MEDIEVAL INFLUENCES IN THE COIMBRA COMMENTARIES
(An Inquiry Into the Foundations of Jesuit Education *)

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I

1. Between 1592 and 1606 a group of Jesuits at the 'Collegium Conimbricensis', the College of Arts in the Portuguese city of Coimbra ("in Conimbricensi liberalium artium Academia Societati") published several commentaries on Aristotle in order to reinforce and standardise the study of Christian Philosophy, following Ignatius Loyola’s prescription that Aristotle should be studied on Philosophy courses. This Cursus was also conceived to give a "philosophical canon to the aspirations of Portuguese culture and at the same time has assured the education of youth against the doubts of the century".

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1 These are Pedro da Fonseca’s exact words, written (October 1591) for the first volume of the whole series.

2 Here is the list of all the titles published by the CONIMBRICENSES: Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1592); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in Quatuor libros de Caelo Aristotelis Stagiritae (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S.J. in libros Meteororum Aristotelis Stagiritae (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Aristotelis qui Parva Naturalia appellantur (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); In libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum, aliquot Conimbricensis Cursus Disputationes in quibus praecipua quaedam Ethicae disciplinae capita continentur (Lisboa: S. Lopes, 1593); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in duos libros De Generatione et Corruptione Aristotelis Stagiritae (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1597); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in tres libros de Anima Aristotelis Stagiritae (Coimbra: A. Mariz, 1598); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S.J. in universam Dialecticam Aristotelis (Coimbra: D. G. Loureiro, 1606); Other editions: Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S.J. in libros Meteororum Aristotelis Stagiritae (Lugduni 1608); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S. J. in libros Aristotelis qui Parva Naturalia appellantur (Lugduni 1608); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in Quatuor libros de Caelo (Lugduni 1608); In libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum, aliquot Conimbricensis Cursus Disputationes (Lugduni 1608); Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu In tres libros de Anima Aristotelis Stagiritae (Coloniae 1600); Commentarii Conimbricensis in Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis (Lugduni 1594); Commentarii Conimbricensis in Dialecticam Aristotelis (Coloniae 1607); Curso Conimbricense I. Pe. Manuel de Góis: Moral a Nicómaco, de Aristóteles. Introducción, estabelecimento do texto e tradução de António Alberto de Andrade (Lisboa 1957).

3 DIAS, J. S. da S. - Correntes de Sentimento Religioso em Portugal (Séculos XVI a
The first Commentary in the series, the *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Physicorum* by Father Manuel de Góis, on the eight books of Aristotle’s *Physics*, was published in Coimbra at the University publishing house of António de Mariz. Baltazar Álvares and Sebastião do Couto were the other authors involved, respectively of the Commentary in *de anima* (1598) and of that in *dialecticam* (1606), but Manuel de Góis seems to be in a way the leader of the task. He wrote all the other titles, including a *Commentary on Ethics* and several Commentaries on Natural Philosophy (*physicorum, de caelo, meteororum, parva naturalia, de generatione et corruptione*), which were very important in the series.

It is obvious that we are not looking at an original initiative of the Company, whose study of Aristotelian Philosophy took various forms: suffice to think of Bento Pereira’s or Francisco de Toledo’s works. However, such an initiative was not totally alien to the Portuguese philosophical tradition, as is shown, first by the creation of a College of Arts (1547) in accordance with the Humanist spirit; secondly, by the fact that from 1559 several Aristotelian texts were prescribed for Portuguese Arts students (*Categoriae, De interpretatione, Analytica priora, Analytica posteriora, Topica, Elenchi, Ethica, Physica, De caelo, De generatione, De anima and Metaphysica*); thirdly, by the relation between *latinitas*, cultural *mimesis* and scholarly editions, as shown e.g. by Peter of Perpignan, S. J., who recommended the use of ‘interlinearis’ editions 4; and finally by Pedro da Fonseca, who in 1564 published his famous *Dialectical Institutions* 5, certainly after to have taught at the College of Arts between 1555 and 1561. Furthermore, we know by now that his relation to Aristotle’s logic was not strange to Ramism, and we also know that the French scholar Nicolas Grouchy (1548-1550) translated the *Organon* into Latin for his Portuguese students 6.

Perhaps an Aristotle’s scientific book at the very beginning of such an editorial plan was part of the mood of the moment, but Coimbra commentators took a philosophical, metaphysical and religious approach to

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Aristotle’s Physics rather than a scientific one. This is not to imply that there were no connections at all between Galileo and Jesuitic Natural Commentaries read in the Collegio Romano. Furthermore, everybody is surely well aware of Descartes’ confession to Mersenne regarding Coimbra Commentaries. Indeed, the Coimbra Commentaries were frequently reprinted and widely used throughout Europe, becoming a standard Scholastic reference even in the 17th century. Are we to explain such a success, as Wallace did, by their conservative tone and “great attention paid to speculative issues important for theology and less to empirical detail”? Was it due, instead, as Andrade claimed, to their modernity and editorial advantages? The Commentaries unusual success must certainly be explained, but this task will only be possible after the critical edition is completed.

Meanwhile, we must remember that if a medieval tone is the backbone of the Commentaries, they are already facing systematizations and manuals (see e.g. an Index ending the Commentary, an important although unsatisfactory tool for a contemporary reader. Needless to say this is a very important feature in any academic work because in a Commentary one finds not only the author’s theses but also refutations of opposite schools). The academic context is sufficient to account for the composition of our Commentaries. For instance, at the beginning of his work on Ethics, justifying the reason why some of his own commentaries (Ethics, Meteoros, Parva Naturalia) omit the Aristotelian context, Góis displays a real sense of pedagogical timing. This is not to say that the difference between syntheses and extensive commentaries (such as Pomponazzi’s or Cremonini’s) lies entirely in the incorporation by the latter of materials


11 ANDRADE, A. A. de - Introdução, XIII, XXII- XXXI.

12 It is also possible to find alphabetical indexes in medieval texts, see e.g. Scriptum Petri Hispani cum alis multis questionibus et notabilibus bonis super dictis universalibus Isac, fol. 44r-46r (ms. from 14th century: Erfurt, Amplon, F 172).

13 GOIS, M. de - In libros Ethicorum.... Prooemium (ed. Andrade, p. 58): «Omismus autem... interpretationem Aristotelici contextus, non quod eum negligenda putemus: sed quia non quid ab alia scriptum sit, aut scribi a nobis possit: sed quid Philosophiae auditoribus, certo annorum spatio eis praescripto, enarrari queat, perpendimus.»
«from medieval and Renaissance authors including those of anti-Aristotelian sympathies» 14. Evidently, it is impossible to say that these texts represented a new style of writing, but we may surely believe that they also contributed to the Humanistic process that would make Medieval universities tremble. We are dealing with printed books and texts edited in the context of a University, a feature Walter Rüegg would have considered an ally of Humanism 15. Moreover Jesuit Colleges were a new type of school 16, designed to answer urgent sociopedagogical needs 17.

2. The Jesuits were given the College of Arts in 1555; the College had been founded in 1547 to bring Portugal into the Humanist movement 18. The Jesuits had first come to Portugal as missionaries in 1540 19, and the climate of the Counter-Reformation directed them to teaching. In 1551 Ignatius Loyola asked Father Simão Rodrigues to set up colleges in the southern town of Évora, in Lisbon and elsewhere. Two famous scholars were appointed to lead this process, Cipriano Soares, well known as a dialectician, and Manuel Álvares, the author of a Latin Grammar widely read throughout Europe 20. Both were ordered to leave Coimbra and to found in Lisbon a first Jesuit school (Colégio de Santo Antão, 1553). In the same year King John III authorised the building of another school in Évora, which between 1556-58 became first a Faculty of Arts and then a University. The plan of the courses were then defined as follows: a first academic year dedicated to the study of Dialectics; a second, again to Logic and then to Physics and Ethics; during the third year the student had to read Metaphysics and Parva naturalia; finally for six months, attention was paid to De anima. A similar program (not very different from the Roman style 21) was followed in Coimbra in the College of Arts 22. However, in the Coimbra Faculty of Theology four major courses were offered along with three smaller ones: on the one hand, Peter Lombard’s Sentences (Prima), Aquinas’ Summa Theologiae (Vespera), Holy Scriptures (Terça) and Duns Scotus (Noa), and

14 WALLACE, W. A. - op. cit. 225.
16 GIARD, L. - «Le devoir de l’intelligence, ou l’insertion des jésuites dans le monde du savoir», in Les jésuites... LVII.
17 ID. - ibid. LX, LXII.
19 DIAS, J. S. da S. - Correntes... 655-658.
21 ANDRADE, A. A. de - Introdução, XXVIII - XXIX.
22 STEGMÜLLER, F. - op. cit. 85-86.
on the other hand, Durandus, Scriptures, and Saint Thomas or Gabriel Biel. It is thus wrong to say, as Charles Lohr did, that «in Iberian universities metaphysics was taught not as the culmination of the arts course, but in theology.» At least Portuguese practice was different!

It is important to link at least these two aboved-mentioned Coimbra educational institutions, for it would surely have been impossible for the masters of the College to be unaware of the subjects studied at the University nearby. Indeed, this link has to be geographically wider, since we know, for example, that Pedro da Fonseca taught in Évora after studying in Coimbra.

Father Manuel de Góis (1543-97) taught two courses in Coimbra College of Arts during 1574-78 and 1578-82. However, in order to complete his huge contribution to the Cursus Conimbricensis he must have used manuscripts of several Coimbra or Évora colleagues, such as Pedro Luís, Lourenço Fernandes and Inácio Tolosa, along with some foreign printed editions brought into Portugal. A preliminary study of Góis’ way of working, as far as the Ethics was concerned, was undertaken by Andrade; his analysis may be taken as an example, still to be developed, for future editions. Andrade concluded that a common manuscript of the Ethics would have been shared by the Évora and Coimbra masters.

It can be noted, for example, that in the ‘Preface’ which Fonseca wrote to the whole Cursus he mentions «communes Philosophiae commentarii manuscripti», which are surely, at least in the very early days of the College, a rough collection of some master’s contributions. The instructions Father Nadal gave to the University of Évora (1561) enable us to say that in the Sixties there was still considerable liberty as to the texts chosen within the schools of the Company. As a second conclusion, regarding the College’s library, Andrade insisted upon the liberty our commentators had displayed with regard to printed works. Furthermore, their type of pedagogical approach would inevitably lead Philosophy to an exegetical programme focused on those attending the Cursus. As far as later medieval metaphysicians were concerned such a programme had a hermeneutical penchant. Is it possible to measure the extension of that program as far as Medieval Philosophy is concerned? We shall follow here only a case-study.

The way the Coimbra Commentaries deal with Aristotle pays a clear
tribute to the spirit of Renaissance Philosophy in which Aristotelianism is a multifaced prism. How then is this compatible with Loyola's order that Jesuit scholars should follow Aristotle along with Thomas Aquinas? After studying two related cases—Prime Matter and the role of the Medieval theologian Henry of Ghent (III)—we shall conclude that to comment on Aristotle was an occasion for teaching contemporary oriented Philosophy, convinced that, as happens with any cultural production of the 16th century, scholarly and literary practices were strongly entangled.

But first we shall say something on how Fonseca was related to the Cursus (II), in order to show also how quickly we have been jumping to barely established conclusions.

II

1. To Father Fonseca as well as to Fathers Marcos Jorge, Cipriano Soares and Pero Gomez, was given the task of publishing in 1561, a «curso de scriptos» (written course) in order «to avoid the work of writing, too much». In a letter of January 14th 1562, Fonseca writes to Father Jerónimo Nadal telling him of his own plan to achieve that target. He first insisted on working on the Complete Aristotle, a task of great importance because the use of Aristotelian anthologies, as Jacqueline Hamesse has shown, was encouraged even by the Jesuits (let us not forget that this is the age of Greek commentaries but also of sententiae, dicta and auctoritates, tables of contents, etc.). He decided also to read Philosophy in its entirety, thus explaining the quotation of different ancient and recent authors. I must read—Fonseca writes—all the books of Aristotle that I have not yet read or paid due attention to, I must take note of all doubts and good explanations with two or three great interpreters in order to explain one passage by another; Father Cipriano—Fonseca goes on—must pay special attention to Aristotles' mathematics, that is, examples of Geometry, demonstrations in Cosmology, Astrology, and Perspectives, subjects we can find in de coelo and meteoros; he should concentrate on the theories of the planets in chapter IV of Sacrobosco's The Sphere (a local tradition), and finally he should

31 See GOMES, J. E. - Introdução, XXVI-XXVIII.
33 ZIMAAR - Tabulae dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averrois (Venice 1562); SCHMITT, Ch. B. - Aristotle and the Renaissance, 34-63.
34 Cf. ALBUQUERQUE, L. de - «Sobre a Influência de Sacrobosco em Portugal», in Crónicas da História de Portugal (Lisbon 1987) 18-27; BALDINI, U. - «As Assistências Ibéricas da Companhia de Jesus e a Actividade Científica nas Missões Asiáticas (1578-
read Pliny and others on *meteoros*, winds, «de origine fontium» and so on; Cicero's *philosophy* has fine ways of speaking and dealing with a subject; as to Father Jorge, he could read some questions of Scotus and others, taking notes of difficulties and solutions, as well as Seneca's natural questions, *Alexander Aphrodisios* and another similar ancient authors 35.

As we all know, this plan was not implemented, and all the three Jesu- its were no longer involved in the Course which was actually published. Instead, at the very beginning of his *Commentary on Physics*, Father Góis gave us a possible introduction to the entire Cursus. How did he then conceive Philosophy? Note the differences between his and Fonseca's own approach. First, after insisting upon the Aristotelian definition «cognitio rerum per suas causas» 36 he divided Philosophy into two parts — Naturalis, Moralis, and Dialectica, on one side 37, and Metaphysica, Physiologia and Mathematicae on the other, the latter beeing the side he prefers 38. The Prooemium, in which he discusses these divisions, was written in a med­eval scholarly fashion. However, article 2 of question 1 was created — he says— because of recent philosophers’ opinions which were in total dis­agreement 39, and a similarly modern motivation informs the discussion of

35 See GÓIS, M. F. - *Introdução*, XXVII-XXVIII: «Ocurriremos pro esto que ya que V. R. me dana mayor parte del assunto, et repartia el trabaho con el P. Cypriano y con los Padres Marcos Jorge e Pero Gómez, seria buena lo que los que podemos tomásemos cada dia algún tiempo, para cada uno uer cosas que puedan ayudar, y preparar la materia para quando se hiziere: que yo tomasse dos horas, el P. Cypriano una, y el P. Marcos Jorge media, con esta continua proporcion de tiempo, cada uno conforme a sus occupations, dexando el P. Pero Gómez con las que tiene, porque harto haraa agora en acudirles. Assimismo me parecia que yo fuese en este tiempo uiendo todos los libros de Aristoteles que no tengo uistos y pueden seruir (ó no tam uistos) apuntando la dudas y buenas expositiones con dos ó tres graues intérpretes como por cifras, exponiendo unos lugares por otros, etc; porque esto es lo que ayudara más al que tom a principal assunto; y que el P. Cypriano attendiessse especialmente á las cosas de mathematicas que ay en Aristoteles, como son exemplos de geometria, demonstraciones, lugares que hablan de lo que perte­nec á cosmographia, astrologin y perspectiva, como ay muchos en los libros de coelo y metéoros; y allende desto hiziesse por traer algo de las teóricas de los planetas al 4º cap. de la sphaera de Sacrobosco que acá se lee, quanto buenamente se pudiesse hazer, y se compadeciesse con el tiempo que se da á estas cosas. Finalmente que leyesse en Plinio y otros algunos lo que puede seruir para maeria de metéoros, como de uientos, de origine fontium, etc.; passando también las obras de philosophia de Cicero, y apuntando los modos de hablar y tratar que comúnmente podemos tomar del; y que el P. Marcos Jorge podria uer algunas questions (que sabe seren allercadas en el curso) por Scoto y otros que le pareciesse, apuntando breuamente lo que ay de dificultad ó de resolución, y leyose las questions naturales de Séneca, Alexandro aphrodisio, et de alguno otro antiguo que hiziesse al caso.»

36 GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...*, Prooemium (ed. Andrade, p. 8).
37 GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (ibid., p. 10).
38 GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (ibid., p. 14 f.).
39 GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* (ibid., p. 20).
article 5 and of the last paragraph of the Prooemium. Indeed, Philosophy is here taught as if it was controversy. The authors' predilection for the theoretical side of Philosophy (scientiae contemplationis) is totally founded on abstraction (of matter and movement), that is to say, on the formal way (scibilitates) a science considers its subject. This seems to be the reason why the second tripartite division is correct even if abstraction in Mathematics is to be divided further. Indeed, one recognises here also the epistemological problem of intermediate sciences, but it is clear that Father Góis prefers to insist rather on Physics and Metaphysics, the latter having the higher mission or «duty of presiding over all arts, to form and defend the Republic of the Sciences, and to give to each discipline its own subject of study».

The Prooemium ends with the division of Philosophy according to Aristotle. Given the fact that we are dealing with the Physicus Prooemium, let us pay attention to Góis’ scheme in that domain. The following plan

40 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... (ibid., p. 32).
41 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... (ibid., p. 52).
42 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... (ibid., p. 24): «Tot sunt scientiae contemplationis, quot abstractiones a materia et a motu: haec vero tres omnino sunt; ergo totidem erunt contemplationes scientiae. (...) [Il]iace abstractiones necessario comitantur diversi modi (scibilitates vocant) sub quibus scientiae subiecta vel per se attingunt...»
43 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum..., a. 3 (ibid., p. 26): «Quarum prima ad Philosophum Naturalem pertinet, secunda ad Mathematicum, postrema ad Metaphysicam. Enim vero Philosophus Naturalis considerat, v.g. hominem ut ex animo constat et corpore affecto qualitatis sub sensum cadentibus, quod materia sensibilis dicitur; nec tamen materiam singularem scrutatur, cum singularia non per se spectant ad scientiam. Mathematicus affectiones triangularum, utique id genus contemplatur, quae licet re ipsa in materia sensibilis haeceant; non ea tamen quatenus in eiusmodi materia sunt, expendit. Metaphysicus in cognitione primae causae, et intelligentiarum, atque aliarum rerum, quae neque in materia consistunt, neque illam in suo concepto includunt, versatur. Porro quod de abstractione a materia diximus, similiter de separatione a motu intelligenti debet. Liqueit igitur tres esse abstractiones, atque adeo totidem inspicientur philosophiae partes; neque ahns praeterea inuere opus esse; cum omnin, quae in scientiae contemplationem veniant, sub aliqua et tribus praedictis notitionibus ab intellectu percipientur. Atque haec ratio a D. Thoma loco cit. breuiter perstringitur.»
44 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum..., a. 4 (ibid., p. 30): «Ex quo planum euadit cur Mathematicae phures sint, Physiologia vero una, itemque una Metaphysica; videlicet quia harum quaelibet unam duma taxit; illae duplicem veniabant abstractionem. Ac nos hactenus de iis tantum Mathematicis egimus, quae syncereae, puraeque Mathematicae dicuntur. Sunt vero praeter ha. sine, quae mixtae nuncupantur, propertia, quod inter Physiologiam, et pure Mathematicae mediae sint, eorumque obiepta partim ad Naturalem Philosophum, partim ad Arithmetica, vel Geometram spectent; ut Musica et Perspectiva. Numerus enim Sonorus, circa quem Musica versatur, ex parte quidem numeri Arithmeticae quidpiam est; ex parte Sonori, Physicam.»
45 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum..., a. 5 (ibid., p. 34).
46 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... (ibid., p. 48): «Quae autem in iis tractantur, ad quinque genera, seu capita reduci possunt. Pars una, epistolarum, Poeticae et Rhetoricae scriptionem continet. Altera, disserendi praecipue Tertia, Civilem, Moralemque doctrinan. Quarta, rerum Naturalium Quinta, Transnaturalium scientiam.»
47 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum..., (ibid., p. 50-52).
was almost completely achieved, although not in a uniform way. The whole field of Physiology is divided into ten parts: 1) the eight books of Physica; 2) de Caelo; 3) de Generatione; 4) Meteororum and an absent book on metals and stones, that can be substituted—he says—by Theophrastus, Plinius and Albert the Great; 5) de Anima; 6) the complement of de Anima (de senso, somno, vita et morte, etc.); 7) Animalium historia, in spite—he adds—of its historical rather than scientific character; 8 - 10) the three parts of de partibus animalium.

It would be possible (although not very wise to lean on entirely or exclusively) to compare Fonseca’s plan already mentioned with Góis’ Proemium. Manuel de Góis also aims to give students a systematisation of the Complete Aristotle, and he was fairly successful as regards Physiology. According to Góis, however, there was currently no prohibition on replacing Aristotle in matters he has not dealt with. If a scientific concern is to be preferred to the historical one, Aristotle seems to be mainly a path to attain a global view of reality in its various dimensions.

2. Two things are to be concluded. It is by now obvious that Metaphysics or «Transnaturalium scientia» was to be offered within the frame of the Cursus. As António Martins has noticed, one should not think that Fonseca’s Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics was to be placed among the Coimbra Commentaries, thus explaining the fact that no commentary on the Metaphysics was written within such an editorial project. In his Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics, one year after his Physics’ Commentary and sixteen years after the publication, by Fonseca, of the first volume of his Commentary on Metaphysics, Manuel de Góis repeated at least three times his intention of writing a text on Metaphysics.

As far as Fonseca’s contribution is concerned, we are struck by the fact that the Coimbra Commentary on Aristotle’s Dialectics appeared only in 1606, two years after the publication by Gaspar Coelho of an ‘unauthorised’ edition that seems to have been launched by an unusual publishing campaign. This fact, along with the contested originality of Fonseca’s Dialectical Institutions conceived as an introduction to Philosophy, seems to indicate, as A. Martins has noted, a divergence among Coimbra Jesuits about on how to deal with Logic.

This is not too much to speculate if we assume that some kind of a wider philosophical divergence explains the reason why Fonseca was not connected to the Cursus Conimbricensis. Perhaps this supposition is not totally unavailing, as we possess a letter, written by Father Francisco de

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48 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum.... (ibid., p. 48); cfr. supra n. 46.
50 See MARTINS, A. - «Conimbricenses», in Logos..., vol 1: 1113.
Gouveia (1596) to the General of the Jesuits, where we may notice a sort of ideological difficulty related to the composition of the Commentary on Metaphysics 51: (1) Manuel de Góis was ordered to write the whole Arts Course («todo el Curso de Artes»); (2) in some of his texts prepared for the Press he was not already considering a study of Metaphysics but he also follows common opinions acknowledged in the Schools; (3) he planned to harmonize Metaphysics with Logic in a brief and more acceptable way; (4) the order to compose the compendium on Metaphysics was given by the Father General to Fonseca, and Góis was asking through Gouveia for advice regarding whether he eventually ought to consider Metaphysics; (5) Fonseca was a slow worker and Father Gouveia was afraid that the Course would be incomplete («imperfecto»); (6) Gouveia seems to suggest that the Father General could allow both to write their own Commentaries and then he would decide which one would be more suitable; (7) but Gouveia also mentions to the General the opinion of an aid, Father Manuel Roiz, who thinks Manuel de Góis was the man to take the job, given the fact that Fonseca had a few uncommon opinions that Góis, being more orthodox, rejected in what he was publishing.

As we know, Fonseca was not so slow that he could not accomplish his Commentary on Metaphysics. From that letter it seems to us that his metaphysical views had given rise to a certain opposition or perplexity in some Company circles. Was the opposition objective? In a letter where he rejected this censorship it is possible to read at least one of the opinions in dispute, dealing with God’s efficient causality, but it is also clear that Fonseca says he has never taught such a thing, namely, he has never said that God the Creator acquired «simpliciter et absolute» a positive mode and he has never defended a virtual distinction between the act of God’s will and His act of Creation 52.

51 See GOMES, J. E. - Introdução, XLIX, n. 1: «Otra dificultad se ofrece sobre los Comentarios de la Metafisica porque el Pe. Manuel de Goes tenia a su cargo hazerlos por le estar encomendado coperior todo el Curso de Artes y ja en los Physicos y en los de Coelo y en los de Generatione y de Anima que tiene para imprirme se remite a la Metaphysica, y va siempre có las opiniones comunes y recibidas en las escuelas y [?] uniformidad de las opiniones en toda esta obra y en la Logica e ade ser mas breve porque se ade remetir a la Metafisica y est ade ser mas acepto en las escuelas. Por otra parte tengo entendido que el Pe Fonseca có licencia de V. P. determina hazer copenhio de su Metaphysica pero se leer en nuestras escuelas y el Pe Goes dessea saber la determinacion de V. P. para cesser de su intento y disponer las cosas de otra manera, no haziendo mencion de Metaphysica. Por otra parte el Pe Fonseca es muy vagoarse en su còposicion y asi se puede temer que ni el acabe ni el otro còponga por su respecto y quedemos con el curso imperfecto. Vea V. P. se sera conveniente que cada uno haga sus comenitarios y despues se vera cuales se deva leer en las escuelas. Porque el Pe Fonseca tiene muchas opiniones contra la comun, y el Pe Goes va có las recibidas en las escuelas y refuta en lo que esta ynpreso algunas opiniones del Pe Fonseca sin nombrarle por le guardar el devido respecto. EIP. Manuel Roiz que fue asis-tente desea mucho que el Pe Goes compenga la Metafisica por las razones que apuntó».

52 See GOMES, J. E. - Introdução, L, n. 1: «Qâto a lo 2º, la censura que agora viene
3. As far as those at the Collegium Conimbricensis were concerned, good Catholic faith ought to be acquired after Aristotle’s text had been soundly interpreted. What does this mean? Coimbra’s approach to later medieval metaphysics was not really in total agreement with Loyola’s prescription. The masters enjoyed considerable liberty in their task of creating a Christian philosophy. This certainly explains a certain Scotist mentality and anti-Nominalist spirit present in their textbooks. In order to explain Aristotle, medieval philosophers (some of them newly published) would also have had a role. This fact, along with the reaction of many philosophers against the humanist reading of Ancient Philosophy, explains the reason why medieval assumptions, problems and terminology seem to be revived here.

Indeed, Eckhard Kessler has noted an absence of dogmatism in Psychology, thus asserting that «in many questions that were controversial between Thomist and Scotists of the time — e. g., the distinction between the agent and possible intellect, the necessity of the intelligible species, the intellection of singulars and the manner in which the intelligible species is produced— both positions were considered at least defensible if not equally probable, and no dogmatic decision was arrived at» 53. The same was noted by Randles on the substance of the sky 54 and P. Porro has also paid attention to Sebastião do Couto’s hesitation as regards the Aristotelian category «quando» 55. In his Commentary, Father Góis observes that it is preferable not to assert something when any doubt seems to occur 56. If Dominican Thomism was still taught at Vespers between 1541 and 1565,
after that period such a predominance was superseded by what was called an eclectical Thomism. This explains the importance for instance of Giles of Rome, an influence yet to be studied. However, other authors were well also known and deserve further attention. For instance, when dealing with the problem of the eternity of the world in his rejection of Aristotle's position, Manuel de Góis does the same also with Aquinas soft interpretation of Aristotle. This is interesting enough because it corresponds exactly to the position of Henry of Ghent against Bacon's, Bonaventure's and Aquinas' hesitations over how to interpret Aristotle. However, if Henry thought that it was theoretically wrong to defend both the theological doctrine of Creation and the philosophical doctrine of the eternity of the world, Góis admits such a logical possibility. Needless to say this was the Duns Scotus' and William of Ockham's strategy.

III

1. The accommodation of new materials and new religious imperatives shaped this period as a «complicated and confused one, and the diversity of the philosophical materials, collected from different schools and traditions, makes it burdensome to exhume the position of a given author» and this may be «the reason why philosophical discussion declined in manuals and textbooks».

How is it possible to advance in such a dramatic trend? It is correct to say that as medieval philosophers had worked out their doctrines by doing commentaries, Coimbra commentators did the same? The answer seems to deserve a considered judgement. We propose to open a direction by alluding to one case.

2. Let us choose the already mentioned Henry of Ghent as a possible exemple, since in 1518 there appeared a printed edition of his two major works. In addition to this we may remember that Henry was Thomas Aquinas' first true critic, and from the 13th to the 18th century his influence never really decreased. He was criticized by the early Thomistic school, thoroughly read in 14th and 15th centuries, edited in the 16th and

57 DIAS, J. S. da S. - Correntes... 441.
58 See MACKEN, R. - «La temporalité radicale de la créature selon Henri de Gand», in Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale 38 (1971) 211.
again in the 17th century, adopted by the Servites in that same century, and in March 12, 1649 at Heidelberg University he was formally considered by Hoest von Landenburg a «modern» author. Our Coimbra Commentator gives him the significant title (since Henry was engaged in Tempier’s Condemnation of 1277) «Doctor Sorbonicus, auctoritatem Parisiensis articuli».

Coimbra was certainly aware of Henry’s work mainly of his 15 Quodlibets. All of these were quoted, whereas of the Summa’s 75 articles only 20 were mentioned, and even then in an incomplete form. Should we explain this by the fact that only the «de Deo section» of Henry’s Summa was written, and the Coimbra Commentaries were intended to be a philosophical rather than a purely theological work?

In the whole Commentary on Ethics Henry of Ghent is only quoted twice. This seems to indicate that the Coimbra Commentaries ignored his real and historical importance for Moral Philosophy. We may suppose that they did not thoroughly study his Quodlibets, although they must have known them. In the two quotations we find an interesting case confirming our suspicion. When dealing with passions (D. VI, q. 1, a. 2) Góis does not hesitate in taking sides with Henry of Ghent instead of with Aquinas. The question was if concupiscence and irascibility were two really different potencies. Saint Thomas was said to promote a real distinction (and this position—Góis points out—is almost a commonplace amongst philosophers from Aristotle to Henry) Manuel de Góis then adds another last, familiar question: which one has more dignity? In Quodlibet VIII, q. 15—Góis answers—Henry of Ghent prefers concupiscence whereas Saint Thomas in De Veritate q. 25, a. 2 seems to embrace a different opinion and gives his preference to irascibility. It is true—he goes on—that we may understand Thomas’ choice, but Aristotle in the eight book of Historia Animalium gives rational strength to Henry’s position. But are Góis’ philosophical rea-

65 See ID. - ibid.
67 GÓIS, M. de - In libros Ethiconum... (ed. Andrade 182): «Haec dubitatio ita explicanda est, vt dicamus ex parte objecti, atque adeo simpliciter appetitum concupiscibilem
sons here adduced really related to Henry's *Quodlibet* VIII, q. 15? If one reads Henry's question—which by the way does not ask about the superiority of any appetite—one has to give a relatively negative answer. It is true that Henry says what his Portuguese interpreter actually reads \(^{68}\), but Góis misses all the context, both metaphysical and historical, that Henry was dealing with. Without any allusion to Avicenna's *Metaphysics* (here an authoritative text for Henry \(^{69}\)), the student would also receive no information on the relation between rationality and sensibility, above all he would not be able to appreciate how the discussion was deeply entangled with Henry's important philosophy of free will \(^{70}\).

It is fair to say that if a Renaissance Portuguese student was not informed on Henry's philosophy he would be at least prepared to identify a controversy and to quote a correct text and authority suitable to neutralize it. Shall we say then that the Commentary's main concern is Aristotle and not a medieval metaphysician? We propose to answer this question by alluding to a problem, instead of by studying the role of an author. Again, for Henry's sake we have chosen the Aristotelian theme of Prime Matter. The first and more important of Henry's allusions to this problem appears in *Quodlibet* I, q. 10, which, by the way, is precisely the question Góis quotes when asking if matter, by divine power, was possible without any substantial form \(^{71}\). This is indeed a better use of Henry's work than that one we just have mentioned. We were struck by the fact that, like Henry, our Commentator also links this theme with the problem of the distinction between essence and existence \(^{72}\). Incidentally, we do not want to deny a direct knowl-

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\(^{68}\) HENRICUS de GANDAVO. *Quodlibet* VIII, Q. 15 (ed. Badius: Paris 1518) fol. 327 r T - v: «Quae in hoc ex parte objecti differunt, quod concupiscibilis dicitur esse circa bonum ut est delectabile, quia appetit in ipso bono decorlctare. Irascibilis vero dicitur esse circa bonum arduum quia appetit in ipsa superare omnia contraria. Est enim irascibilis vindex concupiscibilis. (...) secundum hoc concupiscibilis sit (...) principalis potentia et irascibilis sit quaedam vis in ipsa et ex ipsa orta...»


\(^{71}\) GÓIS, M. de. *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. IX, q. 6, a. 1 (ed. Coimbra 1592 p. 178).

\(^{72}\) GÓIS, M. de. *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. IX, q. 6, a 2 (ed Coimbra 1592 p. 180): «... persuasum habent existentiam non a sola forma provenire sed tam materiam quam caetera entia ut unumquodque ab alici distinguitur, ita aliquam sibi propriam existentiam vendicare (...). Existentia cuiusque non distinguitur ab essentia, nisi ut mo-
edge of Henry by the Portuguese Jesuits, but one must remember that such an allusive style may also be explained by the dissemination of anthologies, the kind of texts we referred to above.

We shall be dealing then with chapters 8 and 9 of *Physics* Book I (191 a 23 - 192 b 2), two and half pages of The Revised Oxford Translation \(^{73}\), which were divided by Góis' into twelve texts, with 13 smaller sections, occupying 57 pages of the Coimbra edition. According to Ross' revised text «the whole substance of book 1 (....) is the establishment of matter, form, and privation as the factors involved in all change. Aristotle's chief claim is that he has for the first time exhibited clearly the distinction between matter and privation, and the necessity of both to any account of change...» \(^{74}\). In his analysis of chapters 8 and 9, Ross pinpoints the Aristotelian discussion of the difficulties felt by the Ancient philosophers, as well as his reflections on the first principles of nature \(^{75}\) — Ross' study could have had its counterpart in the *explanatio* of the Coimbra edition \(^{76}\) — and he also understands his duties as a Commentator \(^{77}\), first by doing philosophical and historical research (Quellengeschichte), searching for the literal meaning and elucidating cross-references, and, secondly, by insisting again on analytical work well founded in critical philological and philosophical training:

The 57 printed pages of Coimbra are in contrast to the 10 pages Ross dedicated to both chapters. Still, although if Ross may share some of the Coimbra concerns, he would not follow the Portuguese Jesuits. These Commentators preferred to deal with the following 12 questions: does matter exist within (insit) physical things (qu. 1) \(^{78}\); if matter can be correctly defined, known and named (qu. 2) \(^{79}\); how matter is related with potency (qu. 3) \(^{80}\); if matter tends towards form (qu. 4) \(^{81}\); if matter belongs to the essence of natural composites (qu. 5) \(^{82}\); if by divine power there can be matter without form (qu. 6) \(^{83}\); if privation is or is not a being (qu. 7) \(^{84}\); if

dus rei a re, ergo ut unumquodque essentiam ab alio distinctam habet ita et distinctam sibique propria existentiam...»


\(^{74}\) Aristotelis *Physics*. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by David Ross (Oxford 1979) 24.


\(^{79}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 2 (ibid., p. 160-164).

\(^{80}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 3 (ibid., p. 164-168).

\(^{81}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 4 (ibid., p. 169-171).

\(^{82}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 5 (ibid., p. 171-177).

\(^{83}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (ibid., p. 177-183).

\(^{84}\) GÓIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 7 (ibid., p. 184-187).
privation is the true principle of natural things (qu. 8) \(^{85}\); if, besides matter, substantial form is needed in whatsoever natural things (qu. 9) \(^{86}\); if the definition of substantial form is a correct and true one (qu. 10) \(^{87}\); if from substantial form and matter a one is formed (qu. 11) \(^{88}\); and finally, if all or only natural forms derive from matter by subjective potency (qu. 12) \(^{89}\).

Since Philosophy is here presented to students as a series of controversies aspiring for solution, it is obvious that it is not exclusively the distinction between matter and privation and their importance to any account of change that occupies our Jesuit, but mainly the vast and complex historical controversy over the metaphysical and theological relationship between Matter and Form. We may even conjecture by the size of these 12 questions which were considered to be the more significant: there are questions answered in one or two pages (qu. 10, 8), the discussion of the two last questions occupies almost twenty pages. Being the culmination of book I, this fact means that anthropology in its own right (the question was about human soul) was within the domain of Physics. It is by now clear to us that this huge shift from the study of the factors involved in change to a theological and metaphysical discussion of the matter/form relationship was almost completely undermined by what is now called medieval philosophy. However, this is done without any explicit awareness of historical difference.

It is only fair to conclude that Aristotle is not the only «maître à penser» and that to comment on him meant at least taking him as an occasion for doing Philosophy. What kind of Philosophy? Let us follow question 6, a very important one as it exemplifies this close relation between Philosophy and Theology and between Medieval and Sixteenth Century Philosophy. As we have already said, the author asks whether by divine power there can be matter without form. We are facing a problem that goes back at least to medieval Augustinian tradition \(^{90}\). The question’s structure, in four articles, is a medieval one: the first article lists the thinkers and their arguments for both parts—Hugues, Peter Lombard, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Durandus, Capreolus, Caietanus, Giles of Rome, Herveu of Nedellec, also «aliique permulti» against Henry of Ghent, Duns Scotus, Richard, Gabriel, Gregory, and also «aliique non pauci». Furthermore, it displays five arguments against the possibility of matter existing without form by divine intervention, and three other arguments in favour of that possibility. It is important to observe that authors and arguments are textually separated,

\(^{85}\) GOIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum*... L. I, c. VIII, q. 8 (ibid., p. 187-189).
\(^{86}\) GOIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum*... L. I, c. VIII, q. 9 (ibid., p. 189-191).
\(^{87}\) GOIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum*... L. I, c. VIII, q. 10 (ibid., p. 192-193).
\(^{88}\) GOIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum*... L. I, c. VIII, q. 11 (ibid., p. 193-201).
\(^{89}\) GOIS, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum*... L. I, c. VIII, q. 12 (ibid., p. 201-211).
and the effect of such a procedure is a summary systematisation of the arguments in dispute.

Article 2 explains further both sides («utriusque sententiae fundamenta paulo explicatius proponenda sunt»)\(^{91}\). Was it admissible among students to work only with the first and easier presentation? We do not know. Students have their own way of challenging the teacher’s recommendations! Nevertheless, it is in article 2 that we find Henry’s position against the alleged «Thomisticae opinionis fundamentum»\(^{92}\). Significantly, ancient authors like Plato, Dionysius and Boethius are quoted in order to deepen the Thomistic positions, but the reason why Góis does not follow such a position is because he has specific views about the essence/existence relationship as well as about the difference between creation and conservation. Is all existence—he asks—received through form? A theological and a metaphysical reason are here entangled in order to admit the possibility for matter to exist without form. First: matter was created by God and from that point of view matter may exist without form\(^{93}\); second: existence is form’s last actuality\(^{94}\). The first reason is only discussed in article 3 where one finds an allusion to the beginning of *Genesis*. However, what is really significant here is the fact that another shift seems to have happened, in fact a really modern one, a subtle movement from metaphysics to physics without losing theology on the horizon. That is the case of questioning if the difference between creation and conservation was compatible with the admission of the possibility of matter existing without form\(^{95}\). Coimbra doctrine on the difference between creation and conservation has a few distinctions which we shall omit here to concentrate only on the part associated with the form/matter relationship\(^{96}\). Father Góis writes that

\(^{91}\) Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (ibid., p. 179).

\(^{92}\) Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (ibid., p. 180).

\(^{93}\) Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6, a. 3 (ibid., p. 181): «...asserendumque posse materiam divina virtute sine omni forma substantiali consistere, id quod fieri adhibente Deo maiorum concursum, quo quidquid forma materiam actuando praestat, ipse in genere efficientis causae supplieat».

\(^{94}\) See Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (ibid., p. 180-181).

\(^{95}\) Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. I, c. VIII, q. 6 (ibid., p. 181): «Sed opponet alius: Id quod Deus creavit immediate conservavit sicut enim nihil cum Deo etiam ut instrumentum, concurrer ad creandum, ita neque ad conservandum. Cum igitur Deus materiam creavit, eadem per se immediate conservavit ac sine ullo formae concursu quem erga materiam omni forma spoliatam compensari oporteat. Respondendum tamen esti cum Deo creante nihil efficienser concurreat, quia conferre esse ex nihilo infinitum virtutem arguit, nihil tamen obstare quominus ad esse rem, quae creatur, concurreat creatura in alio causae genere, quomodo in prima rerum molitione cum Deus corpora coelestia et elementa creavit tam materia ad eorum formas excipiendas, sustentandasque quam formae ad materiam actuandam et foveandas concurrentur».

\(^{96}\) Góis, M. de - *In octo libros Physicorum...* L. VIII, c. II, q. 1, a. 4 (ibid., p. 711): «Nam conservatio qua forma materiam conservat et eiusdem materiae creation non possunt inter se re ipsa non distinguiri. Quod icta probatur: Forma eatenus materiam conservare dicitur, quatenus eam actuatur, haec vero actuatio non est aliud quam modus quidam quo forma sese in materiam insinuat, sequi illi donat, qui modus, ut in 2. libro disserimus, est
there is a certain real distinction between creation and conservation, the latter being the physical structure of all creatures constituted by matter and form. Form conserves matter, although form itself is distinguished from matter and from creation since creation is creation of matter. This theological frame does not ignore a physical one. Theology must study matter as a certain kind of being independent of form, but in our physical world matter is nothing without form, since the law of conservation belongs to form. Real things are concrete things, having their own specific time. Conservation is thus the first law of the physical world qua physical, to which we must add a triple bond of essence, existence and duration. It is true that essence has preeminence, but since existence is understood as a being outside its own causes (extra suas causas) this indicates that essence and existence cannot be separated, and that Creation is thus not only related to existence but concerns also essence. Since there is no real distinction between essence and existence but only a modal one, then a program of a metaphysics of essence is also a metaphysics of existence, thus explaining article 4, wherein we may find a clear negation of the basis of strict essentialism.

Calling existence form’s last actuality (postremam actualitatem) is

idem re cum forma et ex consequenti realiter a materia dissidet cum (...) alia res sit materia alia forma. Quo patet conservationem qua forma materiam conservat, distinguere tum a materia tum a creatione quare est idem re cum materia creatae.«

97 GOIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. IV, c. 14, q. 2, a. 2, (ibid., p. 549); «... colligit essentiam, existentiam et durationem, quae tria in qualibet re creata nuncuo quodam inter se colligata reperiuntur. Eum servare ordinem ut essentia prior sit, secundum locum habeat existentiam, tertium ac postremum duratio.»

98 GOIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. IV, c. 14, q. 2, a. 2, (ibid., p. 549); «... respondemus existentiam duci postremam actualitatem et modum rei, quia unaqueque forma et perfectio habet sese ad existentiam ut potentia ad actum quatenus potest secundum se existere et non existere neque potentialitatem exuit dum non stat actu sub existentia. Hoc vero modo etiam duratio ad existentiam comparata est in potestate ad illam, ut ad ulteriorem gradum, quatenus sumpta secundum suam existentiam est indifferentem ut ponatur in rebus. Quo sit ut existens maneat ultimus modus rei utpote cui ipsa quoque duratio praecipitur et quae existens dicitur commodata invicem mutua appellacione ut sicut existentia a duratone durans ita duratio ab existentia existens nuncupetur.»


100 GOIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. I, c. 9, q. 6, a. 2, (ibid., p. 180): «Existentia ciusque non distinguitur ab essentia nisi ut modus rei a re...»

101 GOIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. I, c. 9, q. 6, a. 4, (ibid., p. 183): «Nam si natura communis per se extra singularia existeret, esset ac non esset singularis; non esset quia ita supponitur: esset quia existere in rerum natura sicuti operari et produci non convenit superioribus nisi per inferiora, quandoquidem ut existere est ultima cuiusque rei actualitas, ita non nisi ultimo perfecta et terminatis in sua serie quali sunt sola singularia primo convenire debet caeteris vero ipsorum merito ac beneficio. Quod vero ad suppositi rationem attinet repugnat etiam dari naturam absque supposito cui ininitatur quia subsisteret per se tanquam a nullo dependens, quod in rebus creatis nulli praeterquam supposito convenit simulque non subsisteret utpote suppositi adminiculo cares...»
equivalent to understanding existence as duration (sicut existentia a
duratione durans ita duratio ab existentia existens) — an idea widespread
among the Company, which our Commentator could have found in Giles
of Rome or in Duns Scotus. Existence is also the basis of all second
acts, a perspective which amounts to a significant change in understand-
ing time, from something of an abstract nature to something as the dura-
tion of the thing itself. The theoretical principle here at stake is the
identification with existence, and certainly this is not what Aristotle had
thought, he himself being more inclined to measure movement itself or the
duration of movement rather than being concerned with permanence of
real things.

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the Coimbra Commentaries, a group of eight commentaries of
Aristotle, published in the Portuguese town of Coimbra between 1592 and 1606, that knew
a large editorial success through Europe. The reception of the Medieval philosopher Henry
of Ghent is considered as a case-study but attention is also paid to geographical, cultural
and scholarly humanistic conditions that helped the Commentaries to create their own
philosophical style.

RESUMEN

El artículo versa sobre los Comentarios de Coimbra, un grupo de ocho comentarios
de Aristóteles, publicados en esa ciudad portuguesa entre 1592 y 1606, y que alcanzaron
un gran éxito editorial en toda Europa. El autor analiza la aceptación por los Conimbricenses
de las tesis del filósofo medieval Enrique de Gante, prestando además atención a las condi-
ciones geográficas, culturales y humanísticas que contribuyeron al estilo filosófico propio
de los Comentarios.

102 There is a difference, see GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. IV, c. 14, q.
2, a. 2, (ibid., p. 548): «... durationem differre ab existentia non quidem realiter (...) sed
tamen ex natura rei (...); ex natura rei distinguir ab existentia continuitatis motus. Primum
quia ratio existentiae in eo tantum consistit ut res sit extra suas causas, duratio vero
significat protensionem seu moram rei in suo esse...»
103 See PORRO, P. - op. cit. 468.
104 ID. - ibid. 464.
105 GÓIS, M. de - In octo libros Physicorum... L. VII, c. 2, q. 2, a. 2, (ibid., p. 684): «... existentia sit fundamentum omnium actuum secundorum, nihil posse ex se ullam edere
actionem nisi existat.»