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MORRÁS, María and LAWRENCE, Jeremy (2022), *Alfonso de Cartagena's Memoriale Virtutum. Aristotle for Lay Princes in Medieval Spain*. Leiden/Boston: Brill. 445 pp. ISBN: 978-90-04-41115-9.

The *Memoriale Virtutum* (*MV*) is the first work by Alfonso de Cartagena, a leading diplomat and one of the finest intellectuals in early 15th-c. Europe. María Morrás and Jeremy Lawrence provide the readers with a rigorous new critical edition of the Latin text faced by an elegant and helpful English translation. Morrás and Lawrence approach the *MV* based on a long-lasting familiarity with Cartagena's work. A conspicuous series of contributions to Cartagena's literary culture and context is paralleled by critical editions of his work both as a translator (most notably, of Cicero: Morrás 1996), and as an original author (Morrás/Lawrence 2020).

Morrás and Lawrence shed light on the evolution of Cartagena's thinking on the classical tradition, linking it to what we know of his intellectual trajectory but also to their philological findings on the textual tradition of the *MV*. While scrutinising the text of *MV*, Morrás and Lawrence provide a portrait of Cartagena as an intellectual permeated by medieval culture but open to the inputs proceeding from Italian humanism, albeit 'militantly' (Cartagena famously engaged with Leonardo Bruni precisely on how to translate Aristotle's ethics). This issues in a dynamic tension between the scholastic nature of Cartagena's training and the cultural rethinking he underwent induced by an increasingly fine-tuned knowledge of the classical tradition.

One of the major results of the edition of the *MV* is related to the role played by the Council of Basel in both the personal and the intellectual biography of Cartagena. Morrás and Lawrence show that Cartagena may have travelled to Basel with a manuscript of a *MV*, which might have served as the exemplar for manuscript B (= Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Handschriften A VIII 35, 15th c.). Participation in the Council of Basel somehow reorients the treatise in a European sense. The 'natural' addressees of the work – prince Duarte of Portugal and more generally the Iberian high aristocracy – are not in question. But despite the 'Castilian' characterisation of the modern examples that Cartagena included in his work (see the quote from II. *Prol.*23-35, p. 19), the 'message' of the *MV* was valid and perfectly readable by all the French and German princes attending the Council. The choice of Latin has obviously helped from this perspective, and manuscript B is a material testimony of the interest

of non-Iberian readers for Cartagena's work. In what follows, I will first go over the essential coordinates on the cultural context of Cartagena's work. Secondly, I will return to the analysis of the key points of the reconstruction of the history of the text provided by Morrás and Lawrance.

An introduction touching on all the relevant issues of the *MV* dossier precedes the critical text. The editors approach the question of the genre of the text, the role played by Cartagena as an author and as a compiler, and the place of the *MV* among his works. They provide a complete description of the six extant manuscripts of the Latin text plus the Castilian translation of the Latin original (end of the 15th c.). The description of the manuscripts is followed by the analysis of the relationships between the witnesses of the *MV*. Finally, a very rich apparatus of 2800 «minor variant readings», an index and a helpful glossary of Greek terms complete the book.

The *MV* saw the light in 1422, while Cartagena had been sent in a diplomatic mission to the court of Portugal. It is there that Cartagena, «aged 37», «was induced at the behest of crown prince Duarte» to write the *MV*, the first of his original works (p. 1). The adjective *original* applied to the *MV* needed clarification, which Morrás and Lawrance provide in the first pages of the Introduction (pp. 1-10), where the medieval conception of the text is evoked. Of great interest is the integration of the medieval notions of *compilatio* and *ordinatio* into the Foucaultian idea of «author-function».

Morrás and Lawrance point out that the *MV* goes hand in hand with Cartagena's work as a translator: the translations of Cicero's *De senectute* and *De officiis*, as well as Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium*, date from those years. The names of Boccaccio and Cicero set us back to the European scene. From this perspective, the French reception of the moral works of Cicero and the Latin Boccaccio is paradigmatic. Right at the beginning of the 15th century, Laurent de Premierfait shows literary interests very similar to those of Cartagena: he translates into French Cicero's *De officiis*, *De senectute*, *De amicitia*, and twice (1400 and 1410) Boccaccio's *De casibus* (Premierfait is also the first European translator of the *Decameron* – 1414).

The *MV* is framed as a late medieval work aimed at making Aristotle's ethics accessible to lay princes. In the prologue to Book I, Cartagena confirms the compilatory nature of his work. There are three main sources in the *MV*: the *Vetus Latina* of the *Nichomachean Ethics* (*EN*), the Thomistic commentary on the *EN*, and finally the *Expositio et questiones super libros Ethicorum* by Geraldus Otonis, which Cartagena never mentions explicitly (p. 6). While relying on his sources, Cartagena does not hesitate to manipulate them. The work is primarily a reduction of the Latin text of Aquinas: Cartagena got rid of, disposing of the argumentative ultratechnicism of Aquinas's work. The result is an agile

précis, suitable for reading by laymen unacquainted with the rigid ‘geometries’ of scholasticism.

Morrás and Lawrance pay a good deal of attention to the use of the expression *cothidianus sermo* in relation to the kind of Latin that Cartagena used in the *MV* (pp. 16-17). The phrase is found in the prologue to Book II 85-88, where the author claims to have reworked the Latin of his sources by pursuing clarity and brevity. The relationship of Cartagena with language and Latin does not respond to the humanist ideal of leaving aside the vernacular in favour of a philologically restored Latin: «instead of moving towards writing in the classical language, Cartagena progressed the other way, starting with Latin and ending, in his last and in this respect most innovative work, with the vernacular» (p. 28). The aim obviously was to write for laymen who did not need to delve into philosophical speculation. Cartagena’s words relate to a communicative concern that is close to widespread views in the Middle Ages (e.g. Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana* on the use of a (Latin) language featured by humility and functionally aimed at spreading the Gospel, leaving aside any rhetorical or grammatical concerns).

The text of the *MV* is preserved in six manuscripts (we do not conserve the original), to which we must add the translation of the Latin text to Castilian (preserved in a single ms. from the end of the 15th century). The descriptions of the witnesses can be found in the first part of the «Prolegomena to the critical Edition» (pp. 40-52). Very helpful comments summarising the relevant points of the relationship between structure, contents, and external history of the manuscript integrate the material description of the codices.

The manuscript tradition of *MV* spans the 15th c. and is evidence for the interest in Cartagena in the highest circles of the Iberian and European aristocracy (as the case of the Basel manuscript shows): manuscripts such as A came from an important library (either the address-ee Duarte or the Count of Haro); manuscript H belonged to the count of Haro, «Cartagena’s friend» (p. 44); manuscript O was made for the library of a refined collector, Pedro de Montoya, bishop of Burgo de Osma (1453-1474).

The codices show traces of an ‘active’ engagement on behalf of compilers and readers. Manuscript O is certainly the most innovative among the witnesses: «O’s scribe was the sort of fellow who, like Herakles, should have had snakes placed in his cradle at birth. He gives over 600 unique readings (more than any other...)» (p. 62). Signs of active reading can also be seen in the manicules of A (similar to those in the mss belonging to the library of Íñigo López de Mendoza), and most importantly in the numerous accurate corrections in J, a witness today held at the royal library of El Escorial. These corrections are particularly important. They appear to have been made right after the copy was ended, which

«makes J the most reliable of all witnesses, closely followed by A» (p. 55). On this basis and because it «displays the most regular orthography in terms of standard fifteenth-century Iberian usage, and is also the best punctuated» (p. 65), J was chosen as the copytext for the edition of *MV*.

Morrás and Lawrance prove the existence of two branches of the tradition, α and β , that correspond to two chronologically different stages in the genesis of the text: the first, α (AJ), «the branch closest to the original presented to Duarte in 1422» (p. 63), represents the earliest drafting phase of the work that took place in Portugal, while the second, β (QH), reflects an innovative phase, which came later, perhaps coinciding with or having been made right after Cartagena's participation in the Council of Basel (1334-1337). In this picture, the two manuscripts from Basel (B) and the Escorial (O) would occupy «an intermediate position between the two main branches» (p. 58).

From a textual perspective, groups AJ and QH appear clearly defined. The lists of variant readings (a)-(d) prove both that AJ and QH constitute two distinct groups and that the manuscripts involved within each group, AJ and QH respectively, are not copies of one another (pp. 52-56). The group QH is identified based on a mechanical accident, namely the displacement of a sheet in the subarchetype β that caused the shift of the passage at I.30 2-85 to I.32 7, which «leaves the text incoherent, the argument illogical» (p. 53). The variant readings listed in (h)-(l) shed light on the position of O and B (pp. 58-62). The *loci* discussed at (m) and (l) (pp. 62-63) presuppose a relationship of O and Mcast with the original (Ω), while (o) are editorial corrections by conjecture (p. 64).

List (e) includes a series of *lectiones adiaphorae* (pp. 56-57). The editors suggest that these could be traces of redactional variants. This hypothesis would be consistent with the idea that Cartagena «tampered with the text over time» (p. 63). Morrás demonstrated that this was the case in Cartagena's contemporary translations of Cicero (Morrás 1996 and see n47, p. 59). And we have evidence of interlinear/marginal corrective practice (albeit non authorial) in manuscript J (pp. 44-46 and see Figure 3, p. 44). As Morrás and Lawrance suggest (p. 59), we might see instances of variants fruit of authorial tinkering in lists (e) and (h). By way of example, potential instances of redactional variants could be seen in passages such as I.5 44, where OB β read *virtutem* instead of *a bonitatem*. If these changes are not authorial, I am less inclined to see in these variant readings the fruit of contamination than of polygenesis: there is always a chance that equivalent solutions could have been introduced by scribes.

In the same chapter (I.21 20) we have one of the cases of variant readings «where B alone shares β 's errors and omissions» (p. 58). The omission of the entire sentence at II.17 59-64 is remarkable. If it is not a deliberate omission (as the editors admit (308 and n265), the reason for

the omission is obscure), I wonder whether it might be a *saut du même au même*. Having arrived at *ut suprascripsimus* (I.21 19), the copyist would have skipped the sentence beginning *Est ergo* to go with his eyes directly to *Dicetur ergo*, misled by the similar wording.

This example is consistent with the findings provided in list (i), which oppose variant readings in B β to α O (p. 60), and with variant readings in (j) showing cases whereby O β read against AJB. As the editors acknowledge (p. 61), the explanatory power of (j) is minor: not only is the list in (i) far more numerous than in (j), but we find in (i) at least five cases of omission (*sauts*) alongside less perspicuous variants, whereas in (j) we have only four readings that may be polygenetic trivialisations. Overall I think that list (i) is of great important because it indicates a high rate of coincidence in error between β and B. This reduces the significance of the high overlapping rate of correct readings between B and α (60).

Perhaps we can add passages like I.24 15-16 to the variant readings in (i) as evidence for both the less accurate state of the text in β +B and their potential dependence on a common exemplar. The passage I.24 15-16 comes from a chapter on temperance in which Cartagena states that self-control is more about mastering the inclination to pleasure than moderating the displeasure resulting from the absence of pleasure. In this case it is B that seems less accurate (or more innovative) than β . The latter might better reflect than B a redactional variant reading that would involve the elimination of the concessive clause «*licet circa utrumque consistat temperancia*» which we read in α . While β bears a less redundant text (the idea expressed in the concessive echoes what has already been said), B goes a little too far in contracting the sentence. While comprehension is not compromised, syntactic cohesion appears weakened:

- α → ...per suam absentiam. Ideo licet circa utrumque consistat temperancia, principalius tamen circa regendam delectacionem quam circa fugandam tristiciam que ex absentia rei delectabilis venit
- β → ...per suam absentiam. Ideo principalius temperancia est tamen circa regendam delectacionem...
- B → ...per suam absentiam. Principalius tamen circa regendam delectacionem...

The question of both the relationship between Cartagena's original (Ω) and the extant witnesses and the existence of an archetype remains open. We find traces of variants that would imply access to witnesses very close to the original in the cases discussed in (m) (good readings of O against the other mss) and in (n) (good readings of the Castilian version Mcast against the Latin tradition). As for Mcast, the lesson discussed at (n) (Conc 2 [hesterna] = de anteayer Mcast vs. externa JOB β and extnma A) seems to indicate an error common to all witnesses of the Latin text of the *MV* (p. 63). As for O, we mentioned above the

highly interventionist approach of its copyist (O is the manuscript with the highest number of *lectiones singulares*). Cases such as those in (m), I.1 48, I.31 46, and I.10 51, where O seems to carry the correct variant reading (against the joint tradition of the other witnesses), would be potentially consistent with the hypothesis of O owing part of his innovative readings to a manuscript with marginal/interlinear redactional variants (see p. 59). Since the common derivation of JO from α^1 is proven (see *loci* discussed at (k) and (l), pp. 61-62), and given that J does not read like O in the passages discussed in (m), I wonder whether we might reconsider the possibility of facing a case of contamination: the copyist of O would have collated α^1 with an exemplar with marginal/interlinear redactional (and authorial) variant readings. A manuscript with marginal variants might partly explain why the textual tradition of the *MV* as a whole and particularly B and O show signs of textual eclecticism, suggesting the idea of the latter manuscripts reflecting an intermediate redactional stage (p. 63). On solid grounds, however, Morrás and Lawrance are sceptical of a contamination hypothesis and prefer to make the case for «a text that underwent a process of minor authorial changes» (p. 59, and see the stemma at p. 71).

The text we now have in this elegant edition for Brill is exemplary. Morrás and Lawrance did achieve more than the «reconstruction of the putative history of the text» (p. 71). They have drawn on a remarkable series of textual, literary, historical, philosophical data, to deliver a book that moves seamlessly from the particular to the general and that provides the reader with a new outstanding tool to understand the vast and complex cultural movement known as European humanism.

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