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*Richard Kilvington on the Capacity of Created Beings, Infinity, and Being Simultaneously in Rome and Paris. Critical edition of Question 3 from Quaestiones super libros Sententiarum.* Edited by Monika Michałowska. Brill, Leiden – Boston 2021, pp. 187.

Volume 130 of the series *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* contains a new critical edition of a text by Richard Kilvington, a fragment of his question commentary on the *Sentences*. Its author, Monika Michałowska, who edited Kilvington's questions to *Ethics* for the same series in 2016, has again demonstrated her expertise in the painstaking work of an editor as well as mastery in tracing the paths of the English thinker's arcane reasoning. The task she undertook was genuinely demanding, for the commentary is a huge and complex work, as many *Sentences* commentaries, and its manuscript tradition is rich and complicated. The volume has been entitled *On the Capacity of Created Beings, Infinity, and Being Simultaneously in Rome and Paris*, probably to make it look more attractive to the prospective reader (buyer), but this marketing trick seems redundant: the book would be interesting even without the eye-catching title.

The introduction preceding the edition contains information about the author

of the commentary, his life and work, the detailed analysis of the structure and content of the edited question (in fact, a small treatise in its own right), the study of manuscript tradition and its description, editorial principles and a comprehensive bibliography of the subject. The edition is provided with a critical apparatus and notes on the sources of references in the text. It is followed by two indices: in addition to the *index nominum*, Michałowska put in a very useful *index locorum* providing detailed information on quoted sources (she has succeeded in identifying almost all of them together with the second-hand quotes).

The Oxford Calculators, a group of fourteenth century English scholars interested in applying logical and mathematical methods in philosophy and theology, became well-known (and read) in the academic circles of Western Europe even before they became locked in conflict between the adherents to *via moderna* or *via antiqua*. Although some historians of philosophy see them as nominalists, the

label does not seem to stick very well, at least not in the case of Richard Kilvington, who apparently drew more inspiration from John Duns Scotus (three references in question 3 to the *Sentences*) than William of Ockham (no references in the same text). This special taste for “mathematical philosophy” is not entirely unprecedented, especially in the English tradition (we should remember about Robert Grosseteste, to whom Kilvington refers several times), but in Kilvington it is unique because of the consistency with which he applied it to every issue he analyzed.

Kilvington’s Question 3 to the *Sentences*, entitled *Utrum omnis creatura sit suae naturae certis limitibus circumscripta*, is loosely related to Peter Lombard’s work. It deals with the fundamental metaphysical and theological problems concerning man, namely the infinite or finite character of his nature. The general problem announced by the title is mostly analyzed with respect to the soul but one issue concerning the body is also raised. The question is divided into five articles, considerably varying in length, devoted, respectively, to the problem of the capacity of the soul for acts, the problem whether one infinity can be greater than another (separately dealing with quantitative, qualitative and discrete infinity), the problem whether one body can be in various places at the same time (bilocation), the problem whether the punishment for a mortal sin can be intensively infinite, and the problem whether one can merit his or her prize. Presented in this way, the structure appears simple but when one looks into the book, one discovers a veritable maze of arguments, through which Michałowska leads the reader like a modern day Ariadne. First she describes the sequences of arguments in the introduction

(p. 7–11), then she applies those meticulous distinctions to the edited text arranging it in a way that is easy to follow. This is especially helpful with arguments for and against a position and replies to them: she identifies them all and matches them, thus pointing out the ones that have not been answered.

Untangling the structure of Kilvington’s question 3 on the *Sentences* was not only a difficult task because of the structure of the text itself but also because of the complicated manuscript tradition of the work. Because of its loose form of a question commentary made up of eight large questions, Kilvington’s *Sentences* was rarely preserved in its entirety, let alone in its original order. There are twelve manuscript codices which contain Kilvington’s *Sentences* commentary. Question 3 has been preserved in nine of them, dispersed across Europe, from London to Bologna and from Paris to Wrocław. Needless to say, the manuscripts differ greatly as to the state of preservation of the original text, both with respect to its completeness and the degree of its corruption by the scribes. Michałowska devotes a long section of her introduction (p. 35–49) to the analysis of the manuscript tradition of the whole commentary. She identifies two separate families, of five and seven manuscripts, respectively, within which she finds further divisions and subdivisions. These findings serve her as a point of reference for establishing the text basis of the edition (ms. Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, A.985) and for elimination of one manuscript (ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat.15561) from the set of manuscripts on which the edition is based. In the section on editorial principles (pp. 50–56), she specifies how she reconstructs the

main text of the question, justifying the selection of variants that give the most probable reading. She also explains the reasons for elimination of some groups of variants from the *apparatus criticus*.

The five articles which make up Kilvington's question 3 from the *Sentences* commentary: *Whether every creature is circumscribed in its nature by certain limits* are preceded by six principal arguments which somehow signal the later division: 1. The capacity of the soul is infinite; 2. It is possible for God to create an infinite body; 3. It is possible for a body to be in infinitely many places at the same time; 4. It is possible that punishment for a mortal sin is infinite; 5. One species can be infinitely more perfect than another; 6. Angelic nature allows for simultaneous presence in infinitely many places. They are countered with the authority of Peter Lombard but in the short determination Kilvington explains that Lombard's opinion refers only to spatial limitations of creatures and thus opens discussion on other ways in which a creature can be considered finite or infinite.

A review is not the proper place to summarize the contents of the book, but a few things should be said to give the

reader the foretaste of it. First of all, it is representative of the Oxford Calculators' style of philosophizing in general and Kilvington's style in particular. The problem of infinity, which had a special allure for him, is addressed in Question 3 from numerous perspectives and the theological subject of his work allows him to add some new ones to those which he had already tried in his Aristotle commentaries. In the section of the introduction devoted to the content of the question (pp. 14–20), Michałowska scrutinizes the arguments concerning infinity and comments on their relation to those found in Kilvington's other works as well as their influence on the views of other fourteenth century thinkers, such as John Buridan and Roger Roseth. Secondly, it is a good reader. Michałowska's editorial work produced a text which is lucid even in the most difficult passages thanks to the internal divisions and sensible punctuation she has introduced. Thirdly, and finally, it is an interesting and important work that really deserved a modern critical edition. At last, we have it!

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