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## THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES (NICOMACHEAN ETHICS, BOOK VI) IN THREE WORKS OF POPULARIZATION OF ARISTOTELIAN THOUGHT

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### Resumen

Me propongo observar en este trabajo cómo la doctrina aristotélica de las virtudes intelectuales expuesta en el libro VI de la *Ética a Nicómaco* llegó a formularse en un corpus de tres compendios de la *Ética* y dos florilegios de filosofía moral que circularon en la Castilla de los siglos XIII-XV. Estos textos pertenecen a la polifacética literatura medieval de divulgación que pretendía ofrecer al estudiante de la Facultad de Artes o al círculo más amplio de la nobleza ansiosa de erudición el acceso a las doctrinas de los autores de la Antigüedad clásica, especialmente las de Aristóteles, «el Filósofo», primera *auctoritas* filosófica estudiada en las universidades medievales. El objeto que me propongo analizar aquí valdrá por lo tanto como ilustración para entender un fenómeno más amplio: la transmisión de contenidos doctrinales aristotélicos mediante obras de divulgación, la cual constituye una de las modalidades más interesantes de la recepción del *corpus aristotelicum* en Europa a partir del siglo XIII.

**Palabras clave:** Aristóteles, *Ética*, virtudes intelectuales, divulgación

### Abstract

This paper aims to analyse how the Aristotelian theory of the intellectual virtues (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI) is formulated in a corpus of three compendia of Aristotle's *Ethics* and two anthologies of moral philosophy which circulated in Castile from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These texts belong to the multifaceted medieval literature of popularization, which hoped to offer students of the Faculty of Arts, and a larger circle of noblemen eager for knowledge, access to the doctrines of the authors of classical Antiquity, especially to those of Aristotle, "The Philosopher", the first *auctoritas* studied in medieval universities. The object of my analysis will therefore serve as an illustration of a larger phenomenon: the transmission of Aristotelian doctrines through works of popularization, which constitutes one of the most interesting modalities of reception of the *corpus aristotelicum* in Europe from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

**Key words:** Aristotle, *Ethics*, intellectual virtues, popularization

## 1. Introduction

In the following pages I will study how the Aristotelian doctrine of the intellectual virtues presented in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was transmitted through five works of philosophical popularization that were in circulation in Castile between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

With the term “popularization”, I will refer to texts meant to disseminate doctrinal contents under a form that rendered them more easily accessible, through the simplification of the original doctrines, the abbreviation or, on the contrary, the addition of further explanations. The character of such texts and the procedures that allowed them to fulfill their purpose remain to a great extent independent from their language—Latin for scholars and clerics, Castilian for lay nobility, although this distribution is far from systematic<sup>1</sup>—but the ways in which these texts modify the original works in order to facilitate their comprehension are identical in all cases.<sup>2</sup>

Despised for a long time, dubbed “compilation” literature, “borrowing or plagiarism” and even “second-hand” literature,<sup>3</sup> these works have recently become, after the pioneering studies of Jacqueline Hamesse,<sup>4</sup> the object of numerous studies,<sup>5</sup> whose authors have insisted on distinguishing several subgenres—anthologies, compendia, paraphrases, *tabulae*...—whose formal characteristics vary but which share the same function. The interest of such texts lies in the fact that they exercised their influence on broad sectors of society,<sup>6</sup> due to their intellectual and pecuniary accessibility, whereas the copies of the complete works of the *auctoritates*, few and expensive, were not read outside very reduced circles.

To exemplify the mechanisms of this outreach process, I will deal here with the specific and highly significant case of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, a key figure for the construction

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, the anthology entitled *Vademecum* of the library of Pedro Fernández de Velasco, Count of Haro, contains numerous texts written in Latin despite having been composed for twelve “hidalgos ancianos” of the hospital founded by the Count in Medina de Pomar. MUÑOZ JIMÉNEZ 2009.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Castilian compendium of the *Ethics* I will study below, I will focus on the modifications Nuño de Guzmán introduced in the Aristotelian text—additions, distortion, simplifications—rather than on the translation into Castilian. I will adopt a different standpoint from that of the authors of the miscellany *El saber i les llengües vernacles a l'època de Lull i Eiximenis. Estudis ICREA sobre vernacularització*, Barcelona: Abadía de Montserrat, 2012. However, my thesis dissertation devotes numerous pages to the Castilian translations of the *Ethics*, where I analyse the constitution of a philosophical vocabulary in Romance language.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to the FIDEM colloquium 2012, “La compilación del saber en la Edad Media”. MUÑOZ JIMÉNEZ (in press).

<sup>4</sup> Jacqueline Hamesse edited the main Aristotelian anthology disseminated in all medieval Europe, the *Parvi flores or Auctoritates Aristotelis*, HAMESSE 1974. She has authored numerous articles devoted to this kind of texts.

<sup>5</sup> This is the case of the works of the research group led by María José Muñoz Jiménez at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, “La literatura latina en extractos: florilegios y antologías de la Edad Media y el Renacimiento”. In 2012, FIDEM dedicated to this category of texts its annual conference, “La compilación del saber en la Edad Media”.

<sup>6</sup> These texts were widespread, not only among students, but also among preachers and, at the end of the Middle Ages, among the members of lay nobility.

of medieval philosophical thought.<sup>7</sup> In fact, from the origins of European universities in the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the works of Aristotle were part of the teaching programme of the Faculty of Arts, the first university cycle in which both liberal arts and moral philosophy were taught. The syllabus of such cycle gave rise to the flowering of the second-hand texts I have focused on here, which conveyed the doctrinal content of Aristotelian works to the students of the Faculty of Arts, albeit under a compiled and simplified form.

The corpus of Aristotelian popularization I will analyse in the following pages comprises texts in Latin and in Castilian. It is composed, on the one hand, of three compendia of the *Ethics*:

- The *Summa Alexandrinorum* is the Latin translation of an Arabic compendium of the *Ethics*, which is in turn the translation from the original Greek.<sup>8</sup> It was carried out by Herman, the German, in Toledo in 1243.<sup>9</sup>
- A Castilian version of the *Summa Alexandrinorum* is included in the *Libro del Tesoro*,<sup>10</sup> a Castilian translation of the *Livres dou Tresor* by Brunetto Latini finished in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>11</sup> a French encyclopaedia, which included the third<sup>12</sup> vernacular translation of the *Summa Alexandrinorum*;
- A Castilian compendium of the *Ethics*, or compendium of translations, composed by the humanist from Seville, Nuño de Guzmán. The text has been preserved in several manuscripts and two incunabula (Zaragoza 1488 and Seville 1493).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Latin medieval world accessed the *corpus aristotelicum* in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries thanks, first, to the Latin translations of Aristotle's natural philosophy, and later to the translations of his moral philosophy. By mid- 13<sup>th</sup> century, the complete translation of the *Ethics* made by Robert Grosseteste (1246) was already available, and replaced previous translations, *Ethica vetus* and *Ethica nova*.

<sup>8</sup> Both the Greek text and the Arabic translation of the *Summa Alexandrinorum* are lost. See D'ALVERNY 1982 and GENTILI 2006: these authors explain the successive transmission phases of the text, as well as the differences between two different compositions, the primitive version by Herman, the German, edited by C. Marchesi (MARCHESI 1904) and a clearer reelaboration, with a pedagogical purpose, edited by G.B. Fowler (FOWLER 1982). See also SACCENTI 2010, who expounds on the Neoplatonist theses implicit in the *Summa*.

<sup>9</sup> See FIDORA 2010. The text I will quote from is edited by C. Marchesi (MS Plut. 89 inf. 41 of the Library Mediceo-Laurenziana, Florence).

<sup>10</sup> I will quote from the edition by BALDWIN 1989.

<sup>11</sup> Brunetto composed two versions of the *Livres dou Tresor*—one during his stay in France, in 1260-67, the other after 1275, upon his return to Florence—but the Castilian translation corresponds to the first one. As to the sponsor of such translation, the manuscripts mention Alfonso X and Sancho IV, which leads Fernando Gómez Redondo to suggest that “No sería raro que tanto padre como hijo se interesaran por el *Tesoro* y quisieran vincularse al juego de significados que de la obra se desprende”. GÓMEZ REDONDO 1998: 864-866.

<sup>12</sup> The first vernacular version was probably that of Herman himself, who, according to the hypothesis in FIDORA, AKASOY 2002 (p. 92), would have translated the *Summa* from Arabic into Latin through Castilian. The second version was the Italian version by Taddeo Alderotti, which includes elements coming from the Latin version of Robert Grosseteste and the commentary on the *Ethics* by Thomas Aquinas. In turn, Brunetto Latini would have translated the *Summa* into French consulting also Alderotti's Italian version. The Castilian text of the *Summa* included in the *Libro del Tesoro* is the result of this complex tradition. See GENTILI 2006, p. 253.

<sup>13</sup> I will quote from the text printed in Seville in 1493, but at the end of this article I will indicate significant differences between the printed text and the text of the six extant manuscripts. See RUSSELL and PAGDEN 1974, although, focused on the identity of the author of the compendium, this article will not analyse the relationships between the text and its indirect source, the Aristotelian *Ethics*, or its direct source, a Catalan compendium extant in the manuscript 296 of

On the other hand, two anthologies include Aristotelian materials:

- The *Parvi flores* or *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, an anthology composed by the Franciscan scholar Johannes de Fonte, a lector in the *studium generale* of his order in Montpellier at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> There are six extant manuscripts in Spain.<sup>15</sup>
- The *Vademecum* of the library of the Count of Haro is an anthology composed of the works contained in the personal library of Count don Pedro Fernández de Velasco, among which was the anthology of the *Auctoritates Aristotelis*, containing extracted quotes from each of the ten books of the *Ethics*. The *Vademecum* constitutes, therefore, an anthology of anthologies, since its author made a selection among the quotes from the *Auctoritates*.<sup>16</sup>

I will analyse here how these second- or third-hand texts transmit the doctrine of the intellectual virtues explained in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which, due to its complexity, made necessary, from the moment of the reception of the complete text in mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, an adaptation that made it accessible to the audience, composed of the students and lecturers of the Faculty of Arts first, and later of the noblemen interested in moral philosophy, such as the Count of Haro and the Marquis of Santillana.

I will briefly recall the main elements of the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue, moral and intellectual, as it is exposed in the *Ethics*:

**1 - The two parts of the soul** (Book I): Aristotle distinguishes between two parts of the soul, one endowed with reason, whose virtues are the intellectual virtues, and the other only obedient to reason—whose virtues, called “moral” have to do with appetites, pleasure and sadness.

**2 - Definition of the moral virtue** (Book II): within this framework, the moral virtue is defined as—quoting from the modern translation by José Luis Martínez-Calvo—“un hábito de elegir el medio relativo a nosotros en acciones y emociones, determinado por la razón y tal como lo determinaría un hombre prudente” (CALVO MARTÍNEZ: 18).

The originality of this definition lies in the role of the intellectual faculties in determining what is virtuous. This role is confirmed at the beginning of Book VI: virtue is a medium between two extremes, and this medium is determined by upright reason. Thus formulated the Latin translation of Robert Grosseteste (1246): “Oportet medium eligere, neque superhabundanciam neque defectum; medium autem est ut **ratio recta dicit**” (GAUTHIER 1972-1974: 252).

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the Library of Catalonia. See CUENCA I ALMENAR 2012.

<sup>14</sup> HAMESSE 1994: 495.

<sup>15</sup> MUÑOZ JIMÉNEZ 2009: 424.

<sup>16</sup> The *Vademecum* is preserved in two manuscripts of the Spanish National Library (9513 and 9522). JIMENEZ MUNOZ 2009: 431-432. MJ Jiménez Muñoz shows that the *Vademecum*, an anthology meant for a lay audience, the “hidalgos ancianos” of the hospital of Medina de Pomar, makes a selection of the content of the *Auctoritates*, retaining only citations of “religious-moral, intellectual and chivalric” character, in accordance with the reading advice that Alfonso de Cartagena dedicated to the Count of Haro.

The medieval Latin versions of the definition of the moral virtue reveal how obscure this concept was to contemporaries. The version of Grosseteste states, “est ergo virtus habitus electivus in medietate existens que ad nos determinata ratione; et ut utique **sapiens** determinabit”, (GAUTHIER 1972-1974, p. 171).

The medieval translator incurred thus in a contradiction, since in Aristotle’s text it is not the wise man, but the prudent man, whose virtue is applied to human action, who determines the medium of virtue between two reprehensible extremes.

The version of Herman, the German, of the *Summa Alexandrinorum* was not any clearer, by replacing the concept of *ratio*, with the vague concept of *potentia*, “Virtus igitur est habitus voluntatis in determinata existens medietate quo ad nos secundum **potentiam**” (MARCHESI 1904, XLVIII).

**3 - Distinction between various intellectual virtues:** Book VI distinguishes between five concepts—art, science, understanding, wisdom and prudence—that, until the medieval reception of the *Ethics* had been used mostly as synonyms.<sup>17</sup>

More precisely, Aristotle pointed out, within the rational part of the soul, a first group of virtues whose object was the eternal and immutable (the scientific part) and a second set of virtues that applied to the contingent and unstable sphere of human action (the calculating or “reasoning” part). The main virtue of the first group was wisdom (*sophia, sapientia*), the main virtue of the second one was prudence (*phronesis, prudentia*).

Thus, a new notion appeared, the Aristotelian notion of prudence, as distinct from the cardinal virtue. This notion of Stoic origin involves indeed a sense of certainty, as suggested by the term “science” in its Ciceronian definition, derived from Chrysippus: “Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrarumque scientia” (ACHARD 1994, p. 225). This feature was later maintained in the definitions of prudence offered by the Fathers of the Church, where it merged with the concept of wisdom. Aristotelian prudence, on its part, a humbler virtue, is essentially fallible because of the

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<sup>17</sup> In the works of Cicero, prudence is defined as a “science” (*De inventione*, II, 53), or combined with *sapientia* (*De Officiis*, I, VI- 15). In the Latin Bible, the terms *prudentia* and *sapientia* are not clearly distinguished: in the Book of Wisdom, the term *phronesis* is translated as *sensus* or *sapientia*; moreover, in the Gospel of Matthew (7.24), *phronimos* is translated as *viri sapienti*. The same can be observed in many writings of the Fathers of the Church: in his commentary on Wisdom, 7.7, Augustine mentions four virtues, *sobrietas-temperantia, sapientia-prudentia, fortitudo-virtus*, and *justitia* (GAUTHIER 1970, pp. 268-270). Also in his *De Officiis ministrorum*, Ambrose assimilates the notions of *prudentia* and *sapientia*. The same phenomenon can be observed in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Castilian texts. Maria Kleine, talking about the *Estoria de España* by Alfonso X, remarks: “en muchos fragmentos de la obra, el contexto permite que se pueda inferir una equivalencia de significado entre los términos ‘cordura’ y ‘cuerdo’, ‘seso’ y ‘sesudo’.” And regarding the *General Estoria* and its translations of biblical passages, she adds: “es patente [...] la asociación entre los conceptos de prudencia y sabiduría” (KLEINE 2007, pp. 233 and 238). Similarly, in the sapiential literature of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it is not always easy to perceive the different meanings of the words “sabio”, “cuerdo”, “sesudo” and “entendido”.

matter to which it applies: the contingent sphere of human action.<sup>18</sup> It is also much more complex from a theoretical point of view, particularly for its ambiguous status, that of an intellectual virtue closely linked to the moral virtues, which rightful medium it determines. In contrast, within the set of the cardinal and theological virtues, prudence loses this ambivalence and joins the category of the moral virtues.

Given the complexity of the Aristotelian doctrine of the moral and intellectual virtues, it is of great interest to study how the five works of philosophical popularization above mentioned conveyed these contents: which are the elements that simplify, are suppressed or, conversely, added to facilitate its understanding? Moreover, how do compilers adapt these theses to the thought frameworks of their time? Which concepts defined in the *Ethics* are the object of acculturation?<sup>19</sup> In which cases can we observe a determination to provide them with a Christian veneer?

I shall now present a few examples, on the one hand, of cases of suppression and, on the other, of additions or supplements, leading in both cases, to simplifications and even, at times, to distortions of the Aristotelian thought.

## 2. Abbreviations: The Example of the *Summa Alexandrinorum* and the *Libro del tesoro*

The *Summa Alexandrinorum* and its Spanish translation included in the *Libro del tesoro* provide an example of failure in the popularization endeavour. Indeed, both authors condensed the original text so much that they complicated or even impeded the understanding of the Aristotelian doctrine.

The *Summa* abbreviates a lot the content of Book VI, so that it turns almost into a mere juxtaposition of definitions, such as might be found in an anthology. However, the author of the *Summa* failed to distinguish the important from the secondary and deleted some key elements of the Aristotelian doctrine of the intellectual virtues.

Thus the Aristotelian division of the rational soul into two parts, scientific and reasoning/calculating, disappears and, therefore, also does Aristotle's distinction between speculative dianoetic virtues (whose object is necessary and eternal), and practical dianoetic virtues (aimed, on the contrary, to the unstable, the uncertain and the contingent); one of the key points of Book VI of the *Ethics* is thus eliminated, the distinction between prudence and wisdom.

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<sup>18</sup> Aristotle repeatedly claims that this matter, due to its instability, excludes all the possibilities for a scientific discourse. See AUBENQUE 1986, p. 184: "De tous ces éléments caractérisant la prudence aristotélicienne, les définitions stoïciennes n'avaient rien conservé hormis l'idée, fort vague, d'un lien entre savoir et vertu".

<sup>19</sup> Here I borrow the expression of Bénédicte Sère, see SÈRE 2007, first part, "L'acculturation d'un concept: réception et assimilation de l'*amicitia* aristotélicienne".

In addition to these gaps that the *Libro del Tesoro* inherits from the *Summa*, the former also adds some simplifications and falsifications of its own. The definition of the wise man is formulated as follows:

Onbre **bueno et sabio** es el que puede aconsejar a otros et a sy en las buenas cosas et en las malas que acaesçen al onbre. Et por ende **prudencia** es cosa por que alguno puede ser aconsejado por verdadera razon en las cosas buenas et en las malas (BALDWIN 1989, p. 109).

The text of the *Summa Alexandrinorum* reads “consultus et prudens” (MARCHESI 1904, LXV), whereas the expression used by the *Libro del Tesoro*, “bueno et sabio”, is much more vague and generic; in particular, what was already a gap in the *Summa*—the lack of distinction between prudence and wisdom—becomes an assimilation of the concepts of “prudent” and “wise”.

Furthermore, several manuscripts add yet another twist to the Aristotelian doctrine. In this same definition, the word “providencia” replaces “prudencia”, which creates even more confusion, being providence one of the parts of prudence according to Cicero, but above all, and for the 13<sup>th</sup>-century receptors of the *Libro del Tesoro*, a Christian concept related to divinity.

As for wisdom (*sapientia*), Aristotle distinguished between a specific wisdom (that of each artisan in his own craft), and a general wisdom, that of Anaxagoras and Thales, which, being the intellectual virtue characteristic of contemplative life, is the noblest of all intellectual virtues.<sup>20</sup> However, the author of the *Summa*, compiling the content of Book VI, only preserves that which regards specific wisdom without mentioning global wisdom: “Sapientia est excellentia et prerogativa in artificiis; dicitur ergo talis sapiens in arte sua, et signatur per hoc bonitas ipsius in arte sua”. The same can be found in the *Libro del Tesoro*: “Sapiencia es la dignidad et el ventaja del onbre en su oficio; ca quando alguno dize de algund onbre que es sabio en su arte, estonce es mostrada su bondad et su precio de aquella arte” (BALDWIN 1989, p. 109). Therefore, it is hard to understand why, later in the text, he says that wisdom is the happiness worthy of itself: “Sapientia felicitas est eligibilis propter se ipsam; non sicut res que inducit sanitatem sed sicut ipsamet sanitas” (MARCHESI 1904, LXV). Or, in the Castilian version of the *Libro del Tesoro*, “Sabencia es bien andança que onbre deve aver et escoger por si mesma, non commo cosa que aduze **santidat**, mas commo cosa que es en si misma **santa**” (BALDWIN 1989, p. 109). Thus, by means of a contradiction, misspelling the word “sanitas” as “santidad”, the *Libro* enforces this praise to “sabencia”, but it is incomprehensible that a virtue so humble as that applied by artisans to their respective crafts is described as saintly ... Here also, through misreading, a Christian notion invades the compiled Aristotelian text.

<sup>20</sup> This is also the idea of wisdom defined by Book I of the *Metaphysics*. In the *Ethics*, these two forms of wisdom are described in Book VI, chapter VIII. (GAUTHIER 1972, p. 259).

### 3. Additions

The compilation works I am interested in here also complete the original text of Aristotle, sometimes with specific details, other with structural elements, and still others with a paratext allegedly meant to facilitate its comprehension.

### 4. The Structure of the Text

Whereas the text of the *Summa* appeared in the manuscripts of the original version of Herman, the German, as a compact textual block, both the second version, edited by GB Fowler, and the *Livres dou Tresor*, which includes it within its vast content, introduced thematic chapters.

Likewise, Nuño de Guzmán claims that he has intervened the original text of the *Ethics* in this way, as he explains in the dedication of the *compendium* to Juan de Guzmán:

El prealegado aristotele non faze distinción, antes procediendo usa continuar fasta la fin de cada uno de los diez libros los quales en un volumen se contienen, consideré **capitularlos** [...] porque la luenga suspensión non causase fastidio en la prolixidad de las conclusiones. E asy va **subordenado** en modo que cada materia denota divisiblemente la substancia particular que tracta.<sup>21</sup>

### 5. Precisions

These are explanatory additions that reveal the points of the Aristotelian text considered problematic, obscure, or ambiguous; so problematic, in fact, that the authors of these works of popularization do not fully understand them and introduce, therefore, nuances that distort the original meaning of the text of the *Ethics*.

Thus the *Libro del Tesoro*, contains an interesting precision in the abstract of Book VI of the *Ethics*: “prudencia, **que quiere dezir saber**, confirma las cosas et fazelas buenas et aduzelas a justiciã” (BALDWIN 1989, p. 109). The Castilian translator adds this precision in order to clarify the discourse, but makes a mistake assimilating “prudencia” and “saber”, whereas the Latin text of the *Summa* only said “prudencia firmat res et ponit eas bonas et instaurat ad iustitiam” (MARCHESI 1904, p. LXV).

In contrast, neither the Spanish extant manuscripts of the anthology of the *Parvi flores* or its abridged version of the *Vademecum* contain this erroneous precision that can be found in the version of the incunabula, edited by J. Hamesse, which says “Impossibile est prudentem, **id est sapientem**, non esse bonum” (HAMESSE 1974, p. 241), thus leaving aside, again, Aristotle’s

<sup>21</sup> Manuscript preserved in the Bodleian Library (Oxford), MS Span D.1, fol. 1 v. (RUSSELL and PAGDEN 1974, p. 145).

distinction between the wise man and the prudent man. I have not yet found out if the precision is already present in the earliest manuscripts of the *Parvi flores*, which would help appreciate the value of its absence in the extant Spanish manuscripts.

#### 6. *Additional Texts Accompanying the Ethics*

In some of these popular works, it is interesting to see all the texts that precede and follow the compendium or the citations of the *Ethics*, since these other texts influence the reception of the Aristotelian doctrine and modify its comprehension.

In the *Libro del tesoro*, the compendium of the *Ethics* is the second part of the work. The compendium is preceded by an introduction by Brunetto Latini, which lists the four cardinal virtues:

E esta es la segunda partida del *Thesoro*, que se entiende por los enseñamientos de los sabios que son para la buena vida de los onbres [...] et este enseñamiento sera segund las quatro virtudes prinçipales, onde es la primera prudencia, que se entiende por el carvunco, que alunbra la noche et da claridat sobre todas las otras piedras (BALDWIN 1989, p. 93)

As an introduction to Aristotle's *Ethics*, Brunetto uses a schema outside the Aristotelian doctrine, that of the cardinal virtues.<sup>22</sup> However, as I have already mentioned,<sup>23</sup> prudence, in the context of the cardinal virtues, does not refer to the Aristotelian notion but of the Stoic concept that Cicero simplified and introduced in the framework of the cardinal virtues.

We find again the four cardinal virtues immediately after the compendium of the *Ethics*, in Chapter 56, "Aqui departe la virtud moral en quatro partidas":

Los sabios son acordados que virtud contemplativa a tres partidas, que son estas: fe, esperanza, caridat; et virtud moral es departida en quatro miembros, que son prudencia, atenprança, fortaleza, justicia (BALDWIN 1989, p. 127)

The Aristotelian distinction between the intellectual virtues and the moral virtues is replaced by a distinction between contemplative (or theological) virtues and moral (or cardinal) virtues; thus, the compendium invalidates the originality and ambiguity of the Aristotelian notion of prudence, which is not a moral but an intellectual, practical virtue, and, therefore, closely related to the moral virtues, which just medium determines.

<sup>22</sup> The identification of the four main virtues, absent from the Aristotelian corpus, appears in Stoic writings. Cicero draws its definition on the works of Chrysippus. Later this schema of the four virtues is adopted by Christian authors; Ambrose introduces in this respect the adjective "cardinal".

<sup>23</sup> See pages 165-166 of this article.

In the text that follows, we might think that Brunetto Latini is aware of the special status of prudence, since he warns, “Mas quien bien catare la verdat fallara que prudencia es el fundamento de las unas et de las otras”. However, immediately afterwards he assimilates three notions—wisdom, knowledge and prudence—that Aristotle distinguished: “ca sin sapiencia et sin saber non puede ninguno bevir bien”.

The same can be noted in Chapter 57, which defines the virtue of prudence: “Por estas palabras podemos nos entender que esta virtud, **prudencia, non es otra cosa si non seso et sabencia**” (BALDWIN 1989, p. 128), unlike Aristotle, who distinguished between the concepts of prudence and wisdom. As for the word “seso”, it translates the French “sens”.<sup>24</sup> Both terms come from the Latin “sensus”, whose first meaning “the act of perceiving”, assumed an intellectual sense (COROMINAS, PASCUAL 1986, p. 208).

Chapters 57 and 58 set forth the Stoic conception of prudence, formulated by Cicero in Chapter 57: “Diz Tulio que prudencia es conocimiento del mal et del bien, et del uno et del otro”. Chapter 58 is the vernacular translation of the *De quatuor virtutibus* attributed to Seneca.<sup>25</sup> Prudence becomes here a much simpler notion than the Aristotelian idea: it involves knowing how to foresee, to anticipate, according to the Ciceronian etymology of the term:<sup>26</sup> “Quien quier seguir prudencia, averla ha por razon, et vivra derechamente si cuyda todas las cosas ante” (BALDWIN 1989, p. 128).

Thus, Brunetto Latini proposes two successive definitions of prudence in his work: first, in the compendium of the *Ethics*, he exposes the Aristotelian notion of prudence, and then moves to its Stoic interpretation when he deals with prudence as a cardinal virtue. Thus, he combines two originally distinct concepts into a single, more vague, one.

The *Parvi flores* and the *Vademecum* of the Count of Haro also juxtapose the Aristotelian and the Stoic notion of prudence. In the *Vademecum*, after the quotations from Aristotle, among which we find the definition of prudence “Prudentia est recta ratio agibilium”, appear some *Deffinitiones quatuor virtutum cardinalium* of Ciceronian origin, which state “Prudentia est bonarum et malarum rerum discretio cum fuga mali et electione boni”.<sup>27</sup> Later, it lists the three parts of prudence, that is, memory, providence and intelligence, the latter defined as the virtue “per quam ea perspicit, quae sunt”, a notion close to that of *intellectus* or *seso/sens* contained in the previous quotation from the *Libro del Tesoro*. However, if Aristotle identified the three virtues

<sup>24</sup> The French text by Brunetto Latini equally notes “n’est pas autre chose que sens et sapience”. See the edition in CHABAILLE 1863: 346.

<sup>25</sup> Its author is actually the archbishop Martín de Braga (d. 579).

<sup>26</sup> Hinting at the capability to anticipate this virtue implies, Cicero translated the Greek term “*phronesis*” as “*prudentia*”, a contraction of the word “*pro-videntia*”.

<sup>27</sup> MS BNE 9513, fol. 127.

composing prudence—*eubulia*, *synesis*, *gnome*—he distinguished prudence from the other four intellectual virtues defined in Book V of the *Ethics*—*ars*, *scientia*, *sapientia*, *intellectus*.

I will conclude with a few remarks about the Castilian compendium of the *Ethics* by Nuño de Guzmán, which offers an example of accurate popularization: in fact, the compiled text is accompanied by a rich paratext facilitating the comprehension of the Aristotelian doctrine.

The text of the *Ethics* is preceded by a general prologue about sciences and their classification—*theoretical sciences* on the one hand, and, on the other, *practical sciences*—inspired by the introductions to philosophy with which the lectures on moral philosophy imparted in the Faculty of Arts started:

El segundo miembro principal es de las ciencias practicas, las quales cuelgan de las operationes humanas [...] Primeramente es considerado el hombre como ha de meiorar se en la parte intellectual, e como ha de moderar los apetitos e passiones, e como alcançara los habitos medios que son llamados virtudes, e aquesta es la Ethica (Seville 1493 edition, folio a III recto).

After this prologue, the author offers a summary of the content of the work, organized into books and chapters. However, in this case, the summaries, due to their clarity, constitute a good introduction to the text of the *Ethics*. The sixth book is resumed as follows:

El sexto tracta de las virtudes intellectuales que son perfecciones del entendimiento, que es la parte de la razon que por su essentia es rational. E aquestas son el arte, la scientia, la prudentia, la sabieza e el entendimiento [...] e dize en que manera estos habitos e virtudes differecen, e como dan en diversas maneras perfection al entendimiento humano. E declara como la sabieza es la mas excellente e noble de todas estas virtudes.<sup>28</sup>

The text printed in Zaragoza, in 1488, and Seville, in 1493, is even clearer. In fact, formal differences can be observed between the text in its manuscript tradition and the version of the incunabula; these differences respond to the project of improving the comprehensibility of the compendium. Thus, the language of the manuscripts, close in some terms and expressions to its scholastic source, is substituted with everydayCastilian. I will provide two examples of significant changes. In the manuscripts, the exposition of the classification of sciences in the general introduction to the compendium defines moral philosophy as “*ethica*, o *monastica*”: due to a copying mistake, it reads “*monastica*” instead of “*monostica*”, a technical term that points to the individual considered in himself (*homo secundum se*).<sup>29</sup> In the printed text this obscure term has been suppressed in order to avoid its confusion with its religious meaning. Furthermore, in Chapters IV and V of Book V, regarding the matter to which prudence is applied, the printed version substitutes the adjective “*contingentes*” with “*las cosas que acahecen*” and nuances it, several lines below, with the addition “*y variables*”.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> MS BNE 9513, fol. a IV v / a V r.

<sup>29</sup> SÈRE 2007: 32.

<sup>30</sup> Published in Seville in 1493, fol. h VI v.

## 7. Conclusions

In their effort to rend the Aristotelian text more accessible, the five texts in this study reveal how complex was the ethical doctrine of the Stagirite for Latin authors when it appeared in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and imposed a new conception of man, his actions, his moral and intellectual construction.

Among the different methods used by the authors of these works of popularization in order to make the text of the *Ethics* easier to understand, I have presented several interesting examples of suppressions and additions. These, in most cases, complicate the comprehension due to the erroneous substitution of some terms with others, due to the introduction of explicative precisions, which actually alter the original doctrine, or by the suppression of elements that were indispensable for its correct comprehension. Thus, due to its mistakes, slips and imprecisions, compilation literature constitutes a corpus of great interest to observe the accidents in the process of reception of Aristotelian theses and to shed light on its most problematic elements. Among them is the notion of prudence itself, which is, in the *Ethics*, the condition of acting virtuously, which Aristotle clearly distinguishes from wisdom, the highest of virtues, the condition of perfect happiness.

In other less frequent cases, the popularization endeavour was successful: thus, when compiling the *Ethics*, Nuño de Guzmán knew how to formulate Aristotelian theses in a clear and fluent Castilian, properly extending or abbreviating the original text, offering his own examples to clarify the hardest passages.<sup>31</sup> This wise choice can be partly explained by the recipient of the work, Juan de Guzmán, Lord of La Algaba, for whom Nuño in his prologue declares having made the effort to “mesclar [al texto original] aquello que a declaración del propósito conviene”. It was for these noblemen who were interested in the moral philosophy of the Stagirite, that second-hand texts initially conceived for the students of a university or monastic *studium*, were adapted in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with a new didactic sensitivity.

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<sup>31</sup> Hence the success of the work, which was the first Castilian version of the *Ethics* printed in Castile, before the translation of Prince Carlos de Viana (Zaragoza, 1509).

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