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**Notas a Anna Tropa, La teoria della conoscenza di Francisco
Macedo. Un filosofo a confronto con Tommaso e Scotto**

Resumo: No Capítulo XVII do *Comentário ao Evangelho de João*, Eckhart comenta Jo 17, 3: «Ora, a vida eterna é esta: que eles te conheçam a ti, o único Deus verdadeiro, e aquele que enviaste, Jesus Cristo». O comentário começa assim: «Se a bem-aventurança consista em um ato do intelecto ou da vontade, é uma antiga questão. Das palavras acima [do evangelho de João] parece que consista essencialmente no conhecimento e no intelecto». Para explicitar sua posição, Eckhart cita alguns textos de Agostinho, por exemplo: *De moribus Ecclesiae*; *Retractaciones*; *De beata vita* e *De Trinitate*. Em nosso trabalho, pretendemos mostrar como Eckhart constrói sua exposição a partir de Agostinho, centrando-nos na análise do Capítulo XVII do referido comentário.

Palavras chave: Eckhart; Agostinho; Felicidade; Intelecto; Vontade.

Abstract: In Chapter XVII of the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Eckhart comments on John 17, 3: «Now this is eternal life: may they know you, the only true God, and the one you sent, Jesus Christ». The comment begins like this: «If the beatitude consists of an act of the intellect or the will, it is an old question. From the words above [from the Gospel of John] it seems that it consists essentially of knowledge and intellect». To make his position clear, Eckhart cites some texts by Augustine, for example: *De moribus Ecclesiae*; *Retractaciones*; *De beata vita* and *De Trinitate*. In our work, we intend to show how Eckhart builds his exhibition from Augustine, focusing on the analysis of Chapter XVII of that comment.

Keywords: Eckhart; Augustine; Happiness; Intellect; Will.

The life and work of Francisco de Macedo, also known by the name Francisco de San Agustín (Coimbra, 1596-Pádua, 1681), are that of a true itinerant theologian. The biographical sketch published by J. Schmutz in the *Scholasticon* characterises him as «théologien portugais très éclectique, qui eut une longue carrière académique dans toute l'Europe», since we can ascertain his passage through Madrid, Lisbon, Paris, Venice and Padova¹. Diversity and itinerancy also characterise both his professional academic career and his religious activity. In 1610, he joined the Society of Jesus, where he distinguished himself as a teacher of rhetoric. While in this position, he was summoned by King Philip IV of Spain (II of Portugal) to teach rhetoric in Madrid.

After the Portuguese revolution of 1640, Francisco de Macedo left the Society of Jesus and remained at the service of king John IV of Portugal as a diplomat and delegate, in the course of which he spent time in France and Italy. After returning to Portugal, he entered the Franciscan Order, though only for a short period, later joining the Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, in which he remained until his death, in Padova. As Schmutz states in the same biographical note,

il participe aux querelles autour du jansénisme (...) et publie même un Cortina D. Augustini de praedestinatione et gratia, adytis in centum Oracula reclusis, D. Gregorii Magni et D. Bernardis responsis confirmata (Paris, 1648)².

His adherence to Augustine, which took place during his years in the Franciscan order, seems to have become a persistent feature in his diversified personal and academic career. While teaching in Padova he produced the work *Collationes doctrinae S. Thomae et Scoti cum differentiis inter utrumque textibus utriusque*

¹ J. Schmutz, *Scholasticon*. https://scholasticon.msh-lse.fr/Database/Scholastiques_fr.php?ID=829. Accessed in 22.12.2020.

² Ibidem.

fidelita productis sententiis subtiliter examinatis, commentariis interpretum Cajetani, imprimis et Lychetis diligenter excursis, et aliarum pene omniam Scolarum, praecipue Suariorum & Vasquiorum autoribus controversiis apte prolatis (Padoue, 1671-1673), written, as Tropa explains, «nell'ultima fase della sua vita, quando è titolare della cattedra di filosofia morale a Padova» (p. 12).

It is precisely the latter which Anna Tropa addresses in her recent monograph³, focusing her analysis particularly on Francisco de Macedo's theory of knowledge. Tropa begins her study with a *Preface* (*Premessa*, pp. 9-17) and an *Introduction* (*Introduzione*, pp. 19-23). In the *Preface*, she presents the main reasons why she considers it useful to read Macedo's *Collationes*, highlighting how this work exemplifies the belligerent controversy that sparked between the Thomistic and Scotist schools; a fierce debate that lasted for centuries and of which Macedo's text is a finished product.

In the context of this struggle, Macedo sets out to defend the Scotist position, which he does throughout his *Collationes*. Tropa shows how this is not unrelated to his being professed throughout his life in various religious orders. Macedo explicitly mentions how, while still a student of Francisco Suárez in Coimbra, the latter's freedom in handling the philosophical and theological authorities exerted a strong impact on him. As Tropa notes,

Macedo spiega l'origine della sua adesione alla filosofia di Scoto come una rivendicazione della libertà di poter dire la sua - cosa che, secondo l'aneddoto che egli riporta, non era libero di fare un professore gesuita, fosse anche al culmine della sua carriera come era Suárez⁴.

In the same *Preface*, she adduces further reasons that motivate the renewed interest in studying Macedo's *Collationes*, for philosophy as well as for the history of philosophy: «(...) *si tratta di un testo importante nella storia dello scotismo e della sua diffusione*

³ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza di Francisco Macedo. Un filosofo a confronto con Tommaso e Scoto*, Carocci, Rome; Prague 2020.

⁴ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 11.

alla fine del XVII secolo»⁵ - a text in which readings of Scotus produced by several schools, including the Jesuit, converge.

Concluding the *Preface*, Tropa explains how her work came to be. On the one hand, she reveals it to be the result of a long-standing research initiated in 2010, when she first became acquainted with the *Collationes* in the course of a separate research on sources and commentaries relating to Francisco Suárez (incidentally, the subject of her doctoral thesis was Suárez' theories of knowledge). On the other hand, Tropa stresses the didactic purpose of that work, considering that Macedo's explanation of both Aquinas' and Scotus' theories can serve as an introduction, for contemporary readers, to central aspects of the thought of those two medieval theologians and philosophers. With such didactic goal in mind, Tropa organises her work by putting together the historical and conceptual analyses, combining them with Italian translations of several relevant passages of Macedo's Latin text. Consequently, this work is also the first to include an edition of long segments of Macedo's *Collationes* in a modern language, in a rigorous and clear translation. At the end of each chapter, and for each of the several subjects addressed there, the reader will find an *Appendix* containing relevant passages that Tropa provides to back up her reading of Macedo's explanations of human knowledge, as well as his commentary on the positions of Aquinas and Scotus.

In the *Introduction*, Tropa gives indications to the reader concerning the internal divisions of her study: the main issues treated by Macedo in the analysed texts, the edition in use, and the criteria applied in the Italian translation of the several excerpts. Tropa elaborates her view of Macedo's theory of knowledge in four chapters. In the first two, she analyses the theory of human knowledge in the *Collationes* and explains Macedo's theory of the intelligible species. The third chapter confronts Macedo's theory of human knowledge with those of two other philosophers and theologians whose doctrines are also studied by Tropa: Francisco

⁵ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 13.

Suárez (1548-1617) and Juan de Maldonado (1533-1583)⁶. Finally, in Chapter 4, and as a sort of conclusion that begins with those philosophers and theologians' approach to the problem of human knowledge, Tropa also discusses the relationship between psychology and metaphysics under this topic.

In fact, in the first chapter, Tropa analyses the theory of human knowledge in Macedo's *Collationes*, focusing especially on the problem of the first proper object of the human intellect and highlighting the importance of this discussion in clarifying human intellectual capacity. Since the *Collationes*, as stated in the *Preface* and the *Introduction*, are written in accordance with the dialectic style of the ongoing diatribe between the Thomistic and Scotist schools, the exposition of this issue in cognitive theory and its anthropological implications by Macedo is made by confronting the referred schools' doctrines, concluding with the philosopher's preference for Scotus' theory and his reasons for doing so. In this debate of doctrines, Macedo's position is, as expected, critical of Aquinas, though he endorses a Scotistic position that Tropa considers not to be entirely faithful to Scotus: «La sostanza immateriale (...) e non l'ente in quanto ente è detto essere da Macedo l'oggetto adeguato dell'intelletto umano»⁷. His theory is based on the fact that intellect is, by its own nature, immaterial. Thus, for Macedo, «il fantasma non è un mezzo adeguato alla natura dell'intelletto»⁸, while, since it is human intellectual knowledge, it is the intellect «a stabilire l'oggetto primo e adeguato, ed è la sua stessa natura a farne una facoltà indipendente e autonoma tanto della materia che del fantasma»⁹. Since Macedo's definition of the adequate object of the intellect differs, albeit slightly, from that of Scotus, and since Macedo does not discuss this divergence, Tropa raises the question as to «which Scotus is the one read by Macedo», a problem to which

⁶ A. Tropa, *Pédagogie et philosophie à l'âge de la contre-réforme: Le *De origine, natura et immortalitate animae* (Paris, 1564) by Juan Maldonado S. J.*” *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 88 (2021) 209-282.

⁷ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 36.

⁸ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 36.

⁹ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 37.

she devotes section 1.5. from chapter 1 (pp. 47-49). This chapter also has two *Appendices*. In *Appendix 1.1* Tropa offers a partial Italian translation of *Collatione IV*, in which Macedo examines the problem of the adequate object of the human intellect (pp. 50-62). In *Appendix 1.2.* (pp. 62-68), as she explains in note 79, p. 62, Tropa offers a «rielaborazione parziale di un articolo dedicato alle letture che i commentatori delle rispettive parti hanno dato, e al loro confronto: cfr. Tropa (2019)». This publication is indicated in the bibliography, which is the result of a careful selection of texts and studies, revealing the author's extensive knowledge of both medieval and early modern Latin sources and of the studies published in the last 100 years on the issues she deals with (pp. 171-185). Chapter 2 continues the analysis of human knowledge, now focusing on the question of the function of intelligible species in this process; their necessity and the acquisition of concepts through abstraction. A peculiar aspect of Macedo's exposition, which had already been enunciated by Tropa in the Introduction, is the treatment of the question of human knowledge in close connection with the nature of angelic knowledge. In fact, as the author never ceases to insist, Macedo treats intellectuality as of a nature common to man and the angel, as Scotus did:

Filosofi come Tommaso hanno delineato con precisione la distanza tra le due menti (...). Altri invece, come Scoto, hanno osservato che la natura intellettuale dell'angelo e dell'essere umano li accomuna (...)¹⁰.

Further in chapter 2, Tropa analyses in detail the nature of human knowledge from the characteristics it shares with the angelic, for this is the way Macedo treats human knowledge and it is from this perspective that Macedo contrasts Aquinas and Scotus. The chapter analyses in detail Macedo's technical exposition, marked by the complex nuances of antecedent theories from the opposing schools. As expected, Macedo once again opts for Scotus' position. In the two above-mentioned chapters, Tropa closely follows Macedo's text and, with the utmost fidelity, expounds the theories

¹⁰ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 20.

under analysis in an extremely clear and lucid manner. They become, therefore, transparent to the reader, in their divergences and in the consequences they entail for a conception of man that does justice to the theological theories that such philosophical conceptions aim to support. From Tropa's exposition, it is clear that Macedo defends a conception of the human mind as naturally perfect, capable of reaching its natural ultimate end, namely, the knowledge of God *in patria*, autonomously. This is one of the key claims of Macedo's theory, repeatedly emphasized by Tropa, as a result of her objective and reasoned interpretation of Macedo's doctrines:

Macedo quindi conclude la sua perorazione ricordato che la modalità di conoscenza umana in sé, non è affatto imperfetta, nella misura in cui l'intelletto non è costretto a cooperare con la facoltà sensibile; il modo in cui conosce, attraverso i fantasmi, rispecchia il suo ruolo superiore rispetto a questi ultimi¹¹.

It is this conception of perfect mind proposed by Macedo that Tropa outlines throughout her exposition, regarding the relationship of the intellect with the phantasms, the functions of the agent intellect in the cognitive process and its active capacity, and the cognitive mechanism of man, who, as it was said, shares in common with the angels the same manner of intellection. Therefore, both natures can only be understood in correlation to each other, the study of one highlighting for us the perfection of the other. It is Tropa's conclusion of her study of this correlation that provides the title for section 2.10 of Chapter 2: *La mente perfetta* (p. 104). The study of Macedo's theory of knowledge, directly based on an exquisite textual exegesis, is concluded in the same chapter.

In the following chapter, the author goes on to analyse «alcuni testi che precedono nel tempo l'analisi di Macedo e che presentano dei punti di contatto importanti con la sua teoria della conoscenza»¹². Thus, texts by Suárez, Mastri, Luke Wadding, the

¹¹ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 79.

¹² A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 121.

latter an editor of Scotus, the Franciscan Hugo McCaghwell (Hugo Cavellus:1571-1626) and again by John Maldonado (who she designates as "*predecessore di Suárez*"¹³, regarding some aspects of his cognitive theory) are commented by Tropa from the perspective of their theories on human knowledge, the mediation of species, the knowledge of the singular, the nature of the intellect and its activity and function in the human cognitive process. This analysis of texts and theories from a set of authors who lived and wrote close in time is based on Tropa's conviction that there is an "air of family" among them, since they emerge from an intellectual environment that discusses, from common sources, identical problems: human nature, what characterises it as a rational/intellectual activity, its limits, and the ability to autonomously reach its natural ultimate goal. Also in chapter 3, the author provides the reader with an Italian translation of unpublished texts by Maldonado (in 3.1.), McCaghwell and Suárez (in 3.2.). In the first case, the author publishes some passages from Maldonado's treatise *De origine, natura et immortalitate animae* (pp. 156-162). In the second case, the author publishes, this time in Latin, some segments "sulla simpatia" from McCaghwell and Suárez's commentaries on the *De anima*, showing the first's very close textual dependence on the second. In this case, what Tropa intends to highlight is that this closeness «è un esempio della prima ricezione del *De anima* di Suárez»¹⁴. This aspect is innovative and relevant, since he is a Franciscan theologian who makes use of Suárez's text "per spiegare la posizione di Scoto". Finally, in the fourth and shorter chapter, Tropa takes stock of the results of the study presented, focusing mainly on three aspects: whether Macedo's exposition is closer to the realm of psychology or metaphysics; why Macedo's description of the human mind, albeit derived from Scotus, does not correspond exactly to that of the medieval philosopher and theologian; the influence of the Jesuits Francisco Suárez and Gabriel Vazquez on Macedo's exposition and on his theory of knowledge; finally, the significance of the analogy between human and angelic

¹³ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 150.

¹⁴ A. Tropa, *La teoria della conoscenza*, cit., p. 161.

minds in Macedo's treatment of human knowledge. As previously mentioned, the book contains a carefully selected bibliography (pp. 171-185), which reflects the author's own investigative path, as well as an index of cited authors (pp. 187-190). This work by Tropa is testimony to the importance of better knowing these texts and authors, of the need to study them, not only individually, but as part of an intellectual milieu, a *forma mentis*. Studies on this Portuguese theologian and his work are scarce, and they all go back to the last century. This study of Tropa is extremely relevant because it unearths an important work of this theologian, integrating it into a larger discussion, namely that between the Thomistic and Scotist schools of knowledge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Moreover, with the translation of long passages of the work into Italian, Tropa makes this work available to today's scholarly public. Therefore, as an instrument to divulge Macedo's philosophical work, the Thomistic and Scotist scholastic tradition and its reception in modern times, the value of this work by Anna Tropa is priceless. We have highlighted the extensive passages of Macedo's work, until now unpublished in modern languages, which the author has translated from Latin into Italian, as well as the author's orderly, erudite and profound exposition of complex and technical themes, covering a vast domain of authors and philosophical traditions of diverse chronologies and origins. This is a study of excellence for its methodological and scientific rigour, both attested by an in-depth knowledge of the sources and by a rigorous analysis of the arguments. This work by Anna Tropa, published by the renowned Carocci publishing house, illuminates this research field and makes a valuable contribution to the state of the art and to the progress of research.