louvain 1931–1942, vol. 2, pp. 559–560; see also vol. 2, pp. 725–726.

member of the ‘moderate party’, he managed, with the providential support of Church authorities, both to pacify the University and to temper the philosophical excesses of the rival ‘party’; as a faithful supporter of Thomas Aquinas within the Faculty of Arts, he affected with his Thomism even the supposed leader of the ‘radical Aristotelians’, i.e. Siger of Brabant, encouraging his move toward orthodoxy.

Accepted by several scholars,<sup>3</sup> such a picture is doubtless edifying, but in the light of recent research it appears quite implausible for at least three reasons. First of all, thanks to René-Antoine Gauthier we now know that the so-called ‘scission des Normands’ had nothing to do with doctrinal controversies, and that the institutional majority of the faculty (to which Peter surely belonged) was far from ‘moderate’ in philosophy: as a matter of fact, it had elected as rector Alberich of Reims, who had expressed his enthusiasm for this discipline in terms so extreme that they had disturbed the theologians, sparking the strong reaction of Bonaventure.<sup>4</sup>

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- 3 See e.g. Eastman, John, *Peter of Auvergne: Life, Master Regent, and the First Quodlibet of 1296*, in: *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte. Peter Herde zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen dargebracht*, Eds. Borchardt, Karl and Bünz, Enno, Stuttgart 1998, vol. 2, pp. 583–593, esp. 583–584. Eastman, however, seems to ignore the criticism of Van Steenberghen’s picture provided by Flüeler, Christoph, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen ‘Politica’ im späten Mittelalter* (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie 19), Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1992, vol. 1, pp. 96–97. Though repeating that Peter was a follower (“proche disciple”) of Aquinas, Constant Mews sees instead in Tempier’s intervention of March 7, 1277 an implicit censure of Peter’s supposed incapacity to defend orthodoxy: “Les accusations lancées en 1277 impliquent une critique du nouveau recteur, Pierre d’Auvergne, soutenu par Simon de Brie, pour n’avoir pas su faire prévaloir la défense de l’orthodoxie au sein de l’université”, Mews, Constant, *Communautés de savoirs. Écoles et collèges à Paris au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *Revue de Synthèse* 129 (2008), pp. 485–507, see 501, 503. It is far from clear, however, to what extent, even after the controversial statute of 1272, the jurisdiction of a rector included the struggle against ‘heterodox’ teachings. Moreover, since Peter was appointed in May 1275 and must have been in office, like all rectors, only for a few months, how could he be held responsible for the intellectual climate which sparked the reaction of the ecclesiastic authorities two years later?
- 4 Gauthier, René Antoine, *Notes sur Siger de Brabant. II. Siger en 1272–1275*; Aubry de Reims et la scission des Normands, in: *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 68 (1984), pp. 3–49, see 15–20 (on Alberich) and pp.

Second, it is worth noticing that Simon of Brion's decision to entrust Peter with the guidance of the Arts Faculty after three years of scission does not at all prove that, at this time at least, he was less 'radical' in his philosophical approach than some of his colleagues, including those that would be targeted by the Paris bishop Stephen Tempier in his great condemnation of March 7, 1277. As a matter of fact we cannot take it for granted that the papal legate, though notoriously sensitive to any deviations from Christian orthodoxy (or better, from theological tradition),<sup>5</sup> selected the leaders of the university exclusively among the 'moderates'. We know that, after appointing Peter as *Rector Universitatis*, Simon designated the Proctors of the four nations. The most outstanding figure among them was James of Douai, who has long been considered the author of a commentary on the 'Meteorologica' where two doctrines censured in 1277 – in articles 24 and 40, both dealing with the excellence of philosophy and its role in accomplishing intellectual perfection – are cautiously explained and qualified.<sup>6</sup> Since Iacopo Costa has recently cast serious doubts on the largely received attribution of

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20–25 (on the 'scission des Normands'). For Bonaventure's reaction to Albe-  
rich's panegyric on philosophy, see Bianchi, Luca, *Censure et liberté intellectuelle  
à l'Université de Paris (XIII<sup>e</sup> – XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles) (L'Âne d'or)*, Paris 1999, p. 197.

- 5 One need only think of how he threatened Henry of Ghent in March 1277 in  
order to persuade him to adopt the doctrine of the plurality of forms.
- 6 For Simon's designations see *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, Eds.  
Denifle, Heinrich and Chatelain, Emile, vol. 1, p. 530. After remarking that  
Simon nominated both Peter of Auvergne and James of Douai, Gauthier adds:  
"contemporains, les deux maîtres appartenait à la même tendance modé-  
rée qui s'opposait aux excès du parti de Siger". Cf. Gauthier, René Antoine,  
*Les 'Questiones supra librum Ethicorum' de Pierre d'Auvergne*, in: *Revue du  
Moyen Âge Latin* 20 (1964), pp. 233–260, see 243. One should note, however,  
that the existence of these two opposite 'parties' was later refuted by Gauthier  
himself (see note 4 above). On the prologue to the commentary on Aristotle's  
'Meteorologica', ascribed (mistakenly, as we now know) to James, and the  
articles censured in 1277 see Bianchi, Luca, *Il vescovo e i filosofi. La condanna  
parigina del 1277 e l'evoluzione dell'aristotelismo scolastico (Quodlibet 6)*,  
Bergamo 1990, pp. 47–48, note 74; id., *Censure et liberté intellectuelle* (note 4),  
p. 74; id., *Students, masters, and 'heterodox' doctrines at the Parisian Faculty  
of Arts in the 1270s*, in: *Recherches de Théologie et de Philosophie médiévales*  
76 (2009), pp. 75–109, esp. 86–89. All articles of the condemnation of March  
7, 1277 are quoted according to the edition provided in: *La condamnation  
parisienne de 1277. Texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire par  
Piché, David (Sic et Non)*, Paris 1999.

this commentary,<sup>7</sup> it is no longer possible to claim that James was responsible for disseminating these doctrines. Yet his commentary on the ‘*De anima*’ contains a disparaging remark about ignorant men who, neglecting their natural desire to know, are only potentially human and unworthy to be called ‘men’.<sup>8</sup> Therefore one can still maintain that, being ready to accept the most provocative consequences of Averroes’ well-received idea that science is the “ultimate perfection of man”, James was, if not an ‘ethical Averroist’,<sup>9</sup> at least a quite ‘radical’ supporter of the intellectualistic and aristocratic eudemonism disliked by bishop Tempier.

Third, it is true that Peter’s questions on several of Aristotle’s works (e.g. his questions on the ‘*Metaphysics*’ and the ‘*Politics*’) borrow considerably from Aquinas’ commentaries; it is also true that here he often refutes Aristotelian and Neo-platonic doctrines which were potentially dangerous for the

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7 See Costa, Iacopo, *Anonymi Artium Magistri Questiones super Librum Ethicorum Aristotelis* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698) (*Studia Artistarum* 23), Turnhout 2010. Costa challenges the attribution to James of the commentaries on both the ‘*Ethics*’ (see in particular pp. 80–88) and the ‘*Meteorologica*’ preserved in Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698, and argues that they were authored by two different Arts masters who taught after 1277 and had different conceptions of the relationship between philosophy and theology (pp. 60–79). I discuss this last view in Bianchi, Luca, ‘*Viri philosophici*’. Nota sui prologhi dei commenti all’*Etica* e ai *Meteorologica* erroneamente attribuiti a Giacomo di Douai (Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698), in: *Scientia, fides, theologia. Studi di filosofia medievale in onore di Gianfranco Fioravanti*, Ed. Perfetti, Stefano (Edizioni ETS), Pisa 2011, pp. 253–288. As the title of my article makes clear, however, I agree that the attribution of these commentaries to James was based on weak arguments and can no longer be maintained.

8 I called attention to and quoted this passage – now examined also by Costa, *Anonymi Artium Magistri* (note 7), pp. 81–82 – in: Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi* (note 6), p. 157.

9 The notion of ‘ethical Averroism’ was introduced by Alain de Libera, *Averroïsme éthique et philosophie mystique. De la félicité intellectuelle à la vie bienheureuse*, in: *Filosofia e teologia nel Trecento. Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi* (*Textes et Études du Moyen Âge* 1), Ed. Bianchi, Luca, Louvain-la-Neuve 1994, pp. 33–56 (Peter is mentioned at p. 36). For my criticism see Bianchi, Luca, *Felicità intellettuale, ‘ascetismo’ e ‘arabismo’: nota sul ‘De summo bono’ di Boezio di Dacia*, in: *Le felicità nel Medioevo*, Eds. Bettetini, Maria and Paparella, Francesco D. (*Textes et Études du Moyen Âge* 31), Louvain-la-Neuve 2005, pp. 13–34.

Christian faith and were therefore prohibited in 1277 by the bishop of Paris and his advisors. Nevertheless, recent scholarship has revealed not only that Peter, although largely influenced by Aquinas, is an independent thinker, ready to depart from his alleged 'master',<sup>10</sup> but also that, at least at the beginning of his career at the Arts Faculty, he might have been much closer to 'radical Aristotelianism' than Van Steenberghe would have admitted. If Peter is indeed the author of the commentaries on the 'De caelo' and the 'De generatione' that have been attributed to him, this means that around 1275 he overtly taught doctrines that would shortly be censured by bishop Tempier, such as the impossibility of a plurality of worlds, the impossibility of a numerical plurality of separate substances within a single species, the impossibility for the first cause to produce temporal effects immediately, the creation of matter through secondary causes, the animation of the heavens.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the questions on Aristotle's 'Physics' published by

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10 Among the first historians to emphasize this point see Gautier, *Les 'Questiones supra librum Ethicorum'* (note 6), p. 243; Bazán, Bernardo Carlos, Introduction, in: Bazán, Bernardo Carlos, Giele, Maurice, Van Steenberghe, Fernand, *Trois commentaires anonymes sur le traité de l'âme d'Aristote (Philosophes Médiévaux 11)*, Louvain/Paris 1971, pp. 382–385.

11 Donati, Silvia, *A New Witness to the Radical Aristotelianism Condemned by Étienne Tempier in 1277*, in: *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? Qu'est-ce que la philosophie au Moyen Âge? What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages? Akten des X. Internationalen Kongresses für mittelalterliche Philosophie der Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, 25. bis 30. August 1997 in Erfurt, Eds. Aertsen, Jan and Speer, Andreas (*Miscellanea Mediaevalia 26*), Berlin/New York 1998, pp. 371–382, esp. 373–378; ead., *An Anonymous Commentary on the 'De Generatione et Corruptione' from the Years Before the Paris Condemnations of 1277* (Mss. Erlangen, Universitätsbibl., 213; Kassel, Stadt- und Landesbibl., Phys. 2° 11), in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales 65* (1998), pp. 194–247, esp. 202–203; Galle, Griet, *The Authorship of One of the Sets of Questions on 'De Caelo' attributed to Peter of Auvergne* (Mss. Cremona, Bibl. Governativa 80 (7.5.15), fols. 98ra–136ra, Erlangen, Universitätsbibl. 213, fols. 1ra–28rb and Kassel, Stadt- und Landesbibl., Phys. 2° 11, fols. 35va–55rb), in: *Medioevo 27* (2002), pp. 191–260, esp. 208–210; ead., *Questions on Aristotle's 'De Caelo': A Critical Edition with an Interpretative Essay*, Leuven 2003, pp. 54\*–55\*; ead., *Peter of Auvergne's Discussion concerning the Animation of the Heavens*, in: *Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale. Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy. Intelecto e imaginação na filosofia medieval*, Eds. Pacheco, Maria C. and Meirinhos, José Francisco (*Rencontres de Philo-*

Delhaye under Siger's name and tentatively ascribed by Sajò to Boethius of Dacia present strong similarities not only with some questions contained in Peter's commentary on the 'Metaphysics' (as noticed by Dunphy in 1953),<sup>12</sup> but also with Peter's commentary on 'De motu animalium' (as recently shown by De Leemans) and could therefore provide evidence of what he taught at the Arts Faculty.<sup>13</sup> Now, there is no need to recall that these 'Questions on the Physics' are the source of several articles censured by Tempier, and that the sixth question on book VIII was partially struck off by a zealous reader, apparently shocked by its discussion of the eternity of motion.<sup>14</sup>

Because the authenticity of the aforementioned expositions of the 'De caelo' and the 'De generatione' has been convincingly challenged by several scholars, and the attribution to Peter of the 'Questions on the Physics', though plausible, remains uncertain, one might be tempted to remark that nothing definite can be said about Peter's involvement in the condemnation of 1277, and leave it at that.<sup>15</sup> Still, the problem of Peter's relation to the condemnation remains. As a matter of fact, even a cursory look at recent literature on Peter of Auvergne shows that the condemnation of 1277 there plays a pivotal role, for at least three reasons. First, as we have seen, some works of, or attributed to Peter have been considered as possible sources of some of the 'errors' banned by bishop Tempier. Second, the hypothesis

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sophie Médiévale 11), Turnhout 2006, vol. 3, pp. 1463–1475, see 1474–1475; Musatti, Cesare, *Celestial Movers and Animation of the Heavens in one Commentary on Aristotle's 'De Caelo' ascribed to Peter of Auvergne*, *ibid.*, pp. 1447–1461, see 1460–1461.

- 12 Dunphy, William, *The Similarity Between Certain Questions of Peter of Auvergne's Commentary on the Metaphysics and the Anonymous Commentary on the Physics Attributed to Siger of Brabant*, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953), pp. 159–168.
- 13 De Leemans, Pieter, *Peter of Auvergne on Aristotle's 'De motu animalium' and the Ms. Oxford, Merton College 275*, in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 71 (2004), pp. 129–202, see 183–184.
- 14 Cf. Hissette, Roland, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277 (Philosophes Médiévaux 22)*, Louvain/Paris 1977, p. 314. On mutilations of texts after 1277 see Bianchi, *Censure et liberté intellectuelle* (note 4), pp. 38–39. As to the text discussed here see [Pseudo-] Siger de Brabant, *Questions sur la Physique d'Aristote*, Ed. Delhaye, Philippe (Les Philosophes Belges 15), Louvain 1941, VIII, 6, p. 199 (apparat).
- 15 As already noted by Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen 'Politica'* (note 3), vol. 1, p. 97, and Galle, *Questions on Aristotle's 'De Caelo'* (note 11), p. 23\*.

has been suggested of an evolution of Peter's philosophy: in this perspective, the more prudent attitude of the later commentaries – where Peter, while introducing 'heterodox' philosophical theories, hastens to recall the teachings of Holy Scripture, the Fathers and the Sacred Doctors – has been seen as evidence of the impact that the limitations of intellectual freedom imposed by the 1277 decree had on his thought.<sup>16</sup> Third, and consequently, this decree has been often used as a *terminus ante* or *post quem* for dating his works, arguing that, after the Episcopal intervention, he would not have risked statements too similar to the censured ones.<sup>17</sup>

Let me start, therefore, with a methodological remark on this last point, obviously related to both the first and the second. Introducing his edition of an anonymous exposition 'In III de anima', attributed to Peter of Auvergne by Palémon Glorieux but most probably not composed by him, Bernardo Carlos Bazán stated in 1971:

Dans l'atmosphère créée par la condamnation, il est invraisemblable qu'un maître de la Faculté des arts se soit permis d'exposer et de défendre publiquement une des thèses condamnées; une attitude de prudence s'imposait, il fallait éviter les questions brûlantes et toute prise de position contraire à la décision épiscopale.<sup>18</sup>

Though largely (but not universally)<sup>19</sup> received, this assumption is far from proven and – as I noticed about twenty years ago – has most likely introduced a dangerous circularity between our way of dating texts and our way

16 See e.g. Galle, *The Authorship of One of the Sets of Questions on 'De Caelo'* (note 11), p. 210: "If Peter is the author of the CEK-questions, he is an interesting witness to the way in which the Masters of Arts at Paris changed their teachings under the influence of the condemnations of 1277". Ead., *Peter of Auvergne's Discussion concerning the Animation of the Heavens* (note 11), p. 1475: "If this author is Peter of Auvergne, which is most probably the case, the shift from the statement that 'the heavens are moved by souls' to the statement that 'the heavens are moved by souls in an equivocal sense only' shows an evolution in Peter of Auvergne's doctrine, probably under the influence of the condemnations of 1277".

17 Several examples of this trend will be discussed below.

18 Bazán, *Introduction* (note 10), p. 375.

19 See criticism in Gauthier, René-Antoine, *Trois commentaires 'averroïstes' sur l'Éthique à Nicomaque*, in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 22–23 (1947–1948), pp. 187–336, esp. 219–220, 223–224; Wielockx, Robert, *Commentaire in Aegidii Romani Opera omnia*. III.1. *Apo-logia* (*Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi* 4), Firenze 1985, pp. 246–247.

of interpreting the situation at the Arts Faculty in the last quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. One might indeed wonder whether the impression that after 1277 Parisian philosophers tempered their positions reflects a real historical trend, or whether it is instead the predictable outcome of the widespread editorial tendency to place before 1277 all ‘radical’ texts composed at the Arts Faculty of Paris in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> As a matter of fact, we do know that some members of this faculty continued to teach – *naturaliter loquendo* or *secundum philosophos* – several doctrines which had been censured by bishop Tempier, without feeling much restrained by his prohibition. At least some of the so-called ‘Averroist’ commentaries on the ‘Nicomachean Ethics’ discovered by Martin Grabmann and studied by René-Antoine Gauthier were written after 1277. These commentaries often present various moral doctrines condemned by bishop Tempier, without making any attempts to reconcile the contradiction between philosophical teaching and theological orthodoxy.<sup>21</sup> Another example of this relative freedom in expressing views attacked by bishop Tempier is offered by Radulphus Brito, who in his ‘Questions on Metaphysics’ openly accepts by faith that accidents might exist without a substance, but nevertheless emphasizes that Aristotle would have denied it, according to the principle that the first cause cannot produce directly all that he can do through secondary causes. In repeating this principle without qualifying it, Brito passes over the fact that it had been explicitly censured in article 63 of Tempier’s ‘syllabus’.<sup>22</sup> In an anonymous commentary on the ‘Physics’ possibly authored by Giles of Orleans the numerical plurality of immaterial substances within the same

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20 “Bisogna chiedersi in quale misura l’impressione di un prevalere, dopo il 1277, di posizioni moderate, dipenda in realtà dalla pervicace tendenza a collocare ogni testo ‘radicale’ prima di quella data; proprio presupponendo inverosimile che qualcuno si sia permesso di difendere pubblicamente una tesi condannata. Impiegato sistematicamente questo criterio discutibilissimo, ci si troverebbe di fronte all’immagine rassicurante di una Facoltà delle Arti ricondotta all’ordine dal provvidenziale intervento episcopale: quest’immagine sarebbe però il riflesso non della realtà storica, bensì di una petizione di principio storiografica”, Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi* (note 6), p. 24.

21 See Gauthier, *Trois commentaires ‘averroïstes’* (note 19), and Hissette, Roland, *La date de quelques commentaires à l’Éthique*, in: *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 18 (1976), pp. 79–83.

22 On this point see Bianchi, Luca, *New Perspectives on the Condemnation of 1277 and its Aftermath*, in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 70 (2003), pp. 206–229, esp. 223–224 (with note 41).

species is denied, glossing as follows: *Nescio tamen si est ibi articulus, dico tamen hoc secundum intentionem philosophorum*. Is this claim the expression of a “cautious attitude”, as Silvia Donati has argued, or rather a case of feigned innocence?<sup>23</sup> Since the list of prohibited articles was at that time easily accessible at Paris university, and at least two of them (81 and 96) deal with the problem of the numerical multiplication of immaterial substances, I find the second hypothesis more plausible.

However it might be, I am convinced that if one can reasonably assume that texts presenting ‘heterodox’ opinions in terms strictly corresponding to those found in the articles censured by bishop Tempier were redacted before his intervention, one cannot take it for granted that this applies to every Aristotelian commentary exposing doctrines, principles, or philosophical sayings and *topoi* that recall some of these articles. Nor can one infer that every Aristotelian commentary free from such associations was necessarily composed after 1277. In other words, I am convinced that what I elsewhere called “the ‘pre-1277/post-1277’ paradigm”<sup>24</sup> should be used with great caution as a criterion for dating texts, and I wonder whether this is always the case in Peter of Auvergne’s scholarship.<sup>25</sup>

A brief examination of two commentaries unanimously attributed to Peter and both dated after 1277 by their editors will show that his relation

23 *Et ideo sequitur correlarie quod substantiae separatae a magnitudine non sunt divisibiles in partes consimiles ; et ideo in eis est tantum unum individuum sub una specie secundum philosophos [...]. Nescio tamen si est ibi articulus, dico tamen hoc secundum intentionem philosophorum [...]*, quoted by Donati, A New Witness to the Radical Aristotelianism (note 11), p. 378, note 25.

24 See Bianchi, Luca, 1277: A Turning Point in Medieval Philosophy?, in: Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? (note 11), pp. 90–110, see 105–108.

25 See e.g. the *ex silentio* arguments recently suggested by Michael Dunne and Evert L.J. Poortman. The former argues that Peter’s ‘Expositio in librum Aristotelis de longitudine et brevitate vitae’ might be placed after 1277 since “there is no mention of Averroës nor any allusion to his commentary on Aristotle”: see The Commentary of Peter of Auvergne on Aristotle’s ‘On Length and Shortness of Life’, in: Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge 69 (2002), pp. 153–200, esp. 155. The latter suggests that the commentary on ‘De vegetabilibus et plantis’ was instead composed before that date because it does not make use of the distinction between *felicitas in ista vita/in alia vita* which, relying upon Celano, Peter is credited with introducing after, and because of, the condemnation: see Petrus de Alvernia Sententia super librum ‘De vegetabilibus et plantis’, Ed. Poortman, Evert L.J. (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 13), Leiden/Boston 2003, p. xxxi.

to Tempier's 'syllabus' is a rather puzzling issue, which hardly provides us with a reliable method for establishing a definite chronology of his works. By thoroughly examining Peter of Auvergne's questions on Aristotle's 'De Caelo', Griet Galle has shown that he often rejects some of the doctrines that were censured in 1277; that he openly accepts only one of them, namely that the first cause produces different effects through intermediate and lower causes, such as the heavenly bodies; and finally that when he exposes other Peripatetic theses which were included in Tempier's list of 'errors' (e.g. that there is only one world, that matter is the principle of multiplication within a species, that accidents cannot exist without a substance) he qualifies his position by adding that he is considering only what is naturally possible, not what God could do.<sup>26</sup>

In order to explain this cautious approach, which aims at avoiding conflicts between Aristotle's worldview and Christian beliefs, it is obviously possible to imagine – as Galle has done<sup>27</sup> – that Peter was influenced by the condemnation of 1277, and to argue therefore that he must have commented upon the 'De caelo' after the intervention of the bishop of Paris. But is this the only way to explain his attitude? Peter's remark that it is "prohibited" (*inibitum*) to the members of the Arts Faculty to speak about "God's unlimited power" (*potentia Dei indeterminata*) is less an allusion to 1277 than – as Galle has carefully noticed – to the statute of 1272, which forbade the discussion of strictly theological questions.<sup>28</sup> Other statements introduced by Peter (*utrum autem deus extra universum posset causare quantitatem, non intromitto me, Quid autem sit tenendum et quid non, videtis vos, Utrum autem Deus posset plures mundos facere loquendo de potentia eius absoluta*

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26 Cf. Galle, Griet, Peter of Auvergne on the Unicity of the World, in: *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 68 (2001), pp. 111–141, see 133–134; ead., Questions on Aristotle's 'De Caelo' (note 11), pp. 63\*–67\*. See also Musatti, Cesare A., Il 'De Caelo' di Aristotele e alcuni suoi commentatori: Simplicio, Averroè e Pietro d'Alvernia, in: *Quaestio* 6 (2006), pp. 525–549, see 541.

27 See the previous note.

28 Cf. Galle, Questions on Aristotle's 'De Caelo' (note 11), pp. 63\*, 209\*. For different perspectives on the statute of 1272 and its meaning see Putallaz, François-Xavier and Imbach, Ruedi, Profession: philosophe. Siger de Brabant (Initiations au Moyen Âge), Paris 1997, pp. 123–134; Bianchi, Censure et liberté intellectuelle (note 4), pp. 165–201. On its influence until the 16th century see Bianchi, Luca, Pour une histoire de la 'double vérité' (Conférences Pierre Abélard), Paris 2008, pp. 102–115.

*et non ordinata, nihil ad praesens, cum Deus sit infinitae potentiae*)<sup>29</sup> show a similar concern for making clear that he does not intend to exceed the bounds of philosophical teaching. In this perspective, these statements recall the well-known formula – *nihil ad me de Dei miraculis, cum ego de naturalibus disseram* – coined by Albert the Great, used by Siger of Brabant around 1274, included in the ‘Auctoritates Aristotelis’, and later repeated by generations of Masters of Arts in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

Even Peter’s occasional reference, in the last passage quoted above, to the distinction between the absolute and the ordained power of God is open to different interpretations: is it the effect of the so-called ‘spirit of 1277’,<sup>31</sup> or simply further evidence of a practice introduced within the Aristotelian tradition in mid-13<sup>th</sup> century? One should remember that if one of the earliest examples of the use of the distinction between God’s ‘two powers’ in an Aristotelian commentary goes back to Roger Bacon’s questions on the ‘Physics’,<sup>32</sup> in the exegetical tradition on the ‘De Caelo’ it had already been employed by Albert the Great. And it is worth bearing in mind that Albert distinguishes what God can do *de absoluta potentia ipsius* from what may happen naturally in the context of a long prudential clause, appended to the chapter where he examines Aristotle’s arguments against the actuality and possibility of a plurality of worlds. After arguing, in accordance with Aristotle, that there is only one world – as Peter will later do – Albert in

29 Galle, Questions on Aristotle’s ‘De Caelo’ (note 11), pp. 46, 113, 128.

30 See Bianchi, Luca, “Naturaliter loquendo”, in: Bianchi, Luca and Randi, Eugenio, *Vérités dissonantes. Aristote à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Vestigia 11), Paris/Fribourg 1993, pp. 47, 59. Albert the Great’s expression is to be found in his paraphrase of the ‘De generatione et corruptione’, I, 22, in: *Opera Omnia*, Ed. Borgnet, Auguste, Paris 1890–1899, vol. 4, p. 363.

31 See Galle, Peter of Auvergne on the Unicity of the World (note 26), p. 133; ead., Questions on Aristotle’s ‘De Caelo’ (note 11), pp. 64\*–65\*. For a comparison between the treatment of God’s power in Peter’s questions on ‘De caelo’ and in the so-called CEK-questions possibly authored by him, see Musatti, Il ‘De Caelo’ di Aristotele (note 26), pp. 541–542.

32 Cf. Roger Bacon, *Quaestiones supra libros octo physicorum Aristotelis*, Ed. Delorme, Ferdinand M. (Opera hactenus inedita, fasc. 13), Oxford 1913, pp. 224–225: *Unde de potentia primi absoluta bene posset esse et sic excedit omnem actum finitum. Set loquendo de debito potentie et ordinatione potentie [...]*.

fact declares – as Peter will also do – that he does not intend to dispute on whether the Omnipotent could have made many worlds.<sup>33</sup>

Let us now move to Peter's questions on the first two books of the 'Nicomachean Ethics'. Anthony Celano, who edited them, maintained that they were composed between 1277 and 1283 because they make use of some conceptual distinctions (*felicitas in via/in patria, felicitas in ista vita/in vita futura, finis cuius/finis quo*) which he took as the hallmark of commentaries written after the condemnation, also employed by John of Tytynsale, who – so he argued – borrowed them from Peter.<sup>34</sup> Jacopo Costa has recently and convincingly established that this argument is unfounded, and that the only reason to date Peter's questions on the 'Ethics' around 1280 is their resemblance to those of the anonymous commentary preserved in Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698.<sup>35</sup> But are we sure that two texts similar in doctrine and literary structure are necessarily contemporary? If

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- 33 Albert the Great, In De Caelo et Mundo, I, 3, 6, Ed. Hossfeld, Paul, in: Opera Omnia, Ed. Coloniensis, vol. 5.1, pp. 68–69: *Si autem forte aliquis dicat, quod quidem possunt mundi esse plures, sed non sunt, quia deus posset fecisse plures mundos, si voluisset, et adhuc posset facere, si vellet, contra hoc ego non disputo. Cum enim hic concluditur, quod impossibile est mundos esse vel fieri plures et quod necessarium est esse unum solum, intelligitur de impossibili et necessario, quod est ex parte mundi quantum ad causas eius essentielles et proximas, et est magna differentia inter id quod deus potest facere de absoluta potentia ipsius, et inter id quod in natura potest fieri. Multa enim meo iudicio facere potest, quae tamen fieri non possunt. [...] et ideo quantum est de natura mundi, dico non posse fieri plures mundos, licet deus, si vellet, posset facere plures.*
- 34 Celano, Anthony J., Peter of Auvergne's Questions on Books I and II of the 'Ethica Nicomachea'. A Study and Critical Edition, in: Medieval Studies 48 (1986), pp. 1–110: see notably pp. 4–6 for the dating of the text.
- 35 See Costa, Anonymi Artium Magistri (note 7), pp. 91–101. On the relationship between the commentaries on the 'Nicomachean Ethics' ascribed to Peter of Auvergne and the one preserved in Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698 (and once ascribed to James of Douai: see note 7 above) see also Wieland, Georg, The Perfection of Man. On the Cause, Mutability, and Permanence of Human Happiness in 13<sup>th</sup> Century Commentaries on the 'Ethica Nicomachea' (EN), in: Il commento filosofico nell'Occidente latino (secoli XIII–XV). The Philosophical Commentary in the Latin West (13–15<sup>th</sup> centuries), Eds. Fioravanti, Gianfranco, Leonardi, Claudio and Perfetti, Stefano (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 10), Turnhout 2002, pp. 127–133, esp. 360–361.

this were the case,<sup>36</sup> and if the questions on the ‘Nicomachean Ethics’ of Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698, as well as those ascribed to Peter of Auvergne were actually composed sometime after 1277,<sup>37</sup> the problem of Peter’s attitude towards Tempier’s ‘syllabus’ would become more and more intricate.

Celano tried to confirm his dating by presenting Peter’s reading of Aristotle’s moral philosophy as dominated by a constant effort to reconcile “Greek philosophy and Christian theology”: influenced by the commentaries on the ‘Ethics’ of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, Peter’s commentary would disclose “a general tenor of ‘moderate’ Aristotelianism”.<sup>38</sup> Yet, following a way of philosophising common among Parisian Masters of Arts in the 1270s, Peter shows no scruples in reporting several of Aristotle’s statements which troubled bishop Tempier and his advisors. In Book I, question 36, while explaining in which sense health and external goods are necessary for virtuous life, Peter quotes Aristotle’s maxim *quod impossibile est indigentem bene operari*, which is close to proposition 170 banned by Tempier: *quod pauper bonis fortunae non potest bene agere*

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- 36 Lottin had no doubts on this point and, while discussing precisely the dating of some late 13<sup>th</sup>-century commentaries on the ‘Nicomachean Ethics’, he formulated the following rule: “si un auteur du moyen âge suit servilement sa source d’information, c’est qu’il la suit aussi d’assez près dans le temps”. Cf. Lottin, Odon, A propos de la date de certains commentaires sur l’‘Éthique’, in: *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 17 (1950), pp. 127–133, see 129.
- 37 In ‘Viri philosophici’. Nota sui prologhi dei commenti all’Etica e ai Meteorologica erroneamente attribuiti a Giacomo di Douai (note 7), I argue instead that one cannot rule out the hypothesis that both commentaries were redacted between 1272 and 1277, and I suggest precisely this dating as the most likely for the commentary preserved in Ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14698, whose prologue seems to reply not to Tempier’s condemnation, but to the statute of 1272.
- 38 Celano, Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’ (note 34), pp. 2, 4. This description is explicitly taken from Gauthier, Les ‘Questiones supra librum Ethicorum’ (note 6), who on p. 243 spoke of Peter’s commentary using expressions such as “tendance modérée”, “aristotélisme modéré”, and on p. 244 emphasized that he “évite soigneusement toute opposition entre l’enseignement d’Aristote et la foi”. Also Wieland, The Perfection of Man (note 35), p. 361, presents Peter’s commentary on the ‘Ethics’ as a “moderate” work.

*in moralibus*.<sup>39</sup> In question 40, considering the way in which happiness, once attained, can be lost, Peter remarks:

Et dicendum quod homo potest amittere felicitatem que est in vita ista, et amittitur in morte quia ex quo est perfectio hominis et omne hominis amittitur in morte; quare, et felicitas. Et ideo dicit Aristotiles quod mors est ultimum terribilium.<sup>40</sup>

It is well-known that Aristotle's conception of death as "the end of things to be feared" (or "the end of all terrors") caused the reaction of the committee of theologians who prepared the list of articles censured by bishop Tempier: article 178 forbids to teach *Quod finis terribilium est mors*, adding the significant gloss: *Error, si excludat terrorem inferni qui extremus est*. René-Antoine Gauthier has shown that the idiosyncratic expression *finis terribilium* can be traced back to the 'Tabula libri Ethicorum', an alphabetical list of sentences which a secretary under the direction of Thomas Aquinas extracted from Aristotle's 'Ethics' and Albert the Great's commentary on it.<sup>41</sup> Taking literally Tempier's statement that the *errors* collected in his 'syllabus' were circu-

39 See Celano, Peter of Auvergne's Questions on Books I and II of the 'Ethica Nicomachea' (note 34), q. 36, pp. 77–78: *Dico igitur quod divicie naturales sunt necessarie ad felicitatem, quia sine illis non potest aliquis operari. Et hoc est quod dicitur decimo huius, quod sapiens et iustus et fortis indigent huius que sunt necessaria ad vitam [...]. Hoc etiam dicit Aristotiles quod impossibile est indigentem bene operari. Apparet igitur que divicie necessarie sunt ad felicitatem, et que non, et qualiter*. Needless to say, this Aristotelian maxim – included in the *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, Ed. Hamesse, Jacqueline (Philosophes Médiévaux 17), Louvain 1974, p. 234 § 18 – was often repeated before as well as after 1277. It is, however, worth noticing that in 1283/1284, in a letter addressed to the papal curia, the proctor of the Arts Faculty John of Malignes made clear that the impossibility referred to by Aristotle concerned only "the course of human nature": [...] *quoniam sine victualibus impossibile est hominem aliquod bonum facere, qualecumque fuerit, seu operari; quoniam, sicut vult philosophus in libro Ethicorum, impossibile est bona operari indigentem entem, hoc intelligendo esse impossibile secundum cursum humanae naturae, que propter continuam sui humidi intrinseci deperditionem eget alimentali refectione, sicut philosophus videtur hoc in secundo de Anima innuere [...]*, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (note 6), vol. 1, p. 609.

40 See Celano, Peter of Auvergne's Questions on Books I and II of the 'Ethica Nicomachea' (note 34), q. 40, p. 82.

41 Cf. Gauthier, René Antoine, Préface to 'Tabula libri Ethicorum', in: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia*, Ed. Leonine, vol. 48, p. B 49–50.

lating among the *studentes in artibus*, and that therefore a theologian such as Thomas was never directly the object of the condemnation, Roland Hissette has suggested that the source of article 178 might have been an unknown text where a Master of Arts had borrowed the formula *finis terribilium* from Thomas, who had often used it in his theological works. Ready to admit that some of the prohibited propositions were directly aimed at Thomas, John Francis Wippel has found this hypothesis “forced”.<sup>42</sup> It should be noted, however, that Gauthier, Hissette and Wippel apparently ignore that one of the first evidences of the diffusion of this formula among the Arts Masters is precisely Peter of Auvergne’s commentary on the ‘Ethics’.<sup>43</sup> If composed after 1277, this work would therefore prove that the condemnation did not prevent masters from repeating almost verbatim article 178; if composed before, it could even be considered as one of the possible sources of this article – at least by those unwilling to include among them several works authored by Thomas Aquinas himself.

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- 42 See the following contributions of Roland Hissette, *Enquête* (note 14), pp. 306–307; id., *Albert le Grand et Thomas d’Aquin dans la censure parisienne du 7 mars 1277*, in: *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geistesgeschichte und ihren Quellen* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 15), Ed. Zimmermann, Albert, Berlin/New York 1982, pp. 226–246, see 236–237; id., *Saint Thomas et l’intervention épiscopale du 7 mars 1277*, in: *Studi* (Istituto San Tommaso, Roma), 2 (1995), pp. 204–258, see 231–233, 254–255; id., *L’implication de Thomas d’Aquin in les censures parisiennes de 1277*, in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 64 (1997), pp. 3–31, see 12–14, 18, 20–21; id., *Thomas d’Aquin directement visé par la censure du 7 mars 1277? Réponse à John F. Wippel*, in: *Roma magistra mundi. Itineraria culturae medievalis*, Ed. Hamesse, Jacqueline (Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 10), Louvain-la-Neuve 1998, pp. 425–437, see 435–437. As to Wippell, John F., see *Medieval Reactions to the Encounter between Faith and Reason*, Milwaukee 1995, p. 65, note 93, and id., *Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277*, in: *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995), pp. 233–272, see 267–268.
- 43 Both Celano, *Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’* (note 34), p. 23, and Wieland, *The Perfection of Man* (note 35), p. 374, mention the expression *ultimum terribilium* without noticing its evident similarity with that (*finis terribilium*) used in article 178. Celano (p. 23) pretends instead to find in Peter’s claim that happiness can be lost through death “an implicit, but obvious, reference to the condemned proposition ‘man can be happy only in this life’”. The least one can say here is that the notion of “obvious” would deserve careful discussion.

One might observe that in both cases examined above, Peter is not really disrespectful of Tempier's strictures, because he simply quotes Aristotelian sayings. His treatment of the ideal of philosophical life is, however, a clear expression of his personal reading of Peripatetic intellectual eudemonism, which is all but 'moderate'.<sup>44</sup> Peter claims – without qualifications or restrictions – that through speculation man can attain the ultimate end and the supreme happiness available to him in this life, which consists in a sort of

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44 Fioravanti, Gianfranco, *Desiderio di sapere e vita filosofica nelle questioni sulla Metafisica del Ms. 1386 Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig*, in: *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi. Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, Eds. Mojsisch, Burkhard and Pluta, Olaf, Amsterdam 1992, pp. 271–283, qualifies Celano's reading of the questions devoted to philosophical happiness as "francamente insostenibile" (p. 271, note 1). According to Fioravanti, the presence in these questions of some doctrines which are typical of radical Aristotelianism might even lead to challenges to the attribution of the work to Peter. As I have noticed in: *Filosofi, uomini e bruti. Note per la storia di un'antropologia averroista*, now republished in Bianchi, Luca, *Studi sull'aristotelismo del Rinascimento (Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina 5)*, Padova 2003, p. 44, note 7, the prologue of Peter's 'Quaestiones in Metaphysicam' – edited by Monahan, Arthur P., in: *Nine Mediaeval Thinkers. A Collection of Hitherto Unedited Texts*, Ed. O'Donnell, J. Reginald (Pontifical Institut of Mediaeval Studies. Studies and Texts 1), Toronto 1955, pp. 145–181 – shows a similar, though more restrained attitude. Peter insists on the excellence of metaphysical knowledge; he considers it as the most perfect operation of man in this life, which gives him the greatest delight; and – relying upon Avicenna's definition of *delectatio* (see *Philosophia Prima*, VIII, 7, Ed. Van Riet, Simone, p. 432), frequently used by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas – he emphasizes that this delight is caused by the *comprehensio* [...] *unionis convenientis cum convenienti* (see pp. 150–151). It might be added that also in his commentary on 'De vegetabilibus et plantis', recently edited by Poortman (note 25), Peter insists that through speculation man can attain, already in his mortal life, an intellectual union with God (*assimilamur entium optimo et nobilissimo, videlicet primae causae*, p. 1); and he claims that philosophy allows human beings to become similar to God (*et per hanc Deo similes sumus maxime*, p. 5). The idea that human happiness consists in an intellectual assimilation with God seems therefore to recur in several works ascribed to Peter. One should however acknowledge that the attribution of the questions on the 'Nicomachean Ethics' deserves further investigation, since the arguments in favour provided by Gauthier, Les 'Questiones supra librum Ethicorum' (note 6), pp. 239–240, and Celano, Peter of Auvergne's Questions on Books I and II of the 'Ethica Nicomachea' (note 34), pp. 3–4 are not always convincing.

intellectual union with the most perfect object of his knowledge, i.e. God.<sup>45</sup> Hence, in a question specifically devoted to the possibility of being happy “in this life” (Book I, question 39) he concludes:

Dicendum quod homo potest esse felix in hac vita felicitate que est perfectio hominis. Et huius ratio est quia natura nichil facit frustra, nec deficit in necessariis. Appetitus autem naturaliter inest homini, et maxime appetitus est respectu primi scibilis. Et ideo non potest ille appetitus esse frustra, quia frustra dicitur illud quod natum est finem includere et non includit. Igitur in unione respectu primi scibilis cum consistat felicitas, manifestum est quod possibile est hominem felicitari in hac vita.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, Peter contents himself with saying that man can become happy “in this life”, without drawing the conclusion, condemned in 1277 by article 176, that happiness is to be had in this life “and not in another”: *quod felicitas habetur in ista uita, et non in alia*. Celano is therefore right when stating that “there is no question here of a denial of supernatural beatitude”,<sup>47</sup> but the same could be said of the most famous treatise on happiness of the 1270s, i.e. Boethius of Dacia’s ‘De summo bono’, generally considered the source of the aforementioned article. As a matter of fact, Boethius not only carefully avoids asserting that man can be happy only during his earthly life, but – unlike Peter – he explicitly mentions the beatitude expected after death:<sup>48</sup> should we therefore consider his treatise as a sample of ‘moderate’ Aristotelianism and date it after 1277? It is worth noticing that in this text, although affirming that the life of the philosopher who contemplates the separate substances is as *voluptuosa* as God’s life – a comparison clearly inspired by the Latin translation of Averroes’ ‘Metaphysics’ – Boethius completely disregards the Averroistic interpretation of philosophical felicity, and his sole explicit reference to Averroes is in all probability a second-hand

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45 Celano, Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’ (note 34), qq. 32–34, pp. 72–76.

46 Ibid., q. 39, p. 80.

47 Ibid., p. 23.

48 On the meaning of this reference in the context of Boethius’ treatise, see Bianchi, Luca, Felicità terrena e beatitudine ultraterrena: Boezio di Dacia e l’articolo 157 censurato da Tempier, in: Chemins de la pensée médiévale. Mélanges Zénon Kaluza, Ed. Bakker, Paul J.J.M. (Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 20), Turnhout 2002, pp. 335–350.

quotation from Albert the Great.<sup>49</sup> Peter, instead, openly sides with ‘ethical Averroism’ when he answers the traditional objection that human beings will never attain that happiness which consists in the perfect actualisation of reason, because they cannot know the separate substances:

Ad secundum argumentum dicendum quod homo potest habere cognitionem substantiarum separatarum. Et quando dicitur quod intellectus noster se habet ad eas sicut oculus vespertilionis etc., dico secundum Commentatorem super istam eandem propositionem quod Aristoteles non dicit hoc quia intendat quod impossibile sit comprehendere substantias separatas, sed intendit difficultatem esse ad hoc. Unde licet oculus vespertilionis non comprehendat lucem solis visus claritate, tamen visus esse potest, et similier dico esse de intellectu respectu substantiarum separatarum.<sup>50</sup>

Celano pays no attention to this decisive claim which, as he himself knows, is based on Averroes’ commentary on a passage of the second introduction to the ‘Metaphysics’ (II, 993b9–11), where Aristotle compares the weakness of the human reason to the limited visual faculties of the bat (*vespertilio* or *nycticorax*, according to medieval Latin translations). Averroes argued that Aristotle considered human knowledge of the separate substances difficult, but not “impossible”.<sup>51</sup> In his own commentary on the same Aris-

49 Cf. Bianchi, Felicità terrena e beatitudine ultraterrena (note 48), pp. 208–209, note 38, and Bianchi, Felicità intellettuale, ‘ascetismo’ e ‘arabismo’: nota sul ‘De summo bono’ di Boezio di Dacia (note 9), pp. 24–27.

50 Celano, Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’ (note 34), q. 39, p. 81.

51 See Averroes, In Metaphysicorum libri, II, 1, in: Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis, Venetiis apud Iunctas 1562–1574 (reprint, Frankfurt a. M. 1962), vol. 8, f. 29C: *hoc non demonstrat res abstractas intelligere esse impossibile nobis, sicut inspicere Solem est impossibile vespertiloni, quoniam, si ita esset, tunc ociose egisset, quia fecit illud, quod est in se naturaliter intellectum, non intellectum ab alio; sicut si fecisset Solem non comprehensum ab aliquo visu.* Celano, Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’ (note 34), p. 81, apparatus, makes reference to this passage from Averroes but, while discussing question 39 (ibid., pp. 22–23), he disregards the significant fact that Peter bases on it his answer to the objection concerning the possibility of knowing the separate substances. It is worth noticing, moreover, that despite the fact that he explicitly hints at a specific passage of the ‘great commentary’ on the ‘Metaphysics’ (*dico secundum Commentatorem super istam eandem propositionem*), Peter does not quote it verbatim, but echoes a maxim extracted from it, which was largely

totalian passage, Thomas Aquinas had criticized such a reading as “absolutely ridiculous” (*valde derisibilis*), and in his ‘Summa Contra Gentiles’ he had denounced Averroes for having tried to “manipulate” (*depravare*) Aristotle’s genuine thought, stating that the bat simile “is not about impossibility” (*quantum ad impossibilitatem*) but only “about difficulty” (*quantum ad difficultatem*).<sup>52</sup> Peter of Auvergne – who in his questions on the ‘Metaphysics’ adopts a position clearly influenced by Aquinas’ ‘Contra Gentiles’<sup>53</sup> – repeats here precisely Averroes’ interpretation, so sharply rejected by Thomas. Carlos Steel has recently shown that “the question on the (im-) possibility of knowing the separate substances and the interpretation of the ‘*vespertilio-nycticorax*’ becomes somehow the mark that distinguishes the opponents and the followers of Thomas, the Averroists and the anti-Averroists”.<sup>54</sup> Subjecting Peter to this test, one ought to conclude that, while

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diffused and was transmitted by the Auctoritates Aristotelis (note 39), p. 120 § 63: *Quod Aristoteles nostrum intellectum assimilat in intelligendo substantias separatas oculo vespertilionis, non tamen in hoc impossibilitatem demonstrat, sed difficultatem.*

- 52 Cf. In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio, II, 1, in: Opera Omnia, Ed. Marietti, § 286, p. 82; Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 45, in: Opera Omnia, Leonine Ed., vol. 14, pp. 117–118. One should note that the term here employed by Aquinas in order to define Averroes’ attitude towards Aristotle – i.e. *depravare* – is significantly the same that he later uses in his ‘De unitate intellectus’.
- 53 See the text edited by Dunphy, William, The ‘quinque viae’ and Some Parisian Professors of Philosophy, in: St. Thomas Aquinas 1274–1974. Commemorative Studies, Ed. Maurer, Armand A., Toronto 1974, vol. 1, pp. 73–104, see 95: *Dicendum ergo est ad quaestionem quod substantiae separatae secundum naturam suam manifestissimae sunt, [...] nobis autem immanifestae, ut quod sunt a sensibilibus remotae. Et hoc dicit Aristoteles secundo hujus, quod intellectus noster se habet ad manifestissima in natura sicut oculus vespertilionis ad lucem solis.* For Dunphy’s commentary see pp. 80–82.
- 54 Steel, Carlos, Siger of Brabant versus Thomas Aquinas on the Possibility of Knowing the Separate Substances, in: Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte, Eds. Aertsen, Jan, Emery, Kent, Speer, Andreas (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 28), Berlin/New York 2001, pp. 211–231. I quote from pp. 212–213. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century interpretations of Aristotle’s remarks on the limits of human knowledge (‘Metaphysics’ II, 993b9–11) have been recently examined by Falzone, Paolo, Desiderio della scienza e desiderio di Dio nel Convivio di Dante (Istituto Italiano per gli studi filosofici), Napoli 2010, pp. 257–277. Strangely enough, here Falzone does

lecturing on the ‘Ethics’, he definitely looked more like an ‘Averroist’ than a “most faithful disciple” of Aquinas.<sup>55</sup>

not take into account Peter of Auvergne’s use of Averroes’ reading of this passage in question 39 of the first Book of the ‘Ethics’, which he had extensively quoted and discussed at pp. 164–168, 231–233.

- 55 It is worth emphasizing, however, that Peter’s attitude towards Averroes in question 39 of Book I is quite complex and puzzling, and would deserve a deeper investigation in the light of the crucial role that this text has recently acquired in Dante’s scholarship. In his commentary on the ‘Convivio’ (forthcoming in the Collection ‘I Meridiani’ by Mondadori, but already circulating among scholars) Gianfranco Fioravanti calls attention to the similarity between the controversial passage where Dante, though insisting on the limits of human knowledge, argues that they do not inhibit intellectual happiness (III.xv.7–11) and Peter’s answer to the third argument *quod non*. Here indeed Peter claims that if man, once he has achieved “in this life” knowledge of the first cause, wished to know more (*adhuc quaeritur maior cognitio*), his desire would be irrational because reason does not lead to desire what cannot be had (*ratio enim non dicit illud esse desiderandum quod impossibile est haberi, licet appetitus possit hoc appetere*): see Celano, Peter of Auvergne’s Questions on Books I and II of the ‘Ethica Nicomachea’ (note 34), q. 39, pp. 80–81. According to Fioravanti Peter is here defending an idea which was widely diffused among thirteenth-century Arts masters. Therefore, one should neither overestimate the originality of this position, accepted by Dante, nor see in it an implicit criticism of the Averroists’ conception of happiness. See also Falzone, Desiderio della scienza e desiderio di Dio (note 54), pp. 164–168 and 231–233. Pasquale Porro suggests instead a different interpretation of Peter’s answer to the third argument, claiming that Dante’s conception of the relationship between knowledge of the separate substances and human happiness is more ‘anti-Averroist’ than is often assumed: see Porro, Pasquale, Tra il Convivio e la Commedia: Dante e il “forte dubitare” intorno al desiderio naturale di conoscere le sostanze separate, in: 1308. Eine Topographie historischer Gleichzeitigkeit, Ed. Speer, Andreas and Wirmer, David (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 35), Berlin/New York 2010, pp. 631–659, esp. 645–646. As far as Peter is concerned, one should more carefully distinguish what he says about the possibility of knowing the separate substances (answering the second argument *quod non*) – and there is no doubt that here he follows Averroes’ reading of the bat simile – from what he says about the nature and the limits of such knowledge – which seems, to a certain extent, contrary to what many ‘Averroists’ assumed. The third argument is indeed based on the opposition between the limited knowledge of the separate substances – and notably of “the First” – that man can attain (*habita cognitione primi in vita ista*), and a “further cognition”, which is most likely the cognition of their essence: *Et est*

Needless to say, additional research will be necessary to better understand not only Peter's philosophical position in the 1270s and 1280s, but also his complex and still unclear attitude towards the condemnation of 1277. I hope nonetheless that my brief analysis may have shed light on two small but relevant points. First, it is evident that Van Steenberghen's hypothesis that Peter of Auvergne gave a decisive impulse to the supposed movement toward Thomism of the 'radical' Aristotelians – Siger of Brabant included – is both unlikely and anachronistic. On the one hand, Peter's institutional role in 1275 does not prove that he was then a 'moderate' in philosophy; on the other hand, even if we conjecture that, after 1277, he might have adopted several Thomist doctrines and made considerable efforts to distinguish his own views from the Peripatetic tenets censured by bishop Tempier, this does not necessarily imply that he had done so before 1277.

Second, it is likewise evident that the chronology of Peter's Aristotelian commentaries is far from established and deserves a deeper examination: while the attempt to solve this problem by relying upon the "pre-1277/post-1277' paradigm" has at times proved hardly conclusive, other useful elements should be taken into account. In particular, in the light of their considerably different treatment of the limits of human reason, I would be tempted to challenge the current dating of the commentaries on the 'Nicomachean Ethics' and the 'Metaphysics', which are generally

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*desiderium ad ulteriorem cognitionem, quia primum est quesitum desiderabile respectu intellectus nostri, sicut dicit commentator*, see Celano, Peter of Auvergne's Questions on Books I and II of the 'Ethica Nicomachea' (note 34), q. 39, p. 80. Although Celano refers in note to Eustratius, the 'Commentator' here mentioned should instead be identified with Averroes, who in his commentary on the 'Metaphysics' states that all men by nature desire to know "what God thinks": see In Metaphysicorum libri, XII, 51 (note 51), f. 335D, *Quia ista quaestio est nobilissima omnium, quae sunt de Deo, scilicet scire quid intelligit, et est desyderata ab omnibus naturaliter*. If this is the case, and if therefore Peter's third argument *quod non* evokes Averroes' assumption that all men by nature desire to know God's mind, there follows first, that his answer did have an 'anti-Averroist' flavour; second, that his position is different from that of several of his contemporaries, such as Albert the Great, Boethius of Dacia and Siger of Brabant, who repeated and endorsed Averroes' claim, condensing it in the maxim: *quaestio de intellectu divino est desiderata sciri ab omnibus hominibus*: see Bianchi, Felicità intellettuale, 'ascetismo' e 'arabismo': nota sul 'De summo bono' di Boezio di Dacia (note 9), pp. 24–25 note 32; third, that Dante is closer to Peter than to the aforementioned thinkers.

supposed to be roughly contemporary.<sup>56</sup> I would suggest that the former should be predated, and that what Peter had taught there about the possibility of knowing the separate substances was tacitly recanted in the latter. However it may be, I wonder in conclusion whether all hypotheses for dating Peter's texts by considering his doctrinal changes – the last one included – do not depend on a too teleological way of interpreting his intellectual evolution, and presuppose a notion of 'coherence' which does not apply to a 13<sup>th</sup>-century Aristotelian commentator. Of course, an evolution of Peter's thought is more than plausible – especially if his career at the Arts Faculty was as long as is generally assumed – but are we sure that it can be envisaged as a linear movement from 'radicalism' to 'moderation', that it was the effect of external factors such as the condemnation of 1277 or Aquinas' influence, and that it simultaneously concerned every field of his philosophy?

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56 Since the relationship between the different versions of Peter's 'Quaestiones super Metaphysicam' needs further investigation, their chronology has not been established yet. It is however striking that, in the lack of other evidence, historians have assumed 1277 as both a *terminus ante* and *post quem*.

# Peter of Auvergne, Giles of Rome and Aristotle's 'Politica'

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If scholars were allowed to indulge in their autobiographical memories, the most appropriate title for the present paper would be 'Twenty Years After'. In the late Eighties of the past century I belonged in fact to a group known as the Three Musketeers,<sup>1</sup> when I first crossed swords with Giles of Rome, trying to detect the actual role his 'De regimine principum' played in the affair called "Reception of Aristotle's 'Politics' in the Latin West".<sup>2</sup> Since then, scholarship has made some interesting steps forward. Two recent

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- 1 I would like to dedicate this paper to the two other Musketeers, both now *in maioribus constituti* and serving in the Army of Italian universities: Prof. Costantino Marmo and Prof. Andrea Tabarroni. I would also like to thank Christoph Flüeler, Lidia Lanza and Marco Toste for their patience and support.
  - 2 Thanks to Francesco del Punta, I have been able to publish three related articles in *Documenti e Studi: Philosophus videtur tangere tres rationes*. Egidio Romano lettore ed interprete della *Politica* nel terzo libro del 'De regimine principum', in: *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 1 (1990), pp. 277–325; *Il filosofo, il principe e la virtù. Note sulla ricezione e l'uso dell'Etica Nicomachea nel 'De regimine principum' di Egidio Romano*, in: *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 2 (1991), pp. 239–279; *Tra etica e politica: la prudentia del principe nel 'De regimine' di Egidio Romano*, in: *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 3 (1992), pp. 77–144; a summary of these articles in English appeared under the title: *The Prince in the Mirror of Philosophy. About the Use of Aristotle in Giles of Rome's 'De regimine principum'*, in: *Moral and Political Philosophies in the Middle Ages, Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Medieval Philosophy, Ottawa, 17–22 August 1992*, Eds. Bazán, B. Carlos, Andújar, Eduardo and Sbrocchi, Léonard. G., New York/Ottawa/Toronto 1995, pp. 1522–1534. For a bibliographical introduction to Giles, see the entry by Lanza, Lidia, *Aegidius Romanus*, in: *Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi, I/1*, Firenze 2003; a selected bibliography by Noëlle-Laetitia Perret is also available online: [http://www.arlima.net/eh/gilles\\_de\\_rome.html](http://www.arlima.net/eh/gilles_de_rome.html) (last visited on September 2014)

efforts that promise, however, to substantially improve our knowledge of this subject are Lidia Lanza's and Marco Toste's projects – supervised by Christoph Flüeler – to edit critically both commentaries on Aristotle's 'Politics' penned by Peter of Auvergne.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to her generous kindness, I have access to Lidia Lanza's almost finished edition in progress. The opportunity to read it has persuaded me that it is worthwhile to attempt a reassessment of the issue on this new basis. In the present paper I will therefore first briefly summarize some main results achieved recently by scholars. Second, on the basis of a textual comparison between Giles's 'De regimine principum' and Peter of Auvergne's 'Scriptum', I will point to some clues that could lead to a more detailed reconstruction of the reception of the 'Politics' in its first stages.

First and foremost, Christoph Flüeler's monograph shows beyond a doubt how Peter of Auvergne's continuation of Aquinas' commentary on the 'Politics' exerted such a long lasting influence on other commentaries as to become, so to speak, the 'standard' commentary in the process of the medieval reception of this Aristotelian text. As far as influence is concerned, the literal commentary authored for the first two books (and the beginning of the third) by Aquinas and for the rest by Peter largely superseded Albert the Great's work.<sup>4</sup> Peter's questions also played a leading role in the parallel tradition of question commentaries on the 'Politics', so that this secular master occupies an important place in the mediation of Aristotelian political philosophy to the West.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Giles of Rome's 'De regimine principum' stands out as the first complete mirror for princes that consistently draws on the 'Nicomachean Ethics' and on the 'Politics'.<sup>6</sup> Judging from the number of manuscript copies that are still extant, Giles's

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3 See the website [http://www.paleography.unifr.ch/petrus\\_de\\_alvernia](http://www.paleography.unifr.ch/petrus_de_alvernia) (last visited on September 2014), which also provides the reader with an excellent updated bibliography on Peter of Auvergne.

4 Flüeler, Christoph, *Die Rezeption der 'Politica' des Aristoteles an der Pariser Artistenfakultät des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert*, Eds. Miethke, Jürgen and Bühler, Arnold, München 1992, pp. 127–138.

5 Flüeler, Christoph, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen 'Politica' im späten Mittelalter*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1992, pp. 120–131.

6 The first one is the fragmentary 'De regno' by Aquinas, cf. Miethke, Jürgen, *De potestate papae. Die päpstliche Amtskompetenz im Widerstreit der politischen Theorie von Thomas von Aquin bis Wilhelm von Ockham*, Tübingen 2000, pp. 25–45.