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Book Review: Guillelmus de Aragonia, De nobilitate animi, ed. and trans. William D. Paden and Mario Trovato

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The “edges” of the book also raise a number of difficulties. Was there, for example, as the book’s title states, a “renaissance médiévale du scepticisme” at all? By “renaissance” presumably a revival is meant that involved others besides John, but they do not appear here, and Grellard complicates matters by writing that the touchstone of this study is one of those rare medievals, if not the only one, to relate his own philosophy to Cicero’s practical neo-Academicism (“un des rares médiévaux, sinon le seul . . . à rapporter sa démarche philosophique à la pratique néo-académicienne, exemplifiée par Cicéron,” 12). However, Grellard describes his book as the first of two steps towards putting together the history of skepticism in the centuries between Cicero (and Augustine) and the Renaissance of the fifteenth century. Much more than the influence of the Academy will need to be explored, as Grellard fully realizes, for skepticism in the Middle Ages involves nominalism and also the negative theology of Pseudo-Denis. The pricing of the book by Les Belles Lettres—35 euros—is exemplary and should make many other publishers of scholarly monographs blush, although the volume is so tightly bound that it needs to be held open with two hands.

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GUILLELMUS DE ARAGONIA, *De nobilitate animi*, ed. and trans. William D. Paden and Mario Trovato. (Harvard Studies in Medieval Latin 2.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. Pp. xvi, 193. \$40. ISBN: 978-0-674-06812-4. doi:[10.1017/S0038713415000044](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0038713415000044)

Guillelmus de Aragonia’s *De nobilitate animi* offers a definition of “nobility” that is rooted in Aristotelian philosophy and that responds to various currents of scholastic debates about the nature of the human soul. Written during a period in which legal definitions of nobility had not yet been formalized in early modern Europe, Guillelmus’s philosophical exploration of the definition of nobility may have been partially motivated by events surrounding the disputes between the Union of Aragon and Peter III and Alfonso III of Aragon in the late thirteenth century. In any case, according to Guillelmus, “nobility of soul is nothing else than wisdom in reflection and studiousness in action” (65). As Paden and Trovato point out in their introduction, this definition seems to be the focal point of a sociopolitical theory whose aim is “to show that moral education is the only remedy for the disease of human nature” (19). The *De nobilitate animi* thus provides an interesting lens through which one might investigate late-medieval developments in the areas of political philosophy and philosophical anthropology that “can be traced back to Greek antiquity and forward to Dante and beyond” (25).

This critical edition of Guillelmus de Aragonia’s *De nobilitate animi* presents a Latin text that references six manuscripts dating from the late thirteenth century to the fifteenth century. The Latin text is based primarily on the oldest of these manuscripts, which Paden and Trovato date to within “twenty years or so” (xv) of Guillelmus’s completion of the work. Corrections and addenda to this basic text, as well as variants between the manuscripts, are carefully noted and discussed in an appendix (115–51). Also included as appendices are a bibliography of primary and secondary sources and useful notes concerning source material for and contemporaneous analogues to Guillelmus’s arguments.

Paden and Trovato’s introduction (1–56) provides studies of the dating of the *De nobilitate animi* as well as its manuscripts; the life and works of Guillelmus de Aragonia; the historical and intellectual context for Guillelmus’s discussion of the nature of nobility; and affiliations between the manuscript variants noted in the appendix. The attention devoted to the material transmission of the text suggests that the intended audience for this edition is historians of rhetoric and philosophy who are already familiar with the broad contours

of the context in which it was written. These scholars will appreciate the clarity of Paden and Trovato's brief discussion of the historical and intellectual context for Guillelmus's work. However, this discussion is also pitched at such a level that it offers an orientation to the text that would be appropriate for a general audience interested in the history of the concept of nobility.

Paden and Trovato describe their English translation as "idiomatic" in that it departs from "a strictly literal rendering by reducing certain effects of polysyndeton and redundancy" (56), and they introduce square brackets only for the relatively few departures from the Latin that involve significant editorial interventions. This method leaves room to quibble with translation choices regarding specific Latin terms—for example, on p. 67, *precognitio* is rendered as "precognition," while *cognitio* is rendered as "experience." However, on the whole, Paden and Trovato offer a graceful translation that is easy to read in English and that effectively captures the fluency of Guillelmus's Latin while conveying the intended meaning.

In short, Paden and Trovato have offered a carefully executed and inviting critical edition of the *De nobilitate animi* along with a broadly informative and useful discussion of the historical context and significance of the work.

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JEFFREY F. HAMBURGER and GABRIELA SIGNORI, eds., *Catherine of Siena: The Creation of a Cult*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013. Pp. ix, 338; 31 black-and-white figures and 2 tables. €90. ISBN: 978-2-503-54415-1.

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The politics of sanctity were alive and well in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as this collection of fourteen essays related to the cult and canonization of Catherine of Siena (1347–80) demonstrates. Catherine was a powerful and well-connected figure in her last years, but power and connections have not always been enough to guarantee canonization, and, indeed, it took over eighty years before the Sienese woman was raised to the altar by a fellow Sienese, Pius II, on 29 June 1461. Several times over the course of these eight decades Catherine had been close to canonization, only to come up short. Among the most interesting aspects of the spread of the cult of Catherine was what the editors of this collection of essays in their introduction describe as the "multi-media offensive" organized by some of Catherine's adherents to promote her cause. Hence, *Catherine of Siena: The Creation of a Cult* contributes to a variety of disciplines: hagiography; art history; manuscripts and prints; literary studies; and the history of spirituality.

At least some of the difficulty in getting Catherine canonized had to do with the competing images of the saint. Was Catherine to be thought of more as a typical female contemplative, or did she have an active apostolic role, something far less common in the annals of women saints? Were her virtues or her miracles more important? Was she primarily to be honored as a Dominican saint, especially as a patron of Dominican reform, or was she to have a more universal appeal? What was the role of the city of Siena in fostering her canonization? Was Catherine really a stigmatic, despite the fact that the marks of the crucified Lord did not visibly appear on her body? Was she basically illiterate, although miraculously gifted with the ability to read and write at times, or was she actually able to read and even write in the vernacular? All these issues were debated for more than a century after her death and are examined in these essays.

Catherine's fame today largely rests on her own writings (the *Dialogo*, the hundreds of letters, and to a lesser extent her prayers), as well as on the *Legenda major* written by her disciple and confessor Raymond of Capua. Raymond's work plays a role in a number