

For Humans' Sake: Giles of Rome's Teleological Anthropocentrism in Context

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*Ammiriamo dunque quest'ordine, questo universo.*¹

Abstract

Aristotle's claim that "we too are ends of a sort" (*Phys.* B 2, 194 a 35) is the basis upon which the scholastics build their teleological anthropocentrism. Like several other medieval Aristotelians, Giles of Rome offers a soft interpretation of this line in his *Physics* commentary. In his *Sentences* commentary, however, he develops a more robust anthropoteleology (slightly distinct from Aquinas's and Bonaventure's theories). An analysis of Giles's texts shows that he subordinates Aristotle's view to his own Christian-theological doctrine of the mid-position of human beings in the universe.

Anthropoteleology

Many modern and most late-modern philosophers reject anthropoteleology, i.e., the view that humankind is the goal of nature.² Instead, they express a sort of *Weltvergeblichkeits-erfahrung*, the experience that the world (i.e., the universe or nature as a whole) has not been made for us (as Descartes holds)³ and is even purposeless (as Spinoza argues)⁴ or completely indifferent (as Nietzsche claims).⁵

The aim of this paper is to present some thirteenth-century views on human beings as the goal of nature. In particular, I will focus on Giles of Rome's teleological anthropocentrism,

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¹ G. Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura*, Volume Settimo, Le Monnier, Firenze 1900, p. 199 (4258).

² Arthur Schopenhauer seems to have coined the term 'Anthropoteleologie'; see *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Zweiter Band, *Ergänzungen zum zweiten Buch*, Kap. 26 ("Zur Teleologie"), Brockhaus Verlag, Wiesbaden 1949, part. pp. 389-90.

³ R. Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* III, 2-3, in *Opere 1637-1649*, a c. di G. Belgioioso, con la collaborazione di I. Agostini – F. Marrone – M. Savini, Bompiani, Milano 2009 (Il Pensiero Occidentale), pp. 1836-9.

⁴ B. de Spinoza, *Ethica I*, Appendix, in *Ethik in geometrischer Ordnung dargestellt*, Neu übersetzt, herausgegeben, mit einer Einleitung versehen von W. Bartuschat, Meiner, Hamburg 2007 (Philosophische Bibliothek 92), part. p. 80.1-11.

⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* I, 9, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, VI.2, ed. G. Colli – M. Montinari, De Gruyter, Berlin 1968 (Philosophische Bibliothek 92), pp. 21-2. On the aforementioned thinkers, see F.J. Wetz, "Die Vergeblichkeit der Welt. Genesis und Geltung einer Pathosformel der Neuzeit", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 36 (1993), pp. 117-43 (= Id., *Die Gleichgültigkeit der Welt. Philosophische Aufsätze*, Knecht, Frankfurt a.M. 1994, pp. 149-84); for an analytical approach, see T. Mulgan, *Purpose in the Universe: The Moral and Metaphysical Case for Ananthropocentric Purposivism*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2015, in particular chapter 1, where he argues that "there is a cosmic purpose, but human beings are irrelevant to it" (p. 1).

and this for several reasons. Firstly, although numerous outstanding studies have been devoted to Giles in recent decades, hardly anything has been said about his anthropocentrism. In contrast with Thomas Aquinas's anthropocentric ideas, Giles's discussion of the question as to "whether everything has been produced for the sake of human beings" has not yet been examined.⁶ Secondly, Giles's quite elaborate answer to this question sheds fresh light on his view of the relation between philosophy and theology. Finally, an analysis of Giles's position enables us to rebut a crucial element of Hans Blumenberg's interpretation of the so-called Copernican revolution.

1. Aristotle's Auctoritas and Some Interpretations

Before examining scholastic anthropoteleology, we have to take a quick look at the central Aristotelian argument that is almost always cited in support of teleological anthropocentrism: "Nos sumus quodammodo finis omnium".⁷ This dictum is taken from *Physics* B, chapter 2, in which Aristotle delineates the scope of natural philosophy.⁸ The passage is worth quoting:

(...) the end should not be just any last thing, but the best. Indeed, the arts make their matter, that is, they either bring it into being altogether, or render it good to work with; and we use all things as if they were there for us. (For we too are ends of a sort. As was said in the *De Philosophia*, there are two sorts of thing which a thing may be said for.) There are two arts which control the matter and involve knowledge, the art of using, and the art which directs the making.⁹

In the Middle Ages, this passage, and especially the famous dictum, has been translated and interpreted in different ways. On the microtextual level, at least three different medieval Latin translations must be distinguished:

Gerard of Cremona's Arabic-Latin translation: "utimur enim eis [viz., the arts] propterea quod propter actionem nostram est earum esse; nos enim ipsi etiam sumus finis secundum aliquem modorum";¹⁰

⁶ In their comprehensive essay on Giles's philosophy of nature, Silvia Donati and Cecilia Trifogli thoroughly analyze his views on matter and form, motion, place, and time, but they do not pay special attention to the teleological orientation of his physics. Likewise, Martin Pickavé remains silent about the teleological aspects of Giles's cosmology and natural theology. See S. Donati and C. Trifogli, "Natural Philosophy", in C.F. Briggs – P.S. Eardley (eds.), *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, Brill, Leiden 2016 (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 71), pp. 73-113; M. Pickavé, "Metaphysics", *ibid.*, pp. 114-49.

⁷ See J. Hamesse, *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis. Un florilège médiéval. Étude historique et édition critique*, Publications Universitaires, Louvain 1974 (Philosophes Médiévaux 17), p. 145.17 (proposition 2, 63) with n. 17: "Nos sumus quodammodo finis omnium". The editor astonishingly prefers the reading "Non sumus", but remarks that "le texte d'Aristote est *Nos*, mais nous avons maintenu la version donnée par la majorité des témoins de la tradition imprimée".

⁸ Cf. W. Charlton, *Aristotle's Physics: Books I and II, Translated with Introduction and Notes*, Clarendon, Oxford 1970, p. 93.

⁹ Arist., *Phys.* B 2, 194 a 32-b 2, trans. by Charlton, p. 27. For the Greek text, see Aristotelis *Physica* rec. (...) W.D. Ross, Clarendon, Oxford 1956: βούλεται γὰρ οὐ πᾶν εἶναι τὸ ἔσχατον τέλος, ἀλλὰ τὸ βέλτιστον· ἐπεὶ καὶ ποιοῦσιν αἱ τέχναι τὴν ὕλην αἱ μὲν ἀπλῶς αἱ δὲ εὐεργόν, καὶ χρώμεθα ὡς ἡμῶν ἕνεκα πάντων ὑπαρχόντων· ἐσμὲν γὰρ πῶς καὶ ἡμεῖς τέλος. διχῶς γὰρ τὸ οὐ ἕνεκα (εἴρηται δὲ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ φιλοσοφίας). δύο δὲ αἱ ἀρχουσαι τῆς ὕλης καὶ γνωρίζουσαι τέχναι, ἣ τε χωρμένη καὶ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἢ ἀρχιτεκτονικῆς.

¹⁰ I thank Massimo Perrone for allowing me to quote his transcription of Gerard's translation (based on Aosta, Biblioteca del Seminario maggiore, 71, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16141).

Michael Scotus's Arabic-Latin translation: "nos autem utimur illis [viz., the arts] secundum quod omnes sunt propter nos; nos enim ipsi etiam sumus finis quodammodo";¹¹

James of Venice's Greek-Latin *Translatio vetus*: "et utimur tamquam propter nos omnibus que sunt; sumus enim quodammodo et nos finis".¹²

William of Moerbeke's second revision of the *Translatio vetus*: "et utimur tamquam propter nos omnibus existentibus; sumus enim quodammodo et nos finis".¹³

These versions (like so many other passages in medieval translations of philosophical texts) reflect the Greek rather inaccurately. The Arabic-Latin translations are wrong, since the object of "utimur" and the subject of "est" and "sunt" is not "the arts"; James's translation is wrong, since it misrenders the *genitivus absolutus* and suggests that Aristotle speaks here of "all beings". Moerbeke's revision is more adequate, but remains a bit unclear.

On a higher level, we can distinguish two interpretative lines. Some commentators (such as David Sedley) have read the above-cited quotation as a fundamental principle underlying a robust teleological anthropocentrism. Sedley correctly criticizes the counterfactual interpretation of $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ and renders the core of the passage as follows: "And we use it [i.e., material] on the ground that everything exists for our sake. For we ourselves too are, in one sense, an end". After examining several passages from various works of Aristotle, Sedley concludes that even though the Aristotelian world-view is theocentric insofar as "god is the ultimate focus of all aspirations", "in another sense, and an important one, it remains anthropocentric", inasmuch as "all sublunary nature is organised in a cooperative hierarchy, in which the lower benefits the higher, and at the apex of this hierarchy stands the highest beneficiary of all, man".¹⁴ Such a strong anthropocentric interpretation of Aristotle's teleology has a long pedigree. In support of his view, Sedley could have invoked, for instance, the Coimbra Jesuits, who in their voluminous *Physics* commentary argue that "humankind is the universal goal of the entire corporeal nature", while adding that "there is another goal beyond humankind, namely the order and beauty of the whole of nature" and ultimately "the most common and very last goal, for the sake of which the whole of nature acts, namely the Author and Father of nature, God".¹⁵

¹¹ See Aristoteles apud Averroem, *Physica* II, 24, apud Iunctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 57vI-K. (In this passage, the text of the Renaissance edition is identical with the text of the critical edition prepared by Massimo Perrone.)

¹² See Aristoteles, *Physica. Translatio Vetus*, ed. F. Bossier – J. Brams, Brill, Leiden 1990 (*Aristoteles Latinus* VII.1.2), p. 54.1-3.

¹³ See Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, 1067, fol. 9v (available online: <<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000125534&page=1>>, image 15). Moerbeke's first revision (not critically edited) is included in the *Aristoteles Latinus Database* (ALD); according to the ALD, his first revision of these lines is identical with the *Translatio vetus*. On Moerbeke's revisions of the *vetus*, see J. Brams – G. Vuillemin-Diem, "Physica Nova und Recensio Matritensis: Wilhelm von Moerbeke's doppelte Revision der *Physica Vetus*", in A. Zimmermann (ed.), *Aristotelisches Erbe im arabisch-lateinischen Mittelalter. Übersetzungen, Kommentare, Interpretationen*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1986 (Miscellanea Medievalia 18), pp. 215-88.

¹⁴ D. Sedley, "Is Aristotle's Teleology Anthropocentric?", *Phronesis* 36 (1991), pp. 179-96, part. pp. 189 and 196.

¹⁵ *Commentariorum Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu, In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae, Prima Pars* (...) II, cap. 8-9, q. 2, a. 1, Sumptibus Lazari Zetzneri, Coloniae 1596, cols. 415-16: "Vtrum natura ad vnum tantum finem, et vno duntaxat modo feratur, an non? (...) Est etiam totius corporeae naturae vniuersalis finis, Homo (...). Est praeterea finis alius homine vterior, videlicet totius naturae ordo et pulchritudo (...). Denique vltra hunc est alius communissimus omniumque postremus, ob quem tota natura agit, nempe ipsius naturae auctor et parens, Deus". On the "Dominanz der anthropologischen Finalität" in early-modern scholasticism, see further Th. Leinkauf, *Mundus combinatus. Studien zur Struktur der barocken Universalwissenschaft am Beispiel Athanasius Kirchers SJ (1602-1680)*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1993, pp. 355-6 and 377-94.

This interpretation, however, does not convince all Aristotle scholars. Wardy, for instance, argues that “Aristotle retains his unique position in the history of natural philosophy by advocating teleology free of both design and cosmic subordination”. In particular, he emphasizes that 194 a 33-35 “is the first important argument in a sequence attempting to establish not teleology, but rather that nature is (primarily) form, not matter”. According to Wardy, Sedley’s interpretation of Aristotle’s teleology is colored by Hellenistic (more precisely Academic or Stoic) anthropocentrism.¹⁶ A similar deflationist interpretation of our passage is defended by Mariska Leunissen. On her reading, “nature is not itself anthropocentric; we just use natural things to our own benefit”.¹⁷ Likewise, more than sixty years ago, Blumenberg had already pointed out that Aristotle propounds nothing but a “Quasi-Anthropozentrik”, restricted to the sublunary realm: “We should avoid viewing the Aristotelian doctrine of teleology through the distorting lens of its Stoic and Christian reception. This cosmos is not a construct centered around a midpoint; still less is man this midpoint or its pampered beneficiary”.¹⁸ While this interpretation is not implausible, two other theses put forth by Blumenberg in this context are doubtful (to say the least). To begin with, he claims that “the misinterpretations of this passage [i.e., 194 a 34-35] gave rise to an entire pseudotradition of teleology in medieval Aristotelianism”.¹⁹ However, as we will see, there is hardly any proof for such a “pseudotradition” (it is not even clear what the neologism ‘pseudotradition’ denotes). Moreover, Blumenberg states that the so-called Copernican Revolution consists not only in the change from geocentrism to heliocentrism, but also and even more radically in a new anthropocentrism which enables human beings to study the world “beyond the realm of pressing needs”. In his view, Nicolaus Copernicus breaks with medieval Aristotelianism because “the Aristotelianizing Middle Ages did not (...) share the Stoic premise that the center of the world was at the same time the privileged position for theoretical consideration of it and rational access to it”.²⁰ As I hope to show, scholastics such as Giles of Rome do not

¹⁶ R. Wardy, “Aristotelian Rainfall or the Lore of Averages”, *Phronesis* 38 (1993), pp. 18-30, part. pp. 27 and 29-30.

¹⁷ M. Leunissen, *Explanation and Teleology in Aristotle’s Science of Nature*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2010, p. 39 (see also p. 56, n. 21).

¹⁸ H. Blumenberg, *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 1998 (suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft 352.1), pp. 149-50 (= *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. by R. Savage, Cornell U.P., Ithaca 2010 [Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought], p. 104; originally published in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 6 [1960], pp. 7-142, at p. 111): “Wir dürfen die aristotelische Teleologielehre nicht durch die Brille stoischer und christlicher Rezipienten betrachten; dieser Kosmos ist nicht ein zur Mitte hin zentriertes Gefüge, und schon gar nicht ist der Mensch diese Mitte oder durch sie ausgezeichnet”.

¹⁹ H. Blumenberg, *Die Genesis der kopernikanischen Welt*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a.M. 1975, p. 222 (= *The Genesis of the Copernican World*, trans. by R.M. Wallace, MIT Press, Cambridge MA 1987, p. 188): “Die Fehldeutungen der Stelle [i.e., 194 a 34-35] haben eine ganze teleologische Pseudotradition im mittelalterlichen Aristotelismus zur Folge gehabt”.

²⁰ Blumenberg, *Die Genesis der kopernikanischen Welt* (above, n. 19), p. 234: “Das aristotelisierende Mittelalter hat eben (...) die stoische Prämisse nicht geteilt, die Mitte der Welt sei zugleich die Vorzugsstellung für ihre theoretische Betrachtung und rationale Erschließung” (= *The Genesis of the Copernican World* [above, n. 19], p. 197). See also Id., *Kopernikus im Selbstverständnis der Neuzeit*, Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Wiesbaden 1965, p. 15 (citing Justus Liebig’s *Die Entwicklung der Ideen in der Naturwissenschaft*): “Kopernikus brachte nicht so sehr die Änderung einer schon fixierten und bewußten Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos, sondern mit ihm begann überhaupt erst ‘der Mensch seine Stärke und Stellung im Universum zu fühlen’”. Elsewhere Blumenberg vaguely connects Copernicus with a medieval “Schöpfungsoptimismus”; see his *Kopernikus im Selbstverständnis der Neuzeit*, p. 13. On Copernicus’s view, see also K. Harries, *Infinity and Perspective*,

need the Stoic idea that “the world itself has been made for the sake of the gods and human beings” as an immense and lawfully ordered cosmopolis, in which the scientific study of nature is made possible by the central cosmological position of humankind.²¹ Giles rather holds that human beings are naturally able to explore the whole of reality precisely because they have been placed in its ontological middle. In what follows, I will first consider Giles's view as expounded in his *Physics* commentary, and thereafter his more detailed doctrine in his *Sentences* commentary. A brief comparison with some contemporaneous commentaries will contextualize Giles's views.

2. *The Dictum in Commentaries on Aristotle*

Before examining Giles's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, it is helpful to glance at some other commentaries from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In his *Questions* on the *Physics*, Geoffrey of Aspill apparently does not address the question as to whether human beings are the goal of nature.²² Likewise, Pseudo-Richard Rufus of Cornwall,²³ Siger of Brabant,²⁴ and John Buridan²⁵ do not comment on 194 a 34-35. Albert the Great's commentary on these lines remains quite sober and close to Aristotle's text:

The arts which effectively use technical products use them for the benefit of the human beings [who live] in a political community. Therefore politicians have to order all technical products toward the benefit of the community, because as beings living a political life we are somehow the goal of all technical things. Indeed, that for the sake of which something occurs is simply speaking its goal, and that is what we are. However, the goal of someone who makes matter and prepares it is the form of the artifact. Therefore we said that we are somehow the goal, and not simply speaking. Since we are somehow the goal of technical things, we use all [of them]. In this manner, then, one speaks of 'goal' in two senses: namely

MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2001, chapter 12 (“Copernican Anthropocentrism”), part. pp. 231 and 241, and the “Introduction” to the monumental edition: Nicolas Copernic, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium. Des révolutions des orbés célestes*, Édition critique, traduction, introduction et notes par M.-P. Lerner – A.-Ph. Segonds – J.-P. Verdet, avec la collaboration de C. Luna – I. Pantin – D. Savoie – M. Toulmonde, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2015.

²¹ For the Stoic idea, see e.g. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* II, 61-2, 154-6 and *De Officiis* I, 7, 22; see further R. Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate*, Duckworth, London 2001, pp. 198-201, and G. Steiner, *Anthropocentrism and Its Discontents: The Moral Status of Animals in the History of Western Philosophy*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 2005, chapter 3 “Aristotle and the Stoics: The Evolution of a Cosmic Principle”, part. pp. 77 and 83-6.

²² See Geoffrey of Aspill, *Questions on Aristotle's Physics. Part 1*, ed. S. Donati – C. Trifogli; English trans. by E.J. Ashworth – C. Trifogli, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2017, pp. 8-10 (*tabula quaestionum*).

²³ See Richard Rufus of Cornwall, *In Physicam Aristotelis*, ed. R. Wood, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2003, pp. 119-22. On the authorship, see S. Donati, “The Anonymous Commentary on the *Physics* in Erfurt, Cod. Amplon. Q. 312 and Richard Rufus of Cornwall”, *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 72 (2005), pp. 232-362, part. pp. 319-20; Wood's reply does not succeed in demonstrating the attribution to Rufus (see R. Wood, “The Works of Richard Rufus of Cornwall: The State of the Question in 2009”, *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 76 [2009], pp. 1-73).

²⁴ Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Physicam*, ed. A. Zimmermann, in Siger de Brabant, *Écrits de logique, de morale et de physique*, Publications Universitaires, Louvain 1974 (Philosophes Médiévaux 14), pp. 195-6 (*tabula quaestionum*).

²⁵ John Buridan, *Quaestiones super octo libros Physicorum secundum ultimam lecturam. Libri I-II* II, 7 (“Whether the goal is a cause”), ed. M. Streijger – P. Bakker, Brill, Leiden 2015 (Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy and Science 25), pp. 294-301 (see also the *index locorum*, pp. 354-5).

the form at which the act of the efficient cause and the motion of matter come to their end, and the goal to which the use of the things is related.²⁶

Albert here obviously follows Averroes, who also takes Aristotle to mean that “since we are somehow the goal of all things produced by the [technical] arts, we use all [such things]”.²⁷ This interpretation may go back to Alexander of Aphrodisias’ lost commentary on the *Physics*. Indeed, in his commentary, Simplicius notes:

[Aristotle] holds that everything is there for our sake, not everything that exists whatsoever, but everything that exists for our preservation, such as the finished products of art, since we make use of them. We are the goals of all things occurring through the arts, since [such things] are there for us and exist in reference to us; they are closely united to their goals.²⁸

Since Averroes never quotes Simplicius’ commentary, and since Themistius and Philoponus, whom Averroes did know, do not develop a similar argument,²⁹ it is not unlikely that Alexander is the common source of Simplicius’ and Averroes’s comments on this passage. As Ruth Glasner has pointed out, Averroes regularly draws on Alexander and sometimes explicitly cites him in his *Physics* commentary;³⁰ and as Marwan Rashed has argued, Simplicius conceives his *Physics* commentary as a Neoplatonized “édition *ad usum Delphini* de celui d’Alexandre”.³¹

Averroes’s and Albert’s interpretation of our passage is also shared by Thomas Aquinas. His minimalist claim “Nos enim sumus quodammodo finis omnium artificialium”³² summarizes

²⁶ Albertus Magnus, *Physica* II, 1, 11, in Alberti Magni *Opera Omnia*, t. 4.1, ed. P. Hossfeld, Aschendorff, Münster 1987, p. 95.6-18 (spelling and punctuation modified): “Artes autem que sic operose utuntur apotelesmaticibus artium, utuntur eis ad utilitatem hominum in ciuitate. Et ideo ciuilibus omnia artificia habet ordinare ad utilitatem communem, quia nos ciuilibus uiuentes sumus quodammodo finis artificialium omnium; hoc enim cuius causa fit aliquid, illud est simpliciter finis, et hoc sumus nos. Sed finis facientis materiam et preparantis eam est forma artificialiati, et ideo diximus quod nos sumus quodammodo finis et non simpliciter. Et quia sumus quodammodo finis artificialium, ideo utimur omnibus. Et sic finis dicitur dupliciter, scilicet forma ad quam terminantur actus efficientis et motus materie, et finis ad quem refertur usus rerum”.

²⁷ Averroes, *In Libros Physicorum* [henceforth: *In Phys.*] II, 24, apud Iunctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 57vM: “Et ideo, quia nos sumus finis omnium rerum facturarum ab artibus quodammodo, ideo utimur omnibus”.

²⁸ Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros quattuor priores commentaria*, ed. H. Diels, Reimer, Berlin 1882 (CAG IX), p. 304.8-12: πάντα δὲ ἡμῶν ἕνεκα ὑπάρχειν λέγει, οὐχὶ τὰ ὄντα πάντα, ἀλλὰ τὰ πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν ἡμετέραν πάντα, οἷά ἐστι τὰ τῶν τεχνῶν ἀποτελέσματα. τούτοις γὰρ χρώμεθα. καὶ ἐσμὲν τέλη τῶν κατὰ τὰς τέχνας γινομένων ἡμεῖς ὡς ἡμῖν ὑπαρχόντων καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἐχόντων καὶ συνέζευκται ταῦτα τοῖς τέλεσι. For the translation, see *On Aristotle. Physics 2*, trans. by B. Fleet, Duckworth, London 1997, p. 60 (translation modified).

²⁹ According to Themistius, “we too are a goal, since many things occur for our sake” (he does not specify which things are meant). Likewise, Philoponus does not explain whether really all things exist for us. See Themistius, *In Aristotelis Physica paraphrasis*, ed. H. Schenkl, Reimer, Berlin 1900 (CAG V.2), p. 43.7-8; Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Physicorum libros tres priores commentaria*, ed. G. Vitelli, Reimer, Berlin 1887 (CAG XVI), p. 237.22-24.

³⁰ See R. Glasner, *Averroes’ Physics: A Turning Point in Medieval Natural Philosophy*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2009, pp. 24-5.

³¹ See M. Rashed, *Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Commentaire perdu à la Physique d’Aristote (Livres IV–VIII). Les scholies byzantines. Édition, traduction et commentaire*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2011 (CAGB 1), p. 29; cf. P. Golitsis, *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon à la Physique d’Aristote. Tradition et innovation*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2008 (CAGB 3), pp. 67-8. On the Neoplatonist’s criticism of Alexander, see M. Schwark, “Simplicius on the Individuation of Material Substances”, *Elenchos* 40 (2019), pp. 401-29, and C. Helmig, “Simplicius”, in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020 Edition, E.N. Zalta (ed.), online <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/simplicius/>> (part. §3).

³² Aquinas, *Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis* [henceforth: *In Phys.*] II, 4, in Thomae de Aquino

the main stream interpretation that dominated the commentary tradition, not only in Late Antiquity, but also in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. William of Ockham, for instance, holds that “it is fitting that there be such an art [i.e., an art through which we use artifacts], because we are somehow the goal of everything which is produced by art”. Furthermore, like Averroes, Albert, and Aquinas, Ockham explains that ‘goal’ must be understood here as denoting “that [item or person] to which a thing belongs and for the sake of which the thing occurs [or is made]”. He concludes that “in this way we are the goal of everything, for we make all artificial things in order to have and to use them”.³³ Needless to say, if he writes “sumus finis omnium”, he apparently means “sumus finis omnium artificialium”. One might even surmise that “artificialium” dropped out due to an *omissio per homoeoteleuton*. However that may be, the context makes it clear that Ockham means that “we are somehow the goal of all artificial things”.

In the texts presented so far, we have not yet encountered a robust teleological anthropocentrism. The only text which Blumenberg cites in support of his “pseudotradition” thesis is a passage from Peter of Ireland’s *Determinatio magistralis* concerning the question of “whether bodily parts have been made for the sake of actions or whether actions are done because of the bodily parts”. Here, Peter argues that in the universe ignoble beings exist for the sake of nobler beings, and “so universal nature has ordered all things for the sake of some benefit, and mainly for the benefit and the sustenance of human beings”. To substantiate this view, he cites Aristotle to the effect that “we too are the goal of all things, not the goal because of which everything exists, but rather as that to which all things are said to belong in respect of some utility”. By contrast, the Prime Mover of the universe is the goal “because of which all things exist”.³⁴ Even though this short passage succinctly outlines a robust teleological

Opera Omnia, t. 2, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1884, p. 66a. Following Blumenberg, Kurt Flasch underestimates Aquinas’s teleological anthropocentrism when he remarks: “Daß die Natur auf den Menschen zustrebe, spielt keine Rolle mehr” (see K. Flasch, *Hans Blumenberg. Philosoph in Deutschland: Die Jahre 1945 bis 1966*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2017, p. 407).

³³ William of Ockham, *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis II*, 4, ed. V. Richter – G. Leibold, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure NY 1985 (*Opera Philosophica* 4), p. 274.22-32 (spelling and punctuation modified): “(...) et hoc est conueniens quod sit talis ars, quia nos sumus quodammodo finis omnium que fiunt ab arte, et hoc accipiendo uno modo finem. Finis enim dupliciter dicitur, sicut habet prima philosophia declarare. Nam secundum Commentatorem commento 24 finis uno modo dicitur illud quod acquiritur per transmutationem; et sic finis materie est forma, quia ipsa est adquisita per transmutationem et propter ipsam ut adquiratur transmutatur materia; et sic non sumus nos finis omnium artificialium. Aliter dicitur finis rei illud cuius est res et propter quem res fit, quia scilicet aliter non fieret nisi ut esset illius uel ille uteretur ea uel haberet eam; et sic sumus finis omnium, nam ut habeamus res artificiales et utamur eis, facimus eas”. In his other works on the *Physics*, he does not discuss this topic. See his summary of *Physics* B, in *Brevis summa libri Physicorum*, ed. S. Brown, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure NY 1984 (*Opera Philosophica* 6), pp. 25-39 (according to Ockham, the thesis that “nature acts for the sake of a goal” cannot be demonstrated; one can only offer rhetorical or dialectical arguments for it; see pp. 36.24-37.29); *Summula philosophiæ naturalis* II, 2 and 4 (“On the formal cause” and “On the final cause”), ed. S. Brown, pp. 216-7 and 220-5 (“God is the goal of all things, since He is the object of love for the sake of whom everything occurs or should occur”; see p. 223.66-7 Brown); question list of his *Quaestiones in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, ed. S. Brown, pp. 885-92.

³⁴ Peter of Ireland, *Determinatio magistralis*, ed. C. Baeumker (editio retractata a M. Dunne), in M. Dunne, *Magistri Petri de Ybernia Expositio et Quaestiones in librum Aristotelis Peryermenias seu De interpretatione (...)*, Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve 1996 (*Philosophes Médiévaux* 34), p. 248.68-82: “Vnde in toto uniuerso sunt quedam propter quedam, id est uiuora propter nobiliora. (...) Et ita ordinauit natura uniuersalis omnia propter aliquod iuuamentum et maxime propter iuuamentum et sustentamenta hominum. Et propter hoc dicit Phylsophus: sumus

anthropocentrism, it should be remembered that it is not part of a *Physics* commentary. Hence, it cannot count as a valid argument for talking of a “pseudotradition”. Moreover, Blumenberg manifestly misinterprets this passage. Commenting on it, he asserts that “anthropocentrism is not a physical fact but more nearly a kind of juridical state of affairs that not only allows man to preserve his existence with the aid of nature but also certifies the undisputedness of this usufruct”.³⁵ In contrast to what Blumenberg suggests, Peter’s above-cited text has nothing to do with the Biblical idea of the subjugation of the earth (mentioned in Gen 1:28); and Peter’s interpretation of ‘goal’ as “illud cuius” does not describe a juridical state of affairs, but rather picks up the distinction which Aristotle makes in his *De Anima* between two senses of ‘goal’.³⁶ Moreover, despite Baeumker’s reference to chapter 10 of *Metaphysics* Λ, Blumenberg does not notice that Peter depends on Averroes’s commentary on this text (according to Averroes, things in the universe are “not situated on the same level, rather some are more [ordered or valuable] than others”).³⁷ Finally, we must keep in mind that Peter (like Aristotle) adopts a limited anthropocentrism. As Ruedi Imbach formulates it, Peter envisages “une hiérarchie selon laquelle l’ensemble du monde d’ici-bas est ordonné à l’homme, mais selon laquelle ce dernier est également ordonné à un autre, le premier moteur”; for Peter, humankind is only the goal of things in the sublunary world.³⁸

The only thirteenth-century philosopher who in a *Physics* commentary depicts a universal anthropocentric teleology is (Pseudo-)Roger Bacon. In the *Questiones super libros Physicorum* attributed to Bacon, it is argued that “human beings are the goal of all beings, since they are the goal of the intelligences, of natural things, and of artifacts”. His argument for this thesis deserves some attention:

[Human beings are the goal] of the intelligences, since the intelligences move the spheres in order that intellectual souls may be introduced into the organical bodies [of human beings]. They are also the goal of natural things, since all natural things are generated for the sake of human beings and referred back to them. Furthermore, the nature of other animals is known through human nature, as is said in the *Book on Animals*. Accordingly, human nature is more known and what is hidden is known through what is evident, as is said in

et nos finis omnium, non finis propter quem omnia sunt, sed ut illud cuius dicunt esse omnia propter aliquam utilitatem; sed omnia sunt propter unum motorem omnium, primum scilicet”.

³⁵ Blumenberg, *Die Genesis der kopernikanischen Welt* (above, n. 19), pp. 221-2 (= *The Genesis of the Copernican World*, p. 188): “Die Anthropozentrik ist kein physischer Sachverhalt, sondern eher so etwas wie eine juristische Sachlage, die den Menschen nicht nur sein Dasein mit Hilfe der Natur erhalten läßt, sondern ihm auch die Unbestrittenheit dieser Nutznießung bescheinigt”.

³⁶ See Arist., *De An.* B, 4, 415 b 2-3. On this distinction, cf. Aquinas, *Sententia libri de anima* II, 7, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 45.1, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Commissio Leonina, Roma 1984, p. 97.124-41, and R.-A. Gauthier, “Préface”, pp. 191*-192*; C. Shields’s commentary, in Aristotle, *De Anima*, Translated with an Introduction and Commentary, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2016, p. 202 (he correctly observes that ‘final cause’ can signify “the subject who benefits or the benefit which is being sought”).

³⁷ Averroes, *Metaphysicorum libri XIII, XII*, 52, Apud Iunctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 338rA (commenting on 1075 a 16-17). Cf. C. Baeumker, *Petrus de Hibernia, der Jugendlehrer des Thomas von Aquino und seine Disputation vor König Manfred*, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München 1920, pp. 24-6.

³⁸ R. Imbach, “La philosophie dans les cours princières européennes (XIII^e et XIV^e siècles). Esquisse d’une problématique”, in R. Imbach – C. König-Pralong, *Le défi laïque. Existe-t-il une philosophie des laïcs au Moyen Âge?*, Vrin, Paris 2013 (Conférences Pierre Abélard 6), pp. 99-122, part. p. 114.

On Plants. Hence, in the same book, it is said that animals are the goal of vegetative [life] and of plants, while man is the goal of animals. Therefore man is a microcosm, i.e., a minor world, in which everything of the macrocosm is reflected. Human beings are also the goal of artifacts in respect of necessity, i.e., because [artifacts] receive their necessity from human beings and for the sake of human beings, and also in respect of their utility, because artifacts are produced for the preservation and the delight of human beings.³⁹

Remarkably, (Pseudo-)Bacon connects his teleological anthropocentrism with the famous macrocosm/microcosm analogy, which he interprets by means of the Christian-Neoplatonic metaphor of light (the idea that “everything of the macrocosm reflects in the microcosm” is reminiscent, at least for thirteenth-century readers, of the pseudo-Augustinian belief that “man’s heart has been created in such a manner that the Lord shines back in it as in his mirror”).⁴⁰

³⁹ (Pseudo-)Roger Bacon, *Questiones supra libros quatuor Physicorum Aristotelis* II, 14, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi* 8, ed. F.M. Delorme collaborante R. Steele, Clarendon, Oxford 1928, p. 64.21-36 (spelling and punctuation modified): “(...) homo finis est omnium, quia finis est intelligentiarum, naturalium et artificialium: intelligentiarum, quia intelligentie mouent orbes quatinus <in> corpora organica anima intellectiua introducatur; finis similiter naturalium, quia omnia naturalia propter hominem fiunt et ad ipsum reducuntur, et <per> istius naturam natura aliorum animalium cognoscitur, ut scribitur in libro *De Animalibus*; unde natura hominis notior est, et occultum cognoscitur per notum, ut habetur in *De Plantis*; unde habetur in libro eodem scilicet, <est> uegetatiui et plante [<est> uegetatiui et plante *conieci*: uegetativum et planta *ed.*] finis animal [animal *conieci*: animalis *ed.*], et animalis [animalis *conieci*: animal *ed.*] finis homo [homo *conieci*: hominis *ed.*]; unde homo est microcosmus, id est minor mundus, in quo omnia maioris mundi relucet. Est autem finis artificialium quantum ad necessitatem ex necessario eorum quod propter hominem ab homine sortiuntur, et item quantum ad usum, quia ad conseruationem et delectationem hominis artificialia fiunt”. Delorme’s edition is based on a *codex unicus* (Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, 406) and needs some corrections; it has no apparatus of sources. (Pseudo-)Bacon refers here to Aristotle, *Hist. An.* A, 6, 491 a 20-23 and Nicholas of Damascus, *De Plantis* I, 1, 8 and I, 2, 53, ed. H. Drossaert Lulofs – E. Poortman, North-Holland Publishing Co., Amsterdam 1989, pp. 518 and 524; for the idea that we start from what is better known to us, he could also have cited Arist., *Phys.* A 1, 184 a 16-23. (Pseudo-)Bacon’s question is partially quoted (though not analyzed) by Th.W. Köhler, *Grundlagen des philosophisch-anthropologischen Diskurses im dreizehnten Jahrhundert. Die Erkenntnisbemühung um die Menschen im zeitgenössischen Verständnis*, Brill, Leiden 2000 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 71), p. 531. On the doubtful authenticity of the Amiens commentary on *Physics* I-IV, see S. Donati, “Pseudoepigrapha in the *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*? The Commentaries on the *Physics* and on the *Metaphysics*”, in J. Verger – O. Weijers (eds.), *Les débuts de l’enseignement universitaire à Paris (1200-1245 environ)*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2013 (Studia Artistarum 38), pp. 153-203, esp. pp. 193-4. For parallel passages in undisputed works, see Bacon, *Questiones supra librum de plantis*, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi* 11, ed. R. Steele collaborante F.M. Delorme, Clarendon, Oxford 1932, p. 210.26-28: “Planta et quicquid est in ea ordinatur ad usum animalis et creator propter animal et maxime propter hominem; set finis nobilior est etc.”; Bacon, *Questiones supra libros octo Physicorum Aristotelis*, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi* 13, ed. F.M. Delorme, collaborante R. Steele, Clarendon, London 1935, p. 82.25-27: “natura est in homine duplex, agens secundum propositum et natura, quia est finis omnium naturalium”, and p. 135.5-24: “(...) natura universalis (...) per accidens intendit generationem vel intendit generationem propter hominem (...)”. See also (Pseudo-)Bacon, *Questiones altere supra libros Prime Philosophie*, II, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi* 11, ed. R. Steele collaborante F.M. Delorme, Clarendon, Oxford 1932, pp. 66.32-67.2 and p. 68.6-15: “(...) dicitur esse prima forma illa que est status et finis (...) totius nature (...), et sic anima intellectiva potest dici prima forma”. (I thank Silvia Donati for drawing my attention to the last two texts and to the authenticity problem; on the last text, see her “Aristotle’s Formal Principle of Natural Things (*Phys.* I, 5-9) in the 13th-Century English Commentary Tradition of the *Physics*” [forthcoming].)

⁴⁰ See Ps.-Augustine/Alcher of Clairvaux, *De Spiritu et anima*, 52, in *PL* 40, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1887, col. 818: “Ita namque conditum est cor hominis ut in eo quasi in templo Dominus inhabitaret et tanquam in quodam

In the fourteenth century, some philosophers briefly touch on the famous dictum. In his commentary on the *Physics*, Walter Burley expounds the traditional thesis that “we are the goal of all artificial things, because they are made in order that we may have and use them”.⁴¹ In his *Questions* on the *Physics*, more precisely in the question “Whether the goal is a cause”, Nicole Oresme observes that “all inferior things exist for the sake of humankind, since human beings are the most perfect of all corruptible things”.⁴² Likewise, Pseudo-Albert of Saxony sketches some sort of teleological anthropocentrism. In his view, the sentence “‘we too are somehow the goal of all things’ must be understood with regard to the extrinsic goal and not with regard to the goal inhering in matter, such as the substantial form, which is called the goal of the generation process”.⁴³ Since, however, it remains unclear in what sense he interprets “omnium”, it is not certain that we should ascribe to him a robust universal anthropocentrism.

Let us now turn to Giles of Rome’s *Physics* commentary. In this huge work (written in Paris around 1275),⁴⁴ he briefly discusses the passage in question. Like Averroes, Albert, and Aquinas, he propounds a minimalist interpretation:

It is also noteworthy that he [i.e., Aristotle] says: “We use all things for our sake”, since the using art is primarily that art which is the goal and the architectonic art governing everything else. For such an art is the using art: even though it does not make matter, it has to know it, since it has to govern and command those who are occupied with it [i.e., that matter]. However, it is noteworthy that he says that we are somehow the goal of such products, since human beings without technical skills do not know how to arrange anything in such a well-ordered way that [the products] obey them; they are so to speak the goal of nothing. Consequently, if we are the goal of such artificial things, it is insofar

speculo suo reluceret (...). Of course, (Pseudo-)Bacon also knew the macro-/microcosm topos through Aristotle (*Phys.* Θ 2, 252 b 26-27) and Averroes (*In Phys.* VIII, 17, fol. 353vH). On scholastic interpretations of the topos, see Rudolf Allers’s classic essay “Microcosmus. From Anaximandros to Paracelsus”, *Traditio* 2 (1944), pp. 319-407, part. pp. 362, 369, and 384; see also J. McEvoy, “Philosophical Developments of the Microcosm and the Macrocosm in the Thirteenth Century”, in C. Wenin (ed.), *L’homme et son univers au Moyen Âge*, Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve 1986 (Philosophes Médiévaux 26), Vol. I, pp. 374-81; Köhler, *Grundlagen des philosophisch-anthropologischen Diskurses* (above, n. 39), p. 742 (index, s.v.); R. Finckh, *Minor Mundus Homo. Studien zur Mikrokosmos-Idee in der mittelalterlichen Literatur*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1999, pp. 82-7.

⁴¹ Walter Burley, *Super octo libros Phisicorum II*, 2, 2 (...), per Simonem de Luere, iussu domini Andree Torresani de Asula, Venetijs 1501, fol. 44ra: “(...) alio modo dicitur finis ille cuius est res et proper quem res fit sic quod aliter non fieret nisi esset illud et ille uteretur; et isto modo nos sumus finis omnium artificialium, quia res artificiales fiunt ut habeamus eas et utamur eis”.

⁴² Nicole Oresme, *Questiones super Physicam (Books I-VII)*, ed. S. Caroti – J. Celeyrette – S. Kirschner – E. Mazet, Brill, Leiden 2013 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 112), p. 242.63-65: “Confirmatur, quia secundo huius dicitur quod omnia inferiora sunt propter hominem, eo quod est perfectius omnium illorum corruptibilium”.

⁴³ *Expositio et quaestiones in Aristotelis Physicam ad Albertum de Saxonia attributae*, ed. B. Patar, Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve 1999 (Philosophes Médiévaux 40), p. 74.4-7.

⁴⁴ On the dating of Giles’s *Physics* commentary, see S. Donati, “Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano. I: Le opere prima del 1285 – I commenti aristotelici”, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 1.1 (1990), pp. 1-111, part. pp. 7, 46-48, and 70-71 (he commented on book I around 1274 and finished his commentary on books II-VII around 1275).

as we are aided by architectonic arts. Therefore we are said to be somehow the goal, not absolutely speaking.⁴⁵

In his commentary on the *Physics*, Giles clearly does not defend the strong thesis that can be found in (Pseudo-)Bacon's *Questions* and he certainly is not an exponent of Blumenberg's supposed "pseudotradition". Hence, we may conclude that within the tradition of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century *Physics* commentaries, (Pseudo-)Bacon's teleological anthropocentrism, which in a very abridged form is echoed by Oresme (and perhaps by Pseudo-Albert of Saxony), turns out to be an exception rather than the rule.

It is also remarkable that in the commentaries on 194 a 34-35 most commentators (including [Pseudo-]Bacon) do not refer to the parallel passage from *Politics* A, where Aristotle explicitly asserts that "if nature makes nothing either imperfect or to no purpose, it must be that nature has made all these things [i.e., all plants and animals] for the sake of human beings".⁴⁶ What is even more, in their *Politics* commentaries, Albert and Aquinas paraphrase this passage very concisely (Aquinas only notes that "it is clear that nature has made animals and plants for the sustenance of human beings").⁴⁷ A more detailed discussion of the passage is to be found in Peter of Auvergne's *Questions on the Politics*. In his view, the specific nature of each plant and animal intends the existence of these living beings (the underlying idea is the Avicennian topos "nature intends the species"). However, universal nature (understood as a power of a celestial intelligence or of the First Cause) intends the preservation of the whole universe, and especially the well-being of humans, who are the principal part of the sublunary world of generation and corruption. Peter of Auvergne clearly outlines a strong teleological anthropocentrism, which probably influenced Nicholas of Vaudémont's interpretation of the same passage.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Egidij Romani *In libros de physico auditu Aristotelis commentaria* accuratissime emendata (...) expensis Heredum (...) Octauiani Scoti (...) per Bonetum Locatellum (...), Venetijs 12a kal. Octobr. 1502 (ed.1), fol. 30ra = Egidij Romani *Commentaria in octo libros phisicorum Aristotelis* II, 4, Impressum Venetijs per d. Andream de Torresanis de Asula, 26 septembris 1502 (ed.2), fol. 32va (spelling and punctuation modified): "Notandum etiam quod ait: utimur omnibus propter nos, quia potissime ars usualis est illa que est finis et architectonica et imperatrix omnium aliorum [*an scribendum* aliarum?]; huiusmodi enim ars usualis, licet materiam non faciat, habet tamen eam cognoscere, quia habet imperare et precipere negociantibus circa ipsam. Notandum autem quod ait nos esse quodammodo finem [*conieci*: finis *ed.1-2*] talium operatorum, quia homo iners nihil scit [*scit ed.1* sit *ed.2*] ordinare [*conieci*: ordinate *ed.1-2*] in sui obsequium et quasi nullius est finis. Si ergo sumus finis talium artificiatorum, hoc est in quantum iuuamur per artes architectonicas; ideo dicimur [*conieci*: dicuntur *ed.1-2*] esse finis quodammodo, non simpliciter".

⁴⁶ See Arist., *Pol.* A 8, 1256 b 20-22 (= *Politics. Books I and II*, Translated with a Commentary by T.J. Saunders, Clarendon, Oxford 1995, p. 11; translation slightly modified).

⁴⁷ See Albertus Magnus, *Politica* I, 6, ed. A. Borgnet, Vivès, Paris 1891 (*Opera Omnia*, vol. 8), p. 46 (§ i); Aquinas, *Sententia libri Politicorum* I, 6, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 48, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, St. Thomas Aquinas Foundation, Roma 1971, p. A99.212-213.

⁴⁸ See Peter of Auvergne, *Questiones super I-VII libros Politicorum* I, 20, ed. M. Toste, Leuven U.P., Leuven 2022 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. Series I 61), pp. 419-22, part. p. 421.46-53; Nicholas of Vaudémont (= Ps.-Buridan), *Questiones politice super octo libros Politicorum Aristotelis* I, 10, Impresse Parisius opera Nicolai de Pratis 1513, fols. 13vb-14ra. On teleology in Peter's political philosophy, see Toste, "Interpretative Study", *ibid.*, pp. 78-9, and my "Lex pertinet ad rationem sicut aliquid factum a ratione: Note sur deux éditions critiques de Pierre d'Auvergne", *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 90 (2023), pp. 419-51, part. pp. 428-9; for the Avicennian background, see my "Natura intendit speciem: A Brief Reception History of an Avicennian Topos from Peter of Spain to Francesco Piccolomini", in D. De Smet – M. Sebtì (eds.), *Penser avec Avicenne. De l'héritage grec à la réception latine, en hommage à Jules Janssens*, Peeters, Leuven 2022 (Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales).

Still, it would be wrong to regard Peter and Nicholas as exponents of a “pseudotradition”, not only because their interpretations basically accord with Aristotle’s claim, but also because other commentators on the *Politics* come up with more modest interpretations.

3. *The Dictum in Sentences Commentaries*

If we look at thirteenth- and fourteenth-century *Sentences* commentaries, we get a different picture. In distinction 1 of book II, Peter Lombard explains why rational creatures (i.e., human beings and angels) have been created. Answering this question, he cites a famous line from Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana*: “Since God is good, we are, and insofar as we are, we are good”. Furthermore, Lombard adds that rational creatures have been created “in order to praise God, to serve Him, and to enjoy Him,” in short “for the sake of God’s goodness and His utility”. Lombard also emphasizes humankind’s mid-position between God and the world: “Just as human beings have been made for the sake of God, i.e., in order to serve Him, so the world has been made for the sake of human beings, i.e., to serve them. Human beings, then, are situated in the middle (...)”.⁴⁹ In commentaries on this fundamental passage, it was not unusual to cite Aristotle’s teleological dictum.

Alexander of Hales, for instance, notes that Peter Lombard’s view of humankind’s mid-position is contradicted by “the Philosopher”, who holds that “human beings are the end of all things that exist”. Alexander is obviously relying on the *Translatio vetus*, but omits the adverbial phrase “quodammodo”. Even though he quotes Aristotle, he does not offer an interpretation of the dictum. Instead, he simply claims that “humans are the last according to their coming into being, while they are said to be located in the middle owing to their dignity, since they are inferior to the angels and superior to all other creatures”.⁵⁰

Bibliotheca 20), pp. 335-85. On Peter’s influence on Nicholas, see Toste, “Interpretative Study”, pp. 313-15.

⁴⁹ Peter Lombard, *Sententiae* II, 1, 4, ed. I. Brady, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Grottaferrata 1971, pp. 332.24-333.15 (spelling modified): “Ideoque si queritur quare creatus sit homo uel angelus, breui sermone responderi potest: propter bonitatem eius. Vnde Augustinus in libro De doctrina christiana: ‘Quia bonus est deus, sumus; et in quantum sumus, boni sumus.’ (...) Et si queritur ad quid creata sit rationalis creatura, respondetur: ad laudandum deum, ad seruiendum ei, ad fruendum eo. (...) Cum ergo queritur quare uel ad quid facta sit rationalis creatura, breuissime responderi potest: propter dei bonitatem et suam utilitatem. (...) Et sicut factus est homo propter deum, id est ut ei seruiret, ita mundus factus est propter hominem, scilicet ut ei seruiret. Positus est ergo homo in medio, ut et ei seruiret et ipse seruiret, ut acciperet utrinque et reflueret totum ad bonum hominis, et quod accepit obsequium, et quod impendit”. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* I, 32, 35. The topos of the mid-position of human beings is borrowed from Hugh of St. Victor (or from a common source); see Hugh, *De sacramentis christiane fidei* I, 2, 1, ed. R. Berndt, Aschendorff, Münster 2008, p. 59.18-29 (= *PL* 176, ed. J.-P. Migne, Garnier, Paris 1880, col. 205C-D; punctuation modified): “Si ergo causa mundi homo est, quia propter eum factus est mundus, et causa hominis deus est, quia propter deum factus est homo (...) ita positus est in medio homo ut et ei seruiret et ipse seruiret (...)”. Similar ideas are also expressed by other twelfth-century authors: for example, see Peter Comestor, *Scolastica historia: Liber Genesis*, ed. A. Sylwan, Brepols, Turnhout 2005 (CCCM 191), p. 30.40-41: “In medio uero positum tradidit, quia homo est quasi medius inter creatorem super se positum et sensibilia sub se posita”. On the ancient Neoplatonic background, see G. Verbeke, “Man as a ‘Frontier’ according to Aquinas”, in G. Verbeke – D. Verhelst (eds.), *Aquinas and Problems of His Time*, Leuven U.P., Leuven 1976 (Mediaevalia Lovaniensia. Series I 5), pp. 195-223, part. pp. 206-14, and T. Scarpelli Cory, “The Distinctive Unity of the Human Being in Aquinas”, in M. Levering – M. Plested (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of Aquinas*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2021, pp. 581-95, part. pp. 589-93; on similar views in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Th. Leinkauf, *Grundriss: Philosophie des Humanismus und der Renaissance (1350-1600)*, Meiner, Hamburg 2017, Bd. 1, pp. 134-9.

⁵⁰ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* II, 1, 26, ed. PP. Collegii

Compared with this scarcely innovative view, Bonaventure's interpretation is much more interesting.

Bonaventure first argues that "the principal goal of the creation of creatures is God's glory or goodness rather than the utility for some creature". As said in Proverbs (16:4), "the Lord has made all things for Himself", not because He needs them, but rather "in order to manifest or to communicate His glory".⁵¹ Thereafter, Bonaventure answers the question as to "whether the spiritual nature [of angels] has a higher dignity than a nature composed of the spiritual and the corporeal [i.e., human nature]". In one of the *sed contra* arguments, he argues that in every class that which constitutes the goal is better. Since, then, human beings are the goal in the class of creatures, they must be superior to angels. In support of this view, he cites "Remigius and the Philosopher" to the effect that "we are somehow the goal of all beings".⁵² This Remigius is probably to be identified with Nemesius of Emesa or a medieval author depending on Nemesius, who indeed holds that "according to a Hebrew belief everything has been made for the sake of human beings".⁵³ On the basis of the passage from the *Translatio vetus*, and owing to Nemesius'/Remigius' influence, Aristotle's line is changed into the stronger dictum "nos sumus quodammodo finis omnium"; it is this dictum that entered the florilegium *Auctoritates Aristotelis*. In his *responsio*, Bonaventure points out that as regards their goal, human beings and angels are equal: both are ordered toward eternal beatitude, and while angels sustain us and thus exist for our sake, we also exist for the sake of angels insofar as "human beings repair the fall of angels through their resurrection". With regard to the dignity of nature, however, angels are of course superior to human beings. In his comment on the abovementioned *sed contra* argument, Bonaventure notes that human beings exist for the sake of God in the sense that they receive his influence. Everything else, however, exists for the sake of human beings in the sense that all things are there to fulfill human needs.⁵⁴ On the basis of this passage, it has been observed that "although man is not

S. Bonaventurae, Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1952, p. 11.10-16: "In medio. Contra, Philosophus: Homo est finis omnium eorum que sunt. Item, Isaac, De elementis: Homo in generatione naturali ultimum est (...). Respondeo: secundum existentiam ultimus est; secundum dignitatem tamen dicitur in medio positus, quoniam superior est aliis creaturis et inferior angelis". Alexander paraphrases Isaac Israeli, *De Elementis*, 1, in *Omnia Opera Ysaac* curavit imprimi (...) Bartholomeus Trot, in lugdunensi emporio 1515, fol. 4va-b; for the idea that humans are the last of all creatures, cf. Gen. 1:25-27 and 2:8-9. On this passage, see also I. Zorroza Huarte, "La relación del ser humano con el mundo, en forma de dominio, según Alejandro de Hales", *Cauriensia* 11 (2016), pp. 315-46, part. p. 326.

⁵¹ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum* [henceforth: *In Sent.*] II, 1, 2, 2, 1, conclusio, ed. studio et cura PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura, Ad Claras Aquas 1885, pp. 44-5.

⁵² Bonaventure, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 2, 2, p. 46 (spelling and punctuation modified): "Item in omni genere quod tenet rationem finis, illud est melius; sed in genere creaturarum homo tenet rationem finis, non angelus (unde Remigius dicit et philosophus quod nos sumus finis quodammodo omnium que sunt); hoc non dicitur de angelo; ergo etc". On the superiority of humans vis-à-vis angels, see R. Brague, *Le Règne de l'homme. Genèse et échec du projet moderne*, Gallimard, Paris 2015 (*L'Esprit de la cité*), pp. 39-41.

⁵³ Cf. Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* 1, ed. G. Verbeke – J.R. Moncho, Brill, Leiden 1975, p. 16.74 (spelling modified): "Hebraicum uero dogma est omnia hec propter hominem esse facta (...)". On the identification of both authors, see I. Brady, "Remigius – Nemesius", *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948), pp. 275-84, part. pp. 280-1. See also J.G. Bougerol, "Dossier pour l'étude des rapports entre saint Bonaventure et Aristote", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 40 (1973), pp. 135-222, part. p. 164; Albertus Magnus, *De homine*, in *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, t. 27, ed. H. Anzulewicz – J. R. Söder, Aschendorff, Münster 2008, p. 8.28 (*app. font.*).

⁵⁴ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 2, 2, conclusio and ad 2, p. 46 (spelling and punctuation modified): "Si quantum ad finem, sic dico quod sunt pares. (...) Si autem loquamur de ordine quantum ad nature dignitatem, dicendum

the highest being in creation, he does hold the central place and exercises a decisive function in the general return [of creatures to God].⁵⁵ Still, it is also clear that Bonaventure does not lend a truly positive meaning to Aristotle's dictum, since he primarily links it with the view of humans as *Mängelwesen*.⁵⁶

Aquinas also cites the Aristotelian dictum (in its strengthened form: "sumus et nos quodammodo finis omnium") in the *sed contra* section of the question "whether everything has been made for the sake of human beings". He immediately connects the dictum with the macro-/microcosm analogy. Since the order of the universe is somehow the goal of creation, and since human beings bear a similitude of the order of the universe, all natures flow together in human nature, and so human beings are somehow the goal of all things. Aquinas's *responsio* offers a much more detailed and positive exposition of the Aristotelian dictum than what we found in Bonaventure. In Aquinas's view, humankind is said to be the goal of creatures in a twofold way. On the one hand, human beings are the goal toward which all created things tend; on the other hand, they are the goal that profits from all creatures. Nevertheless, human nature is not the goal that moves the divine will (the Creator intends only his own divine goodness); rather it is "that for the benefit of which God's product is ordered".⁵⁷

To make this point clearer, Aquinas refers to book Λ of the *Metaphysics*, where it is said that "the order of the parts of the universe among each other exists for the sake of the order that is [directed] toward the ultimate [i.e., the divine] good". Accordingly, he holds that "God has installed a double order: a principal order through which [created] things are ordered toward him, and a secondary order through which they help each other in arriving at a similitude of God".⁵⁸ Since all creatures participate by themselves in divine goodness, their participation in God produces some utility for other creatures, in particular for human beings, which in turn have been made "with a view to repairing the fall of the angels". In addition to this all-encompassing utilitarian order among creatures, there is the principal

quod simpliciter loquendo angelus est creatura superior homine. (...) Quod obiicitur secundo, quod homo tenet rationem finis, dicendum quod aliquid propter quod res est aut est ad supplendum indigentiam, sicut domus propter hominem (...) aut ad suscipiendum eius influentiam, sicut homo propter deum. Quod ultimo modo habet rationem finis nobilius est; quod primo modo non. Quia enim homo omnibus indiget, angelus nullo nisi deo, ideo omnia propter hominem, non omnia propter angelum".

⁵⁵ See A. Schaefer, "The Position and Function of Man in the Created World according to Saint Bonaventure [II]", *Franciscan Studies* 21 (1961), pp. 233-382, part. p. 349.

⁵⁶ On this conception, see e.g. C. Rode, *Soziale Ontologien des Mittelalters. Der Status der politischen Gemeinschaft und das Mängelwesen Mensch*, Aschendorff, Münster 2022 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Neue Folge 93), part. pp. 59-107.

⁵⁷ See Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* [henceforth: *Super Sent.*] II, 1, 2, 3, *solutio*, ed. P. Mandonnet, Lethielleux, Paris 1929, p. 50 (spelling modified): "Respondeo dicendum quod finis alicuius rei dicitur dupliciter: uel in quem tendit naturaliter, uel ex eo quod ad ipsum sicut ad finem ordinari dicitur ut utilitatem aliquam consequatur secundum intentionem et ordinem agentis. Vtroque autem modo homo finis creaturarum dicitur: et primus quidem ex parte operis, sed secundus ex parte agentis. Differenter tamen homo dicitur finis et diuina bonitas, quia ex parte agentis diuina bonitas est finis rerum, sicut ultimum intentum ab agente, sed natura humana non est intenta a deo quasi mouens uoluntatem eius, sed sicut ad cuius utilitatem est ordinatus effectus eius".

⁵⁸ Cf. Arist., *Metaph.* Λ 10, 1075 a 11-16; Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio* XII, 12, ed. M.-R. Cathala – R.M. Spiazzi, Marietti, Roma 1964, p. 612 (§§ 2629-2632); *In librum beati Dionysii De diuinis nominibus* 4, 1 and 4, 5, ed. C. Pera, Marietti, Roma 1950, p. 90 (§285) and p. 113 (§340); *Summa theologiae* I, 21, 1, ad 3 and I, 47, 3, *resp.* and *ad* 1, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 4, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1888, pp. 258-9 and 489.

order through which they “tend toward divine goodness as that to which they intend to assimilate themselves”.⁵⁹ Given that something becomes similar to the best by becoming like what is better than itself, “every corporeal creature tends to become similar to intellectual creatures as far as possible”.⁶⁰ Therefore, Aquinas concludes, “the human form, i.e., the rational soul, is said to be the ultimate goal that is intended by inferior nature, as said in book II of *On the Soul*”.⁶¹

In his paraphrase of this entire passage, John Wright observed that according to Aquinas “man occupies a special place in the universe”.⁶² This is a somewhat trivial and imprecise observation (all beings actually have a particular place in the universe, i.e., a place determined by their specific form, and most ancient and medieval thinkers attribute some sort of *Sonderstellung* to human beings). What makes this passage remarkable is not only the reference to the twofold order mentioned in *Metaphysics* Λ 10 (a reference which enables Aquinas to situate humankind within the whole of reality), but also the hierarchical-teleological worldview distilled from *De Anima* B 4, 415 b 15-20, where Aristotle claims that the soul is a final cause, “since all natural bodies are instruments of the soul”. In his commentary on *De Anima* (written some fifteen years after his *Sentences* commentary), Aquinas gives the following explanation of this important passage:

Since the soul is the form of a living body, it follows that it is its goal. Furthermore, the soul is not only the goal of living bodies, but also of all natural bodies in this inferior [i.e., sublunary] realm. He [i.e., Aristotle] proves this as follows. We see that all natural bodies are so to speak instruments of the soul, not only in animals but also in plants. Indeed, we see that human beings use animals, plants, and inanimate things for their own benefit, while animals use plants and inanimate things and plants use inanimate things, insofar as they receive food and help from them. However, as each thing is done in nature, it is born to be done in that way. Hence, it is obvious that all inanimate bodies are instruments of animate

⁵⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* III, 21-22, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 14, iussu edita Leonis XIII P. M., Typis R. Garroni, Roma 1924, pp. 50-4; on these chapters, see D. Chardonnens, *L'homme sous le regard de la providence*, Vrin, Paris 1997 (Bibliothèque thomiste 50), p. 80.

⁶⁰ For a similar idea, cf. Albertus Magnus, *De Animalibus* I, 1, 4, and VII, 1, 1, ed. H. Stadler, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster 1916, p. 21.16-19 and p. 497.1-5 (based on Arist., *Hist. An.* Θ 1, 588 a 16-31); see also my “Albert the Great’s Zoological Anthropocentrism”, *Micrologus* 8 (2000), pp. 217-35, part. p. 222.

⁶¹ See Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, 1, 2, 3, *solutio*, pp. 50-51: “Ipse enim duplicem ordinem in uniuerso instituit, principalem scilicet et secundarium. Principalis est secundum quem [*conieci: quod ed.*] res ordinantur in ipsum; et secundarius est secundum quem [*conieci: quod ed.*] una iuuat aliam in perueniendo ad similitudinem diuinam; unde dicitur in 12^o Metaphisicorum quod ordo partium uniuersi ad inuicem est propter illum ordinem qui est in bonum ultimum, et sic dicitur esse propter aliud omne illud ex quo provenit ei utilitas. (...) Sed quedam sunt que habent participationem diuine bonitatis absolutam, ex qua provenit aliqua utilitas alicui rei, et talia essent etiam si illud cui provenit ex eis utilitas non foret; et per hunc modum dicitur quod angeli et omnes creature propter hominem a deo facte sunt; et sic etiam homo factus est propter reparationem ruine angelice, quia hec utilitas consecuta est et a deo preuisa et ordinata. Similiter ex parte operis ipse creature tendunt in diuinam bonitatem sicut in illud cui per se assimilari intendunt. Sed quia optimo assimilatur aliquid per hoc quod simile fit meliori se, ideo omnis creatura corporalis tendit in assimilationem creature intellectualis quantum potest, que altiori modo diuinam bonitatem consequitur; et propter hoc etiam forma humana, scilicet anima rationalis, dicitur esse finis ultimus intentus a natura inferiori, ut in 2^o *De Anima* dicitur”.

⁶² See J.H. Wright, *The Order of the Universe in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, Roma 1957, p. 8.

beings and exist for them, and less perfect animate beings also exist for the sake of more perfect animate beings.⁶³

With this reading of *De Anima* B 4 in mind, Aquinas is able to describe the human soul as the ultimate goal of sublunary nature (a view which is not articulated in Aristotle's *De Anima*, but can be traced back to Averroes and Themistius).⁶⁴

In the concluding comments on the arguments for a non-anthropocentric view, Aquinas sets some limits to his teleological anthropocentrism. (1) Human beings are said to be the goal "as that toward which the work of the Maker [i.e., God] is somehow directed". The adverbial phrase "aliquo modo" relativizes the anthropocentric view, since it implies that human beings are not in all respects the goal of the universe. (2) This is spelled out in the second reply: human beings are the goal "as that which gets benefit from every creature, and this is possible because human beings have something in common with every creature". Aquinas backs up this idea by invoking Gregory the Great, who in line with Augustine holds that "we share being with stones, life with trees, sense perception with animals, and thinking with the angels".⁶⁵ (3) Even though "human nature is so to speak something extremely small

⁶³ Aquinas, *Sententia libri de anima* II, 7, ed. Leon., t. 45.1, p. 98.195-212: "Cum igitur anima sit forma uiuentis corporis, sequitur quod sit finis eius. Et ulterius non solum anima est finis uiuentium corporum, set etiam omnium naturalium corporum in istis inferioribus. Quod sic probat: uidemus enim quod omnia naturalia corpora sunt quasi instrumenta anime, non solum in animalibus, set etiam in plantis. Videmus enim quod homines utuntur ad sui utilitatem animalibus et plantis et rebus inanimatis, animalia uero plantis et rebus inanimatis, plante autem rebus inanimatis, in quantum scilicet alimentum et iuuamentum ab eis accipiunt; secundum autem quod agitur unumquodque in rerum natura, ita natum est agi; unde uidetur quod omnia corpora inanimata sint instrumenta animatorum et sint propter ipsa et etiam animata minus perfecta sint propter animata magis perfecta".

⁶⁴ Cf. Themistius, *Commentaire sur le Traité de l'âme d'Aristote. Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. G. Verbeke, Brill, Leiden 1973, p. 229.88-91 (= *In libros Aristotelis De Anima paraphrasis*, ed. R. Heinze, Reimer, Berlin 1899 [CAG V.3], p. 100.35-37): "Extrema autem et summa specierum activus iste intellectus et usque ad hunc progressa natura cessavit tanquam nihil habens alterum [habens alterum *scripsi cum codd. EMOP, Thoma Bateque: inu. Verbeke cum cod. T*] honoratius cui utique ipsum faceret subiectum"; Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, rec. F.St. Crawford, The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge MA 1953, II, 37, p. 187.52-55: "(...) anima est finis omnium naturalium quia omnia naturalia videntur instrumenta anime indifferenter in omnibus animatis; et sicut videtur in animalibus, ita videtur in plantis". See also Aquinas, *Compendium theologie* I, 171, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 42, Editori di San Tommaso, Roma 1979, p. 148.56-68: "Oportet igitur hinc considerare finem motus celi. Manifestum est enim quod omne corpus motum ab intellectu est instrumentum ipsius; finis autem motus instrumenti est forma a principali agente concepta, que per motum instrumenti in actum educitur. Forma autem diuini intellectus quam per motum celi complet, est perfectio rerum per uiam generationis et corruptionis; generationis autem et corruptionis ultimus finis est nobilissima forma, que est anima humana, cuius ultimus finis est uita eterna, ut supra ostensum est: est igitur ultimus finis motus celi multiplicatio hominum perducendorum ad uitam eternam". For the idea that the soul is the "noblest form", cf. Aquinas, *De spiritualibus creaturis* 6, arg. 3, ed. J. Cos, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 24.2, Commissio Leonina, Roma 2000, p. 64.21-26; *Summa theol.* I, 91, 1, arg. 2, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 5, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1889, p. 390. This idea is linked with the Aristotelian topos "nobilissimum animalium est homo": see Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 91, 3, part. arg. 1 and *resp.*, in *ibid.*, p. 393; cf. *Auct. Arist.* 9, 3 and 19, 29, ed. Hamesse, p. 209.20-21 and p. 273.28, based on *Hist. An.* A 7, 491 a 22-23 and *Secretum secretorum* 65, 1 (see further Th. Köhler, *Homo animal nobilissimum. Konturen des spezifisch Menschlichen in der naturphilosophischen Aristoteleskommentierung des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, Teilbd. 1, Brill, Leiden 2008 [Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 94], part. pp. 183-99).

⁶⁵ See Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in euangelia* 29, 2, ed. R. Étaix, Brepols, Turnhout 1999 (CCSL 141), p. 246.34-36; cf. *Moralia in Iob* VI, 16, 20, ed. M. Adriaen, Brepols, Turnhout 1979 (CCSL 143), p. 298.22-25.

in the universe”,⁶⁶ all corporeal creatures (irrespective of their quantitative largeness) are “inferior to human beings because of the intellect”. The angels, however, are by nature nobler than human beings; hence, they exist for the sake of human beings only insofar as the latter benefit from them. (4) Aquinas is well aware that there are many things in the universe that harm human beings (e.g., serpents and thorny plants) and many other things that seem useless to us (e.g., some deep-sea fishes). In his reply to this argument, he points out that living beings that are now harmful to us were not harmful before the fall. Moreover, even in their postlapsarian state, human beings can benefit from them, “if they become humbler through them and consider God’s glory and wisdom even in such creatures of little value”. In this manner, even beings that have no practical use for us benefit us, if we “obtain some general or particular knowledge of them”. Here, Aquinas combines Christian and Aristotelian elements in his answer. On the one hand, his argument rests on the Christian idealization of humility as a virtue that presupposes a recognition of one’s own weakness;⁶⁷ on the other hand, it reminds us of Aristotle’s ideal of the theoretical life and his observation that “there is something wonderful in all natural things”.⁶⁸ (5) At the very end of his replies, Aquinas adds that the Aristotelian *auctoritas* adduced in the *sed contra* argument “is to be understood with regard to artificial things”. Thus, it is clear that even in his *Sentences* commentary Aquinas restricts the anthropocentric range of the famous line from *Physics* B.⁶⁹

With regard to the same question, Peter of Tarentaise and Richard of Mediavilla propound views that are quite similar to, and influenced by, Aquinas’s position.⁷⁰ By contrast, Giles of

Adriaen and Étaix did not notice the Augustinian source: cf. Augustine, *Sermones de vetere testamento* 43, 4, ed. C. Lambot, Turnhout 1961 (CCSL 41), p. 509.62-65. In his commentary on Romans 1:20, Aquinas cites the passage from Gregory’s *Homiliae* verbatim (see *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, ed. R. Cai, Marietti, Roma 1953, p. 23, §120).

⁶⁶ See Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, 1, 2, 3, arg. 3, p. 49, and *Super Sent.* IV, 48, 2, 3, arg. 6, ed. S.E. Fretté, Vivès, Paris 1874 (*Opera Omnia*, t. 11), p. 449b. The idea is based on Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae* II, 7, 3-6, ed. C. Moreschini, Saur, München 2000, p. 50. On the sources of this argument, see J. Gruber, *Kommentar zu Boethius, De Consolatione philosophiae*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1978, pp. 213-5.

⁶⁷ See Aquinas, *Super Sent.* III, 33, 2, 1, 4, ad 3, ed. P. Mandonnet, Lethielleux, Paris 1933, p. 1050 (§170); *Summa theol.* II-II, 35, 1, ad 3, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 8, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1895, p. 286; *Summa theol.* II-II, 123, 1, ad 1; 129, 3, ad 4; 161, esp. 2, *resp.*, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 10, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1899, pp. 4, 62, and 295. On the scholastic notion of this virtue, see S. Ernst, “Die bescheidene Rolle der Demut. Christliche und philosophische Grundhaltungen in der speziellen Tugendlehre (*S. Th.* II-II, q. 161)”, in A. Speer (ed.), *Thomas von Aquin: Die Summa theologiae. Werkinterpretationen*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2005 (De Gruyter Studienbuch), pp. 343-76, and S. Negri (ed.), *Representations of Humility and the Humble*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2021 (Micrologus Library 108).

⁶⁸ See Arist., *De Part. An.* A 5, 645 a 16-23; cf. Albertus Magnus, *De Animalibus* XI, 2, 3, p. 793.33-34 Stadler: “In omnibus enim naturalibus mirabilia est speculari”.

⁶⁹ See Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, 1, 2, 3, ad 1-4, p. 51. The last sentence must be corrected: “Tamen auctoritas philosophi in 2° Phisicorum in contrarium inducta intelligitur de rebus artificialibus”. Instead of “2° Phisicorum” Mandonnet has “V Phys., text. 4”; this reference is obviously wrong. The correct reading is witnessed by some earlier editions: see, e.g., Sancti Thomae Aquinatis (...) *Praeclarissima Commentaria in Secundum Librum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (...), Ab enormibus & innumeris mendis aliarum Editionum expurgata (...), Per (...) Ioannem Nicolai, Operum Tomus Octauus, Apud Societatem Bibliopolarum, Parisiis 1660, p. 20 (“in secundo Physico<rum>”).

⁷⁰ See Peter of Tarentaise, *In II. Librum Sententiarum Commentaria* 1, 3, 2 iussu (...) Thomae Turci (...) edita, apud A. Colomerium, Tolosae 1649, p. 14; Richard of Mediavilla, *Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* II, 1, 5, 3, ed. a L. Silvestrio, apud V. Sabbium, Brixiae 1591, pp. 25-6.

Rome subtly deviates from Aquinas.⁷¹ To begin with, in his *in contrarium* argument, Giles significantly cites two authorities: first a passage from Augustine's *De diuersis quaestionibus LXXXIII* and only thereafter Aristotle's *Physics* (this already hints at the subordination of philosophy to theology, which will structure his entire answer). With Augustine, Giles holds that "everything has been made for the use of human beings, since reason, which has been given to human beings, uses all things with its judgment".⁷² Like Aquinas, he quotes the Aristotelian dictum in its strengthened form ("we are somehow the goal of everything"). In his *responsio*, Giles starts with noting that "the question as to whether we are the goal of all things is thoroughly treated by Augustine and Aristotle". While this is surely an historically inexact or hyperbolic claim, Giles is right in observing that according to Peter Lombard "human beings are placed in the middle between God and the world in order to serve God and to be served by the world". More important than these doxographic comments is what he says about the *dispositio* of his answer: after dealing with "the Philosopher's approach" he "will complement his shortcomings by means of Augustine and the Master [i.e., Peter Lombard], (...) not because the Philosopher said something false on this question, but rather because one could have given a richer and more complete account". These introductory lines can be read as a programmatic proem, in which Giles suggests that he will give a more strongly Augustinian answer than did Aquinas. As we will see, Giles's *responsio* might perhaps lead us to slightly nuance Richard Cross's "view that in crucial ways the central academic theological concerns articulated by Giles are no more distinctively Augustinian than Aquinas's are".⁷³

In the philosophical section of his answer, Giles proceeds in two steps. First, he observes that in *Physics* B 2 Aristotle first demonstrates that human beings are somehow the goal of all artificial things. Secondly, Giles argues that Aristotle thereafter goes on to show that humans are the goal of all natural things. Giles's first step is in line with his *Physics* commentary. In his *Sentences* commentary, he takes up the traditional distinction between preparing, producing, and using arts. Arts that prepare some sort of material are directed toward arts that make something out of the prepared material, and these productive arts are subordinated to the arts that use the products. Hence, he concludes that "if all artificial things are ordered toward the using art, and if the using art exists for the use of human

⁷¹ In the *Reportatio* of his *Lectura*, the question of whether humankind is the goal of all things is not discussed; see the *tabula quaestionum* in Aegidii Romani *Opera Omnia* III.2, *Reportatio lectionum super libros I-IV Sententiarum. Reportatio Monacensis; Excerpta Godefridi de Fontibus*, ed. C. Luna, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2003, pp. 548 and 555-6 (as Concetta Luna observes, book II of the *Reportatio* treats "solo una piccola parte delle questioni presenti in *Ord. II*" [*ibid.*, p. 96]). On the date of book II of the so-called *Ordinatio*, see S. Donati, "Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano. I: Le opere prima del 1285 – I commenti aristotelici", p. 58, n. 146, and Ead., "Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano. I: Le opere prima del 1285 – I commenti aristotelici. Parte II", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 2.1 (1991), pp. 1-74, part. p. 48 (the commentary on the first distinctions was probably written at the beginning of the 90's, perhaps in Bayeux); see also Luna, "Introduzione", in *Reportatio lectionum*, p. 65, n. 101 and pp. 90-1.

⁷² Giles, *In Secundum Librum Sententiarum Quaestiones* [henceforth: *In Sent.* II], 1, 2, 4, *in contrarium*, ed. Angelus Rocchensis, apud F. Zilettum, Venetijs 1581, p. 82bA: "(...) omnia facta sunt in usum hominis, et per consequens omnia ordinantur ad ipsum, et sunt propter utilitatem eius". Cf. Augustine, *De diuersis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 30, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, Brepols, Turnhout 1975 (CCSL 44A), p. 40.59-61; on this passage, see A. Dupont, "Using or Enjoying Humans. *Uti* and *frui* in Augustine", *Augustiniana* 54 (2004), pp. 475-506, part. p. 487.

⁷³ See R. Cross, "Theology", in: Briggs and Eardley (eds.), *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, pp. 34-72, part. p. 36.

beings, all artificial things exist for their sake". In this sense, then, "we are somehow the goal of all artificial things".⁷⁴

Before developing the second point of the philosophical thesis, Giles makes an intermediary observation concerning the relation between artificial and natural things. According to Aristotle, natural things are the matter of art, since "art begins where nature ceases".⁷⁵ If, then, we are the goal of all artificial things, we must also be "the goal of natural things, insofar as art does something with natural things". In this context, Giles cites the pseudo-Ptolemaean adage "the wise man will dominate the stars". He interprets this adage, which is usually adduced against astrological determinism,⁷⁶ in a broader sense: "not only wise astronomers, but even prudent peasants dominate and use the heavens whenever they plough their lands and cultivate their vineyards at the time when the celestial condition and the heavens' mode of existing can be more advantageous to them". This domination, however, only shows that human beings are "the goal of natural things inasmuch as natural things are directed through art and assiduous activity toward the benefit and advantage of human beings".⁷⁷

In the second part of the philosophical section, Giles elucidates "how the Philosopher in the same second book of his *Physics* investigates in which manner human beings are the goal of natural things per se, i.e., without utilizing them by means of art for their own benefit and advantage".⁷⁸ Here, Giles draws on Aquinas's *Physics* commentary so as to surpass Aquinas.

⁷⁴ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 4, *resp.*, pp. 82bC-83aB (spelling and punctuation modified): "Primo ergo pertractabimus modum Philosophi et postea supplebimus defectum eius per Augustinum et per Magistrum, ostendendo amplius dicendum esse quam Philosophus dixerit, non quod ipse Philosophus in hoc falsum dixerit, sed plus et completius dici potuit. Volens enim Philosophus probare hominem esse quodammodo finem omnium in secundo Physicorum, primo probat ipsum esse finem omnium artificialium, secundo ostendit ipsum esse finem omnium naturalium. Primum sic patet: nam quasi omnes artes operatiue reducuntur ad triplex genus artium, videlicet ad preparatiuam, factiuam et usulem. (...) quotienscunque ars est sub arte, finis est sub fine (...). Et quia inter artes operatiuas, usualis est altior, ad hanc ordinabuntur omnia alia. Si ergo omnia artificialia ordinantur ad usulem et usualis est propter usum hominis, omnia artificialia erunt propter usum hominis. Sumus ergo nos quodammodo finis omnium artificialium". For this division of the arts, cf. e.g. Averroes, *In Phys.* II, 25, fol. 58vG and Albertus Magnus, *Physica* II, 1, 11 (quoted above in n. 26).

⁷⁵ Cf. *Auct. Arist.* 7, 2, p. 195.38-39 Hamesse (based on *De Sensu* 1, 436 a 19-b1): "(...) ubi dimittit naturalis, ibi incipit medicus"; cf. also *Auct. Arist.* 15, 134, p. 262.99: "Ars supplet defectum nature".

⁷⁶ Cf., e.g., Giles, *In Sent.* II, 14, 3, 3, pp. 614-16: "Whether the free will is subjected to the motion of the heavens" (he quotes Pseudo-Ptolemy in the *in contrarium* argument: "(...) Through wisdom we not only are not compelled by the motion of the stars, but we are even able to dominate the stars"). On the use of this adage in late-medieval scholasticism, see M. Sorokina, *Les sphères, les astres et les théologiens. L'influence céleste entre science et foi dans les commentaires des Sentences (v. 1220-v. 1340)*, Brepols, Turnhout 2021 (*Studia Sententiarum* 5), chapter 7 ("Le libre arbitre face à l'influence céleste. La théorie de l'*inclinatio*"), part. p. 340, and my "Nicolaus Elenbog's 'Apologia for the Astrologers': A Benedictine's View on Astral Determinism", *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 62 (2020), pp. 251-334, part. p. 296 (with n. 141).

⁷⁷ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 4, *resp.*, p. 83aB-C: "(...) res naturales sunt materia artis; nam ubi natura desinit, ibi ars incipit. Si ergo nos sumus finis omnium artificialium, sumus et finis rerum naturalium, prout circa illas res naturales uersatur ars. Hoc ergo modo et astra nobis seruiunt et sunt in obsequium nostrum, adeo ut Ptolomeus (...) diceret: 'Sapiens dominabitur astris'; nam non solum sapientes astronomi, sed etiam prudentes rustici dominantur celo (...). Viso ergo quomodo Philosophus inuestigauit hominem esse finem omnium artificialium et etiam naturalium, prout naturalia per artem et industriam humanam ordinantur in utilitatem et profectum hominis, uolumus declarare quomodo (...) inquit quomodo homo est finis rerum naturalium secundum se absque eo quod per industriam artis utatur eis in utilitatem et profectum suum".

⁷⁸ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 4, *resp.*, p. 83aC (see the end of the previous note).

Giles's bold argument consists of three main theses. (1) The goal of natural things is to be identified with the object at which the search of natural philosophy ultimately comes at rest. This thesis relies not only on the assumption of an homology between scientific knowledge and its object,⁷⁹ but also on the belief that natural science is a well-ordered system that mirrors the order of nature. (2) Giles holds that "all natural things are ordered toward that [principle] at which the entire analysis (*resolutio*) by natural philosophy comes at rest, or [otherwise put] toward which the study of natural philosophy ultimately extends itself".⁸⁰ (3) In Giles's view, the end of chapter 2 of *Physics* B proves that this ultimate object of natural philosophy is the human soul. At 194 b 9-13, Aristotle asks "up to what point a natural philosopher should know the form" and answers that "he should confine himself to things which, though separable in form, are in matter".⁸¹ Averroes had taken this claim to mean that "in studying the forms, the natural philosopher should arrive at the ultimate form for the sake of which matter exists, namely the form of a human being". This interpretation is surely influenced by the subsequent line of *Physics* B 2, where Aristotle observes that "a human being is generated by a human being and the sun".⁸² Radicalizing Averroes's interpretation of 194 b 9-13, Aquinas observes that "at its end-point natural science studies forms that are somehow separated [from matter] and still have their being in matter, and such forms are rational souls".⁸³ In his own *Physics* commentary, Giles adopts Aquinas's interpretation of this same passage, and also maintains that "the end-point of natural philosophy studies human souls".⁸⁴ More interestingly, Giles invokes this *Physics* passage in the proem to his *De Anima* commentary in order to show that "the human soul, at which the study of nature ends, is the

⁷⁹ Cf. *Auct. Arist.* 6, 162, p. 188.75 Hamesse: "Scientie secantur quemadmodum res de quibus sunt scientie" (based on *Arist., De An.* Γ 8, 431 b 24-25).

⁸⁰ The term *resolutio* denotes a rational procedure that breaks down something complex into its simple constituents or leads from an effect to its cause; cf. J.A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Brill, Leiden 1996 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 52), pp. 130-5.

⁸¹ See *Arist., Phys.* B 2, 194 b 9-13, trans. by Charlton, p. 28 (translation slightly modified).

⁸² Averroes, *In Phys.* II 26, fol. 59rA: "(...) oportet naturalem peruenire in consideratione de formis ad ultimam formam propter quam fuit materia, v.g. ad formam hominis". Cf. *Arist., Phys.* B 2, 194 b 13. Averroes's interpretation may have been indebted to Philoponus, who in his comment on the same passage notes (*In Phys.*, p. 240.23-28 Vitelli (CAG XVI)= *On Aristotle. Physics* 2, trans. by A.R. Lacey, Duckworth, London 1993 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle 17), p. 53 [translation modified]): "So giving this cause [the natural philosopher] will say that 'a human being is generated by a human being and the sun', and both have their being in matter. And he will probably not say that there are human beings in the cosmos because the universe must comprise intermediate forms such as our soul, which ascends and descends. For these and similar questions are proper to the metaphysician to examine (...)". On Philoponus' psychology which lies behind this view, cf. K. Verrycken, "Philoponus' Neoplatonic Interpretation of Aristotle's Psychology", *Apeiron* 48 (2015), pp. 502-20, part. pp. 508-10; on his influence on Averroes, cf. S. Harvey, "The Impact of Philoponus' Commentary on the *Physics* on Averroes' Three Commentaries on the *Physics*", in P. Adamson – H. Baltussen (eds.), *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries*, Vol. 2, Institute of Classical Studies, London 2004 (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement 83), pp. 89-105.

⁸³ Aquinas, *In Phys.* II, 4, p. 66 (spelling modified): "Et ideo terminus considerationis scientie naturalis est circa formas que quidem sunt aliquo modo separate, sed tamen esse habent in materia. Et huiusmodi forme sunt anime rationales (...)".

⁸⁴ Egidij Romani *In libros de physico auditu Aristotelis commentaria accuratissime emendata* II (ed.1), fol. 30va = Egidij Romani *Commentaria in octo libros phisicorum Aristotelis* II, 4 (ed.2), fol. 33ra-b: "(...) circa animas humanas est terminus naturalis considerationis".

worthiest and highest form among the objects studied by the natural philosopher”.⁸⁵ Hence, it is unsurprising that in his *Sentences* commentary he links this *Physics* passage with the idea that “we are somehow the goal of all things”. Given that “the human form is an immaterial form in matter”, natural philosophy culminates in the study of the human soul, “at which all other natural things are ordered as the less noble are ordered toward the nobler”. Higher forms (i.e., the absolutely immaterial unmoved movers of the celestial bodies) do not pertain to the domain of natural philosophy; they are studied in metaphysics.

Accordingly, Giles concludes that “it is because of the rational soul, which we have and which exceeds the whole of nature and all material forms in nobility, that we are somehow the goal of both artificial and natural things”. Owing to its immateriality, the human intellect transcends all material forms that inhere in matter and are “per se and directly subject to [and the subject matter of] the study of natural philosophy”. In step with a long tradition that goes back to the late-ancient commentators on Aristotle, Giles regards psychology (i.e., the study of the human soul) as the supreme natural science. What is novel, however, is that he connects this elevation of psychology with the Aristotelian dictum “we are somehow the goal of all things”.⁸⁶ In this manner, the dictum receives an epistemological dimension:

⁸⁵ *Fidi interpretis Aristotelis Egidij Romani (...) In libros de anima expositio*, Venetijs (impensis domini Andree Torresani de Asula) per Simonem de Luere, 18 aprilis 1500, fol. 2ra-b (spelling modified): “(...) forma autem ultima secundum considerationem philosophi ultra quam non se extendit philosophus naturalis, ut ait Commentator 2^o phisicorum, est anima humana. (...) quare si phisicus habet statum in supremo, anima humana, ad quam terminatur consideratio phisica, est dignissima et suprema inter ea que considerat philosophus [*conieci*: phisicus *ed.*] naturalis”. On the question whether the human mind is to be studied in natural philosophy or in metaphysics, see Köhler, *Grundlagen des philosophisch-anthropologischen Diskurses* (above, n. 39), pp. 347-50, and S.W. de Boer, *The Science of the Soul: The Commentary Tradition on Aristotle's De Anima, c. 1260-c. 1360*, Leuven U.P., Leuven 2013 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. Series I 46), pp. 57-71 and 299.

⁸⁶ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 83aC-bD (spelling and punctuation modified): “(...) ad illud ordinabuntur omnia naturalia ad quod stabit tota resolutio philosophie naturalis, uel ad quod ultimo se protendit consideratio philosophie naturalis; hoc autem est anima humana. Ideo Philosophus ait: Vsque <ad> quantum, idest quousque phisicum, idest philosophum naturalem oportet cognoscere speciem (...). Ideo ait Philosophus ibidem quod hec, idest forme ad quas stat ultima consideratio naturalis, sunt species separate in materia. Forma ergo humana est forma separata in materia; ad talem ergo formam separatam in materia stat ultima consideratio naturalis. Nam si esset aliqua forma [*conieci*: forus *ed.*] plus separata quam anima humana, sicut sunt intelligentie, (...) talia excederent considerationem philosophie naturalis; nam que non amplius mota mouent non amplius sunt phisice [*conieci* (*cf. Arist., Phys. B 7, 198 a 27-28*): *Phylosophicae ed.*] considerationis. Dicemus ergo quod de tali forma separata que est forma in materia, cuiusmodi est anima humana, potest considerare philosophus naturalis. Quod sic probat philosophus: nam omnis forma rei generate ex materia est de consideratione philosophi naturalis; sed anima humana est forma hominis, qui est res generata ex materia, quia homo generat hominem ex materia et sol [*conieci* (*cf. Arist. et Aeg., Phys. ed.2, fol. 33rb*): *sole ed.*]; ergo forma sic separata, cuiusmodi est anima humana, erit de consideratione philosophi naturalis. (...) Propter ergo animam rationalem quam habemus, que nobilitate excedit totam naturam et omnes formas materiales, sumus nos quodammodo finis et artificialium et naturalium. (...) Intellectus ergo humanus tanquam forma immaterialis nobilitate excedit omnes formas per se et directe subiectas considerationi naturalis philosophi, quia omnes tales forme sic subiecte preter animam intellectiuam sunt immerse materie et preter materiam esse non possunt. (...) et propter huiusmodi animam homo est longe nobilior aliis naturalibus rebus”. Giles cites Aristotle, *Phys. B 2, 194 a 35* and *194 b 9-13* and *B 7, 198 a 27-28* mainly according to Moerbeke's translation (though there is also some influence of the Arabic-Latin translation). On the Neoplatonic conception of psychology as the “gateway to higher metaphysics and theology”, see R. Sorabji, “Introduction”, in Id. (ed.), *The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD. A Sourcebook*, Vol. 1: *Psychology*, Duckworth, London 2004, part. p. 25; cf. I. Hadot, “Commentaire”, in Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories*, Traduction commentée sous la direction de I. Hadot, Fasc. 1, Brill, Leiden 1990 (Philosophia Antiqua 50), pp. 85-9, and C. Steel, “Introduction”, in: ‘Simplicius’, *On Aristotle. On the Soul 3.6-13*, trans. by C. Steel in

precisely because human beings are the end of, and superior to, all material things, they are able to know all such things.⁸⁷ If we look at Giles's commentaries on *De Anima* and on the *Liber de causis*, it becomes evident that the human capacity to know all things (and especially all material things) also has to do with the Aristotelian idea that "the soul is somehow everything" and with the Proclian idea that "the soul cognizes everything in the manner in which it is everything" (it knows sensible things insofar as it is their causal model, and it knows intelligible things insofar as it is an image of them).⁸⁸ For Giles, the "transcendental openness" of the human soul, which includes the possibility of an all-encompassing scientific knowledge of nature, is due to our ontological mid-position between God and prime matter. This openness is even widened by grace, which places the soul "in the infinite space" that belongs to purely spiritual beings.⁸⁹

The theological section of Giles's *responsio* in the *Sentences* commentary makes clear in what sense and why human beings occupy a central position between God and the world. First, Giles repeats that according to Aristotle "all things obey us inasmuch as we deal with them by means of reason and art, if we are wise in turning them, as far as possible, to our profit and benefit".⁹⁰ This view, however, focuses only on "the condition of our [rational] nature".

collaboration with A. Ritups, Bristol Classical Press, London 2013 (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle 100), pp. 7-9.

⁸⁷ On the limits of metaphysical knowledge (especially on our limited knowledge of the intelligences), see G. Pini, "Ex defectu intellectualis luminis: Giles of Rome on the Role and Limits of *Metaphysics*", *Quaestio* 5 (2005), pp. 527-41, part. pp. 534-9; C. König-Pralong, "Le désir naturel de connaître. Autour des *Questions métaphysiques* attribuées à Gilles de Rome", in V. Cordonier – T. Suarez-Nani (eds.), *L'aristotélisme exposé. Aspects du débat philosophique entre Henri de Gand et Gilles de Rome*, Academic Press Fribourg, Fribourg 2014 (Dokimion 38), pp. 1-28, part. pp. 6-15.

⁸⁸ See *Fundatissimi Aegidii Romani (...) opus super authorem de causis (...)*, apud Iacobum Zoppinum, Venetiis 1550, fol. 45vC: "(...) omnis anima est omnis res, exemplariter quidem sensibilia, iconice autem intelligibilia. (...) Et ideo anima est quodammodo omnia, et eo modo quo est omnia, scit omnia, ita quo sensibilia est causaliter et exemplariter, (...) sed intelligibilia est similitudinaria (...)". Cf. Arist., *De An.* Γ 8, 431 b 21 (= *Auct. Arist.* 6, 161, p. 188.74 Hamesse); Proclus, *Elementatio theologica*, 195, ed. H. Boese, Leuven U.P., Leuven 1987 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. Series I 5), p. 95.1-13; *Liber de causis*, prop. 14, ed. A. Pattin, *Tijdschrift voor filosofie* 28 (1966), pp. 90-203, at p. 164. On Aquinas's interpretation of this passage (which influenced Giles), see C. D'Ancona, "Elementi di neoplatonismo nella teoria della conoscenza umana di Tommaso d'Aquino (*Q. d. De Veritate*, 10, 6 e *Super Librum de Causis*, prop. 13 [14])", in A. Bertolacci – A. Paravicini Bagliani – M. Bertagna (eds.), *La filosofia medievale tra antichità ed età moderna. Saggi in memoria di Francesco Del Punta*, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2017, pp. 325-62, part. pp. 351-60. On Giles's Neoplatonism, see G. Battagliero, "Egidio Romano, Proclo e il *Liber de causis*", *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 24 (2017), pp. 117-37, and P. Porro, "Egidio Romano, la tradizione procliana e l'averroismo di san Tommaso". Qualche considerazione sul senso e sulla storia della distinzione reale tra essere ed essenza", *Quaestio* 20 (2020), pp. 307-43. On the soul's transcendental openness, see J.A. Aertsen, "The Human Intellect: 'All Things' or 'Nothing'? Medieval Readings of *De Anima*", in R.L. Friedman – J.-M. Counet (eds.), *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima*, Peeters, Louvain-la-Neuve 2013 (Philosophes Médiévaux 58), pp. 145-59, part. pp. 146-51.

⁸⁹ On the human soul as the border (*orizon*) between the material and the immaterial domains, see also Giles's *Sermon on St. Nicholas*, in *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia: I. Repertorio dei Sermoni*, ed. C. Luna, Olschki, Firenze 1990, p. 452.126-49 (cf. *supra*, n. 49): "Et sicut est dare duos terminos extremos: materiam primam et deum, ita est dare unum terminum medium, ut animal rationale. (...) Anima ergo, considerata per naturam, est media inter substantias separatas et hec corporalia. Sed si adhereat gratie, elevat se supra se et quasi collocatur inter spiritualia (...). Igitur anima per gratiam dilatatur et quasi collocatur in spatio infinito (...)".

⁹⁰ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 83bD: "(...) omnia sunt in obsequium nostrum, prout per rationem et per artem circa omnia negociamur, si sapientes sumus conuertendo ea prout possibile est in profectum et utilitatem nostram (...)" (Herewith Giles anticipates Leibniz's view that the universe "n'est pas fait pour nous seuls, il est

By contrast, Christian saints and theologians are aware that “nature is ordered toward grace as toward its perfection”.⁹¹ Accordingly, Giles holds that “we are the goal of all things to a higher degree if we order everything toward our profit through grace”. This graceful ordering is realized in three ways. First of all, human beings are “the goal of themselves if they use themselves for their own profit by directing themselves toward God”. Secondly, they “use rational creatures with a view to [the life in] society, which they ought to refer back to God”. Thirdly, they use “irrational creatures with a view to [their own] prominent position, which they ought also to refer back to God”. As Giles remarks, this entire view is inspired by Augustine’s reflections on *uti* and *frui*.⁹² From his Augustinian perspective, “the utility according to which the Philosopher says that we are the goal of everything” turns out to be “very ignoble and extremely low”, whereas “the utility according to which the saints posit us as the goal of all things is very high”.⁹³ Furthermore, Giles underlines that Aristotle’s view is also inferior to Peter Lombard’s explanation of why human beings are the goal of all things. Lombard points out that all things are directed toward human profit, “insofar as we are placed by God’s mildness in the middle between the world and God”. Although human beings are tiny in comparison with the entire universe, humankind is ontologically located above the heavenly bodies, which unlike human beings are not in themselves endowed with intellect.⁹⁴ Like Aquinas, Giles is also convinced that even creatures that hinder us owing to our lack of wisdom could become useful “if one knew how to use them, (...) either because owing to them one would become humbler or more learned, or because one would rise to praise God, or because one would receive some other advantages from them”.⁹⁵ In his *Hexaemeron*

pourtant fait pour nous si nous sommes sages”; see G.W. Leibniz, *Essais de théodicée*, § 194, ed. J. Brunschwig, Flammarion, Paris 1969, p. 233.) It should be noted that in medieval Latin *profectus* means not only ‘[material, moral, or intellectual] advancement’ but also ‘profit’; cf. D.R. Howlett et al., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, II.1, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2001-10, p. 2490, s.v.

⁹¹ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 83bD: “Declarata opinione Philosophi, uolumus ad ipsam addere aliquid secundum sententiam sanctorum uel theologorum doctorum. Dicemus [*an scribendum* Dicimus?] enim quod natura ordinatur ad gratiam tanquam ad suam perfectionem”. For the relation between nature and grace, cf. e.g. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, 62, 5, *resp.*, in: *Opera Omnia*, t. 5, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1889, p. 115, and *Summa theol.* III, 69, 8, arg. 3, in Thomae de Aquino *Opera Omnia*, t. 12, iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, Ex typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1906, p. 112. On Giles’s view on grace and its relation to human nature, see A. Trapé, *Il concorso divino nel pensiero di Egidio Romano*, Tipografia S. Nicola, Tolentino 1942, pp. 150-9; Cross, “Theology” (above, n. 73), pp. 38-41.

⁹² On Giles’s view on *uti*, see my “Die Verwendbarkeit der Dinge: Die Diskussion um das *uti* im 13. und frühen 14. Jahrhundert”, *Przegląd Tomistyczny* 21 (2015), pp. 291-314, part. pp. 301-2.

⁹³ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 84aA-B: “(...) magis sic sumus finis omnium si per gratiam totum ordinemus in profectum nostrum. Immo [*an scribendum* Primo cum Augustino?] hoc etiam modo homo est finis sui ipsius si se ipso utitur ad profectum suum ordinando se ipsum ad deum. Vitur etiam hoc modo rationalibus creaturis ad societatem, quam debet referre in deum, irrationalibus ad eminentiam, quam etiam in deum referre debet. (...) Hoc ergo est quod Augustinus ait in questione preassignata, ubi ostendit quomodo omnia sunt in utilitatem hominis et quomodo homo omnibus utitur uel uti debet ad suum profectum. (...) Valde ergo uilis et infima est utilitas secundum quam Philosophus dicit nos esse finem omnium (...) et ualde alta est illa utilitas secundum quam sancti nos ponunt finem omnium (...)”. Cf. Augustine, *De diuersis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 30, ed. Mutzenbecher, pp. 39.40-40.45 and p. 40.59-60.

⁹⁴ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, arg. 5 and ad 5, pp. 82bA and 85aD-bA.

⁹⁵ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, arg. 4 and ad 4, pp. 82bA and 85aC: “(...) ut dicitur Sapientie <14> [cf. Sap. 14:11], creature dei in odium facte sunt et in tentationem anime hominum (...) creature facte sunt in odium et in impedimentum hominis propter insipientiam eius, quia nescit bene uti creaturis; si enim bene sciret uti eis, essent omnia ad

commentary, Giles (following Augustine and St. Paul) claims that such creatures have become harmful after the fall and still serve a fourfold purpose in that they punish, correct, perfect, and instruct human beings.⁹⁶ For Giles, then, the Christian-theological perspective on humankind's nobility is superior to the Aristotelian view according to which "we are somehow the goal of all things owing to our own assiduous activity".⁹⁷

Having shown how and why human beings are the goal of all things, Giles adds a lengthy explanation of the meaning of *quodammodo* in this context. The different senses of this restrictive adverbial phrase can be reduced to three main meanings. The first meaning is based on the *Physics* passage, where "'somehow' is related to art and careful activity invented by man or following human nature".⁹⁸ The second meaning of *quodammodo* is bound up with Aquinas's distinctions between the principal and secondary goals of God and the world. Human beings are not the principal goal intended by the Creator, and they are only the secondary goal of the world, "insofar as the other parts of the universe are ordered toward the utility of that part which is humankind". Even so, we are only "the goal of all natural things that have enmattered forms".⁹⁹ The third meaning highlights the contingency of humans' mid-position. This central position between God and the world is not simply an effect of human nature (we are not by nature superior to all other things); rather, it is due to God's mildness and "the order of God's mercy, which made the angels to be our servants".¹⁰⁰ Giles firmly denies that human beings are a necessary condition for the existence of the universe. Human beings are not the goal of the world in the sense that "if they had not been created, the world would not have been created". With this claim, Giles sharpens Aquinas's thesis that all non-human creatures participate in divine goodness and "would exist even if that which profits from them did not exist".¹⁰¹ Likewise, the causal connection that Giles observes between God's mildness and humans' central position is probably derived from Aquinas. In his commentary on the Psalms, more exactly on Psalm 8:5-8, Aquinas explains that God's mildness manifests itself not only in his love for human beings despite their littleness but also

profectum eius, uel quia inde efficeretur humilior uel quia inde efficeretur doctior uel quia inde surgeret in laudem dei, uel aliquas alias utilitates inde acciperet". Cf. Bonaventure, *In Sent.* II, 15, 2, 1, *conclusio*, p. 383a-b (spelling modified): "Similiter bestie sive animalia noxia ordinantur ad hominem secundum quadruplicem rationem et utilitatem quam ponit Augustinus [cf. *De Genesi ad litteram* III, 17, ed. I. Zycha, Tempsky, Wien 1894 (CSEL 28.1), p. 82.23-26] (...). Et sic patet quod tam bestie quam reptilia et iumenta facta sunt propter hominem, sive in statu innocentie, sive in statu nature lapse"; Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, 1, 2, 3, arg. 4 et ad 4, ed. Mandonnet, pp. 49 and 51; see also above, n. 90.

⁹⁶ Giles, *Hexaemeron* II, 40, Apud Antonium Bladum, Romae 1555, fol. 56vbC-D (spelling modified): "(...) cuius nouimenti uidetur Augustinus (...) causam quadruplicem assignare, uidelicet hominis punitionem, correctionem, uirtutis perfectionem et instructionem. (...) uirtus in infirmitate perficitur (...)". Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* III, 15, p. 81.1-20 Zycha; Paul, 2 Cor. 12:9-10. The passage from Augustine's *De Genesi* is also invoked by Richard of Mediavilla, *Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* II, 1, 5, 3, *resp.* and ad 2, p. 26a-b.

⁹⁷ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 84aB-C: "(...) magis omnia ordinantur in nostram utilitatem et profectum, secundum quod per diuinam clementiam positi sumus medii inter mundum et deum (...), quam prout per nostram industriam sumus quodammodo finis omnium conuertendo omnia in utilitatem nostram".

⁹⁸ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 84aC.

⁹⁹ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 84aD-bB and 84bD; see also ad 2 and ad 3, p. 85aB-C.

¹⁰⁰ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, pp. 84aD and 85aA; see also ad 1, p. 85aA-B. Although angels serve human beings, one of the reasons why humans have been created is "the reparation of the fall of angels" (see p. 84bD); cf. supra, n. 54 and n. 61.

¹⁰¹ Giles, *In Sent.* II, 1, 2, 1, 4, *resp.*, p. 84bB-D. Cf. Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, 1, 2, 3, *solutio*, p. 50.

in the fact that He made man “close to the angels” and “the king of [all] inferior [creatures]”.¹⁰² In the same vein, Giles in his *Hexaemeron* commentary cites Hugh of St. Victor to the effect that “human beings have not been made (...) for the sake of the earth, but rather for the sake of heaven (...) and for the sake of the Creator of heaven and earth, (...) not as an ornament of earth, but rather as its lord and owner”.¹⁰³ There too, Giles (following Augustine and Pseudo-Augustine) underlines that in Genesis “human dignity is shown in the fact that man has been created according to [God’s free and intentional] plan” and is “honored by divine grace in a manner far different from the other animals”.¹⁰⁴ In his *Sentences* commentary, Giles endeavors to integrate Aristotle’s weakly anthropocentric remarks into a theological doctrine about creation which entails that the centrality and superiority of human beings is a contingent effect of the divine arrangement of the world.

Conclusion

Teleological anthropocentrism is a significant characteristic of scholastic thought (at least from the thirteenth century onward). One might even say that this idea lies at the heart of what is sometimes called “scholastic humanism”.¹⁰⁵ Yet, the question as to “whether all

¹⁰² See Aquinas, *In Psalmos Davidis*, Ps. 8, 4-5, ed. S.E. Fretté, Vivès, Paris 1876 (*Opera Omnia*, t. 18), p. 267a (spelling and punctuation modified): “(...) de homine habet specialem curam (...) In quantum ergo deus nobis presens efficitur per amorem uel cognitionem, uisitat nos (...) Sic ergo magna clementia dei est in comparatione hominis ad deum. Sed sequitur de homine hoc in comparatione ad angelos, quibus homo inuenitur propinquus. (...) Consequenter ostendit clementiam dei ad hominem per comparationem ad ipsum hominem, cum dicit: *Gloria et honore* etc. Coronari est regum; deus fecit hominem quasi regem inferiorum (...). Sed ille honoratur qui non subiicitur alicui; homo enim nulli creature naturali corporali subiicitur quantum ad animam (...). Consequenter (...) ponit clementiam dei ad hominem per comparationem ad ea que sunt sub homine, quia uoluit habere hominem dominium super ista inferiora (...)”. Aquinas’s focus on God’s mildness in this context is not influenced by Augustine’s commentary on this Psalm, where rather “the multiplication of God’s mercy” is stressed; see Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps. 8, 10, ed. E. Dekkers – J. Fraipont, Brepols, Turnhout 1956 (CCSL 38), p. 54.27-45.

¹⁰³ Giles, *Hexaemeron* II, 40, fol. 56vaA: “(...) nouissime autem factus est homo de terra et in terra, non tamen ad terram nec propter terram, sed propter celum et ad celum et propter eum qui fecit celum et terram (...) non quasi ornatus terre, sed dominus et possessor”. Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fidei* I, 1, 27, p. 56.12-15 Berndt (= *PL* 176, col. 203A). Platonism and Christianity convinced medieval thinkers that earthly life is a poor thing; cf. R. Brague, “Geocentrism as a Humiliation for Man”, *Medieval Encounters* 3 (1997), pp. 187-210, part. pp. 197-205.

¹⁰⁴ Giles, *Hexaemeron* II, 40, fol. 56rbA and 56rbC: “(...) eius dignitas, ut ait, ostenditur quia quasi consilio est creatus. (...) prout additur: et similitudinem, quia homo factus est ad imaginem et similitudinem dei, datur intelligi quod homo longe differenter ab aliis animalibus est diuina gratia decoratus. Nam imago dei in nobis potest accipi secundum naturalia, sed similitudo dei accipienda est in nobis secundum gratuita”. Cf. Gen. 1:26; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* III, 19, ed. Zycha, p. 85.14-20; Ps.-Augustine/Alcher of Clairvaux, *De Spiritu et anima*, in *PL* 40, col. 805 (“Tanta dignitas humane conditionis esse cognoscitur ut non solum iubentis sermone, sicut alia sex dierum opera, sed consilio sancte trinitatis, et opera diuine maiestatis creatus sit homo [...]”).

¹⁰⁵ On this historiographical term, see R.W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, Vol. I: *Foundations*, Blackwell, Oxford 2002, pp. 17-35, and J. Zimmermann, *Humanism and Religion: A Call for the Renewal of Western Culture*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2012, pp. 89-94 and 102-3. However, as Brian Copenhaver argues, the term ‘humanism’ is rather vague and inadequate to describe pre-modern (even Renaissance) phenomena; see his “Against ‘Humanism’: Pico’s Job Description”, in A. Ossa-Richardson – M. Meserve (eds.), *Et amicum: Essays on Renaissance Humanism and Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden 2018 (Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 273), pp. 198-241, part. pp. 239-41, and Id., *Magic and the Dignity of Man: Pico della Mirandola and His Oration in Modern Memory*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge MA 2019, Part Two, part. pp. 153-8.

things have been created for the sake of human beings” is not discussed by all late-medieval theologians; Gabriel Biel is one of the few theologians who after Giles discuss this question in their *Sentences* commentaries.¹⁰⁶ The infrequency of this question should not lead us to endorse Robert Pasnau’s claim that in the later Middle Ages “there was little enthusiasm for Aristotle’s naturalized approach to teleology”.¹⁰⁷ Rather, it shows that anthropoteleology was not regarded as a highly controversial issue. Even though thirteenth-century theologians do not enter into a heated debate on this question, three positions can be distinguished in the tradition of *Sentences* commentaries. (1) Bonaventure interprets the Aristotelian dictum in a rather weak sense: earthly creatures exist for our sake, insofar as they fulfill our needs. (2) Aquinas sketches a more positive interpretation of the topos, connecting it with the idea that the human soul is the ultimate end of sublunary nature. (3) Giles of Rome goes beyond Aquinas’s reading: like Aquinas, he highlights “the human being’s special affinity with the total perfection of the universe”,¹⁰⁸ but he gives an epistemological twist to the Aristotelian topos by linking it more clearly with the idea that psychology is the highest natural science. According to Giles, we are the goal of all created things, not only because we can use them, but also because we are able to know them (in particular those inferior to the human mind). Moreover, unlike Aquinas, Giles emphasizes the limits of Aristotle’s philosophical *auctoritas* and argues that it is to be complemented with the Augustinian theological doctrine of humankind’s ontological mid-position.

The texts presented in this paper go against Blumenberg in two respects. (1) Robust anthropoteleological views are encountered, not so much in commentaries on Aristotle, as in *Sentences* commentaries. The claim that we are the goal of all created things is not widespread in *Physics* commentaries ([Pseudo-]Bacon is one of the rare exceptions), and in their *Politics* commentaries, Albert and Aquinas do not elaborate upon the idea that plants and animals exist for us (Peter of Auvergne and Nicholas of Vaudémont do discuss this idea at some length, but their views do not constitute “an entire pseudotradition”). (2) Although the anthropocentric perspective on the universe found in medieval *Sentences* commentaries (particularly in Giles’s *Ordinatio*) is quite different from the disenchanting views of modern science and philosophy, medieval scholastics anticipate the allegedly modern idea that human beings have been allotted a central and excellent locus for the scientific study of the world.

Even if we no longer share the scholastics’ teleological anthropocentrism, the contemplation of our contingent place in the universe may still fill us with wonder, perhaps eliciting “humility and ecstasy”.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ See Gabriel Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* II, 15, *dubium* 4 (*Utrum omnia corporalia vel sensibilia sint producta propter hominem*), ed. W. Werbeck – U. Hofmann – V. Sievers – R. Steiger, Mohr-Siebeck, Tübingen 1984, pp. 353-5. Biel holds that if one talks about “the goal under the [supreme] goal” (i.e., under God), all corporeal beings “have been created for the sake of human beings” (p. 354.12-14); he also cites the Aristotelian dictum (p. 354.25).

¹⁰⁷ See R. Pasnau, “Teleology in the Later Middle Ages”, in J.K. McDonough (ed.), *Teleology*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2020 (Oxford Philosophical Concepts 16), pp. 90-115, part. p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. O. Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe according to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology*, The Pennsylvania State U.P., University Park 1992, pp. 280-2.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. V. Grossman, *Life and Fate*, trans. by R. Chandler, Penguin, London 2006, p. 64 (near the end of chapter 17 of Part I).