Raimundus Agerii’s Commentary on Aristotle’s Politics: Some Notes

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Medieval commentaries on Aristotle’s Politics have recently received much more interest from scholars than happened in the past. Many specialists investigated single works, while attention for medieval production of such commentaries as a whole started to grow. Also the present issue of Vivarium is a clear sign of this trend. Thanks to Christoph Flüeler, at the beginning of the 1990s a reliable catalogue of medieval commentaries on the Política became available to scholars for the first time. Skimming through Flüeler’s list one could easily notice that only one commentary on Moerbeke’s translation is attributed to a Franciscan author, namely, Raimundus Agerii. As the nature of Franciscan contribution to medieval political theories has been for many years an hotly debated issue among specialists, this entry captured my attention already many years ago. In the present paper I shall present some preliminary results of my investigation. In particular, I shall summarize the results of previous research, describe the techniques Raimundus adopts in his commentary, identify some of his implicit sources, and finally suggest a new dating for this commentary. In conclusion I shall argue that Raimundus’ text, while disappointing—to a certain extent—for a traditional approach to the history of medieval political thought, can be considered, from an historical point of view, as an interesting example of the complex process of reception of Aristotle’s Politics in the Middle Ages.

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3 Flüeler 1992 (op. cit., above, n. 2), II, 45-6. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, in this paper I will adopt the spelling of the name “Raimundus Agerii” used by Flüeler.

Previous research on Raimundus Acgerii

In the catalogue appended to his ground-breaking book about the reception of Aristotle’s *Politics* in the Latin West, Christoph Flüeler lists, among literal commentaries on the *Politics*, a work attributed to a Franciscan, Raimundus Acgerii, witnessed by one manuscript, namely Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, S. Marco 452, at ff. 49va-75vb. Flüeler reproduces there *incipit* and *explicit* and refers to the description of this manuscript contained in the second volume of the *Catalogo di Manoscritti Filosofici nelle biblioteche italiane*. Such an extremely limited amount of information is justified by the fact that the Florentine manuscript seems to have been the only source for the authors who had mentioned Raimundus Acgerii in the past. This is most probably the case for Luke Wadding, who, in his *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*, refers to a “Raymundus Augerii Gallus, mimatensis”, who “scripsit Commentaria in Politica Aristotelis”. The *colophon* of the Florentine manuscript tells us, in fact, that the author is “Raimundus Agerii civitatis mimatensis de ordine fratrum minorum”. For his part, Sbaraglia, admitting his reliance on Rodolphius, diverges from Wadding, asserting that Raimundus was from a “civitas miniatensis”; this disagreement, however, can probably be traced back to a different reading of the Florentine colophon, which perhaps could allow also this second interpretation. Sbaraglia asserts also that Raimundus belonged to the province of Tours, without referring to any evidence which could support his statement. On the contrary, Wadding’s reading, “mimatensis”, clearly points to the southern French town of Mende. According to XIV century lists of Franciscan convents, such as those contained in *Provinciale vetustissimum* or in Bartholomaeus de Pisa’s *De conformitate*, a Franciscan house belonging to the *Provincia Provinciae* was located in Mende (in Latin Mimatis).

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