CHAPTER FOUR

TWENTY YEARS OF CONFUSION: PARIS

It was during the 1240s that Aristotle’s *libri naturales* came to be regularly lectured on at Paris (and, as we surmise from the commentaries of Adam of Buckfield, also at Oxford), although they were not yet *ad formam* books. Their use was facilitated by the recently acquired commentaries of Averroes, which greatly aided the scholastics’ comprehension of the Stagyrite’s thought. However, it took over two decades for the full import of Averroes’s interpretation of Aristotle’s text to be fully appreciated. That Averroes claimed that Aristotle had taught the world to be beginningless was realized immediately, although most scholastics considered the Commentator to be wrong about this, and so denied that Aristotle had taught the doctrine in a way incompatible with Christianity. It was otherwise however with Averroes’s interpretation of Aristotle’s teaching on the agent and possible intellects, and, as Dominique Salman has convincingly shown, until the decade of the 1250s, Averroes was considered to have held that the intellect was a part of the individual human soul.

In spite of the help offered by Averroes, however, other factors prevented an accurate comprehension of Aristotle’s meaning, especially: the number of works falsely ascribed to him (particularly the *Liber de causis*); and, more importantly, the overweaning influence of Avicenna. Among the writers we shall discuss in this chapter, all, whether artists or theologians, were dominated by the thought of Avicenna and particularly, for the topic we are investigating, his *Liber sextus naturalium*. This influence operated differently with different writers. None followed him in all things, but none escaped his influence.

A. ARTISTS

**PETE**ER OF SPAIN. Peter of Spain was known in his own day as a great physician. Today, aside from the fact that he was pope as John XXI in 1276 and 1277, he is known primarily as the author of the widely used textbook *Summulae logicales*. But it is often overlooked that, along with Albert the Great, he was one of the leaders in introducing Aristotle’s natural philosophy to Latin Europe. He composed commentaries on a considerable portion of
the Aristotelian corpus and was especially interested in the *parva naturalia*.

Although Peter began his scholastic career at Paris, he spent much of it elsewhere. It is therefore somewhat arbitrary, though organizationally expedient, to include him among the Parisian artists. The principal facts of his biography have been established with a high degree of probability by L. M. De Rijk. He was born at Lisbon around 1205 and studied and taught arts (and possibly began the study of theology) at Paris from 1220 until the suspension of lectures in 1229. In that year he returned to Spain (probably Léon), and in 1235 came north of the Pyrenees, first to Toulouse and then to Montpellier, where he studied and perhaps taught medicine. From 1245 to 1250 he taught medicine at Sienna, and in the latter year returned to Portugal. In 1263 he was named *magister scholarum* at Lisbon. In 1272 he became personal physician to Gregory X, and the next year became successively archbishop of Braga and cardinal-bishop of Frascati. He was elected pope on September 15, 1276 and died on May 20, 1277.

Since Peter was pope in 1276, when complaints of dangerous novelties being taught at Paris arrived in Rome, and since, as John XXI, he ordered the bishop of Paris to look into the matter, it is of more than ordinary interest to determine his own doctrine of the soul. This is especially true because it has been suggested that Peter instigated the condemnation in order to quash views contrary to his own. This task is more difficult than it would seem at first because there are three separate works on the soul attributed to Peter, and they

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1 A complete bibliography of Peter's works is printed in P. Manuel Alonso, ed., *Pedro Hispano Obras Filosóficas, II. Comentario al "De anima" de Aristóteles* (Madrid, 1944), pp. 14-27.

2 L. M. De Rijk, "On the Life of Peter of Spain, the Author of the Tractatus Called Afterwards Summulae logicales," *Vivarium* 8 (1970), 123-54.

3 This was first argued by André Callebaut, O.F.M., "Jean Pecham O.F.M. et l'augustinisme. Aperçus historiques (1263-1265)," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 18 (1925), 441-72. It was repeated by Martin Grabmann, "Mittelalterliche lateinische Aristotelesübersetzungen und Aristoteleskommentare in Handschriften spanischer Bibliotheken," *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Philologisch-philosophische Klasse (Munich, 1928), 98-113 and "Die Lehre vom Intellectus Possibilis und Intellectus Agens im Liber De Anima des Petrus Hispanus des späteren Papstes Johannes XXI," *AHDLMA* 12-13 (1937-38), 167-208, who remarked (pp. 180-81) that the greater part of Aquinas's argument against Avicenna in *Summa contra Gentiles* II, 74-78, could just as well be applied against Peter. This judgment was also accepted by Gilson, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennais," *AHDLMA* 4 (1929-30),5-149, on pp.106-07.