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Was there a Portuguese Averroism in the 14th Century? Alphonsus Dionisii and Thomas Scotus

In 1852 Ernest Renan wrote in *Averroès e l'averroïsme* that

L'Espagne et le Portugal, où la scolastique s'est continué jusqu'à nos jours, virent aussi se prolonger plus longtemps l'autorité d'Averroès. Antonio a recueilli les éloges qui lui ont été donnés par un grand nombre de médecins espagnols et portugais. Il est pourtant jugé d'une manière fort sévère par les jésuites de Coïmbre.¹

Renan made no further statement concerning the history of «Averroism» in Portugal, besides his comments on the extended duration of the authority of Averroes, whose origins and profile were uncertain and whose followers were unknown.

This paper addresses the question of whether this particular kind of philosophy, «Averroism», existed in Portugal during the 14th Century or, at least, whether it might have been present or in some way debated in this country. Admittedly, in the 14th Century the Portuguese university was not one of the great university centres, and we know of no philosophical or theological work that has been written in this context and period.² Moreover, there are serious difficulties in clearly outlining Averroism as a philosophical school, or even in defining those theories which will have to be upheld for one master or author to be considered an averroist.³ Historians of philosophy typically speak of and dispute the existence

¹ E. RENAN, *Averroès et l'averroïsme* [1852] (*Oeuvres complètes* de Ernest Renan, t. III, ed. H. PSICHARI, Calman-Lévy, Paris 1949, p. 318), new ed. préf. d'A. DE LIBERA, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris 1997, p. 295. The citation of the *Commentarii collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in tres libros de Anima Aristotelis Stagiritae*, II, cap. 1, q. 7, art. 2 (Typis et expensis Antonii a Mariz, Conimbricæ, 1598, p. 60) is exactly the same made by P. BAYLE, s.v. *Averroes*, in *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, 4 vols., Amsterdam-Leyde-La Haye-Utrecht, 1740⁵, vol. I, pp. 384-391, cfr. 386a, n. 30.

² The Portuguese University documentation for the period is compiled in *Chartularium Universitatis Portugalensis*, vol. I: 1288-1377, ed. A. M. de SÁ, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1966.

³ The label «averroism» has a negative connotation, but it also serves to underline an internal philosophical rift in relation to scholasticism, for while it denies theological supremacy, it also demands an autonomy based on argumentation according to «natural reason» (see below n. 6). In the 2nd half of the 20th century, the tag «averroism» was submitted to intense historiographical criticism, both regarding its adequacy to the thinking of Averroes and to his Latin followers. Cfr. G. FIORAVANTI, *Boezio di Dacia e la storiografia sull'Averroismo*, in «Studi Medievali» 3^a serie, 7 (1966), pp. 283-322; R.-A. GAUTHIER, *Notes sur les débuts (1225-1240) du premier Averroïsme*, in «Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques» 66 (1982), pp. 321-374; R. IMBACH, *L'averroïsme latin du XIII^e siècle*, in R. IMBACH-A. MAIERÜ (a cura di), *Gli studi di filosofia medievale fra otto e novecento*, Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 1991, pp. 191-208; F.

of «Latin averroism», «Jewish averroism», «Italian averroism», «English averroism», «Spanish averroism», «Parisian averroism», etc., more as a way of identifying or denying the presence of a specific set of philosophical ideas, than of underlining any local peculiarities, with the one probable exception of «Paduan averroism».⁴

«Averroism» is a very fluid historiographical entity.⁵ It most certainly did not exist as a unitary school of thought, or as a uniform doctrinal body.⁶ In any case, its existence is traditionally associated with mediaeval university life and the dissemination of philosophical ideas in Arts faculties, by authors whose main purpose was to follow the thought of Aristotle in defence of a natural way of speaking. And with that intention they used the commentaries and arguments of Averroes, or those inspired by him, opposing in their own words the theological or

NIEWÖHNER-L. STURLESE (hrsg.), *Averroismus im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance*, Spur Verlag, Zürich 1994; A. ZIMMERMANN, *Propos sur l'averroïsme*, in *Actes del Simposi internacional de Filosofia de l'Edat Mitjana*, Patronat d'Estudis Osonencs, Vic 1996, pp. 79-84; B. C. BAZÁN, *Was There Ever a «First Averroism?»*, in J. A. AERTSEN-A. SPEER (hrsg.), *Geistesleben im 13. Jahrhundert*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2000, pp. 32-53; V. SORGE, *Averroismo*, Guida, Napoli 2007, along with the remaining bibliography listed in the following footnotes.

⁴ «[...] gli storici della filosofia medievale sono concordi nel parlare di averroismo parigino, di averroismo italiano (bolognese e padovano) e anche di averroismo inglese, ebraico e spagnolo, ma di averroismo tedesco non c'è traccia nella letteratura», L. STURLESE, *L'averroismo nella cultura filosofica tedesca medievale*, in F. NIEWÖHNER-L. STURLESE (hrsg.), *Averroismus im Mittelalter*, cit., pp. 114-131, cfr. p. 115. On the varieties and the geographic diffusion of «Averroism» see the studies cit. n. 4 and G. VAJDA, *A propos de l'Averroïsme juif*, in «Sefarad» 12 (1952), pp. 3-29; B. NARDI, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*, Sansoni, Firenze 1958; Z. KUKSEWICZ, *L'influence d'Averroès sur les universités en Europe centrale: l'expansion de l'averroïsme latin*, in J. JOLIVET (éd.), *Multiple Averroès. Actes du colloque international*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1978, pp. 275-286; *L'Averroismo in Italia (Atti dei Convegni Lincei, 40)*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma 1979; O. LEAMAN, *Jewish Averroism*, in S. H. NASR-O. LEAMAN (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Routledge, London 1996, pp. 769-780; G. ENDRESS-J. A. AERTSEN (eds.), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1999; C. BAFFIONI (a cura di), *Averroes and the Aristotelian heritage*, Università degli studi di Napoli l'Orientale, Dipartimento di studi e ricerche su Africa e paesi arabi – Guida, Napoli 2004; A. BAZZANA-N. BÉRIOU-P. GUICHARD (org.), *Averroès et l'averroïsme (XIIIe-XVe siècle): un itinéraire historique du Haut Atlas à Paris et à Padoue. Actes, Presses universitaires de Lyon, Lyon 2005.*

⁵ According to Pierre Mandonnet, the positions taken by averroist philosophers towards faith and Christian life comprised assertions such as these: «La théologie est fondée sur des fables; les sages de ce monde sont les seuls philosophes; le christianisme est un obstacle à la science; il n'y a de bonheur qu'en ce monde; la mort est la fin de tout; il ne faut pas se soucier de sa sépulture; on ne doit se confesser qu'en apparence; il ne faut pas prier; la fornication n'est pas un péché», P. MANDONNET, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIIIe siècle*, Louvain 1911², p. 212. After decades of critical discussion on the existence and profile of «Averroism», John Marenbon proposed characterizing Latin Averroist Masters according to the following features, which I here summarise: a) as Arts Masters they were devoted to expounding Aristotle accurately, and turned especially to Averroes's commentaries for help; b) They accepted Averroes's interpretation that there is only a single potential intellect for all humans; c) As natural philosophers they accepted Aristotle's view that the world is eternal; d) They had an elevated view of the happiness attainable by humans in this life and devoted themselves to philosophy; e) They adopted some sort of strategy in order to explain why, though Christians, they followed (b), (c) and (d); cfr. J. MARENBO, *Medieval Philosophy. An Historical and Philosophical Introduction*, Routledge, London-New York 2007, pp. 255-256. The historiographical evolution is apparent and all the ideological interpretation has been removed.

⁶ The paradoxical influence of Averroes in mediaeval Latin philosophy has also been emphasized, cfr. J. B. BRENET, *Transferts du sujet: la noétique d'Averroès selon Jean de Jandun*, Vrin, Paris 2003; A. DE LIBERA, *L'unité de l'intellect. Commentaire du De unitate intellectus contra averroistas de Thomas d'Aquin*, Vrin, Paris 2004; E. COCCIA, *La trasparenza delle immagini. Averroè et l'averroïsme*, Mondadori Ed., Milano 2005; J. B. BRENET (ed.), *Averroès et les averroïsmes latin et juif. Actes du Colloque (Paris, juin 2005)*, Brepols, Turnhout 2007.

fideistic way of speaking, used by theologians, who are denounced as arguing their positions from the point of view of revealed authority, or faith, or religious dogma.

The array of positions which historians adopted under the name of averroism was very important in the Parisian schools of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from where they spread very widely, with some probability of their also reaching Portugal. University life in the first half of the fourteenth century in Portugal was still at quite a primitive stage. Or, to be more precise, there is no known record of what was taught in Philosophy, by whom and how. Documents pertaining to the University are very scarce and there is no knowledge of the text of any philosophical course or a commentary that might have been read there. This *Studium generale* was founded in Lisbon in 1288, transferred to Coimbra in 1308, and returned to Lisbon in 1338, always by decree of the King, on whom the university depended and who maintained its privileges. This instability and royal protection probably prevented the university from developing and, from what little is known, teaching always seems to have been very dependent on the relationship with universities of other kingdoms. The King himself granted scholarships for students to go to universities in France, England, Italy and Spain. And it seems that foreign masters taught Arts, Canon and Civil Law, and Medicine at the Portuguese university. The two authors in whom I am interested here are precisely in these situations. Alphonsus Dionisii of Lisbon is just one of those students who went to Paris with a scholarship under the protection of king Afonso IV. And it is not unlikely that Thomas Scotus was one of these foreign masters teaching in Portugal, as his name suggests.

For the history of possible Averroism in Portugal in the 14th century we must also mention Ferrandus Hispanus, deacon of Burgos and bishop of Coimbra in 1302-1303, to whom is attributed a commentary on the 3rd book of the *Oeconomica* by pseudo-Aristotle. Bishop Ferrandus has been identified with the homonymous «averroist» philosopher, author of the *De specie intelligibili*, of a commentary on *Metaphysics* and of other as yet unpublished works. Given the uncertainties surrounding the authorship of these works and Ferrandus' very short stay in Portugal, this reference should suffice.⁷

1. Alphonsus Dionisii of Lisbon

It is known that while in Paris Alphonsus Dionisii of Lisbon⁸ taught courses on

⁷ Cf. C. FOUTO, *Ferrandus Hispanus: Commentarium in Oeconomica Aristotelis* (Paris, BnF, Lat. 16133, ff. 69r-73v), Dissertação de Mestrado em Estudos Clássicos, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa 2007, pp. 17-26. On Ferrandus Hispanus' philosophical works and thinking, see A. ZIMMERMANN, *Ein Averroist des spätem 13. Jahrhunderts: Ferrandus de Hispania*, in «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie» 50, 1-2 (1968), pp. 145-164; ID., *Aristote et Averroès dans le Commentaire de Ferrandus de Hispania sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, in «Diotima» 8 (1980), pp. 159-163; ID., *Remarques et questions relatives à l'oeuvre de Ferrand d'Espagne*, in H. SANTIAGO-OTERO (Ed.), *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaísmo e islamismo durante la Edad Media en la Península Ibérica. Actes du Colloque international*, Brepols, Turnhout 1994, pp. 213-228; Z. KUKSEWICZ, *Ferrandus Hispanus «De specie intelligibili»*, in «Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale» 3 (1977), pp. 187-326; G. GALLE-G. GULDENTOPS, *Ferrandus Hispanus on Ideas*, in C. G. STEEL-G. VAN RIEL-C. MACÉ-L. VAN CAMPE (eds.), *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2004, pp. 51-80.

⁸ Alphonsus Dionisii of Lisbon studied Arts in Paris (c. 1329), then moved on to the study of medicine, for the

Avicenna's *Canon* and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, but the text of these courses is unknown. All we know are the translations he made from Arabic into Latin, always with the help of Jewish interpreters. These translations were done c. 1333-1335 in Seville and Toledo, when Alphonsus was a doctor to the Queen of Spain. Among those few texts, almost all dealing with medical and astrological issues, there is one on Philosophy, the *Tractatus Averoyis «De separatione primi principii»* or *Tractatus Averoyis contra aliquos Avicennistas ad probandum primi necesse esse*, a booklet in which it is contended, against the followers of Avicenna, that the existence of the first principle could only be demonstrated by Physics and not by Metaphysics according to the Aristotelian argument.⁹ Alexander Birkenmajer, in view of Alphonsus Dionisii's intellectual career, called him the «universal scholar».¹⁰

The translator added a preface arguing that Averroes is the author of the tractate, and included at the end of the translation an *accessus ad auctorem* in defence of Averroes. In both instances, Alphonsus awards high praise to Averroes, whose translated works he clearly knows, some in detail. In the short texts preceding and following the translated work, Alphonsus is mainly concerned with the physics and cosmology of Averroes, and also with his metaphysics, or at least with the question of determining its subject. But it is first and foremost Averroes the politician and man of laws whom Alphonsus praises as a wise and just man. Alphonsus' «averroism» is above all an apologia of the Commentator, and it never touches on any other of the contentious issues Averroes's name usually evoked.

To prove that this short work is indeed by Averroes and thus confirm its authenticity, the translator brings to our attention some excerpts of other works which are in doctrinal accord with the translated text. This shows his first hand knowledge of the *Great Commentary on Aristotle's Physics* and of the *Great Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, as well as of the *De Substantia Orbis*. Such first hand knowledge suggests that the translator may not have simply translated a text, but rather that his intervention could well have been more profound. The translation ends with a *Praise of Averroes*, presenting him as follows:

[...] that most venerable and distinguished lover of truth about the physical world, Aristotle's unique emulator, whom we Christians usually call the Commentator, Averroes was led by his love of truth and the genuine common good to make a statement in which he calls his king [...]

practice of which he obtained a licence (1332). After a few years as doctor to King Afonso IV of Portugal and his daughter Maria, wife of King Alfonso XI of Castille, he returned to Paris to study Theology. As a bachelor in Paris he read Peter Lombard's *Sentences* in 1345. He returned to Portugal, becoming Bishop of Egitânia/Guarda the following year, and died c. 1352 while bishop of Évora. On Alphonsus' life and works see A. D. S. COSTA, *Mestre Afonso Dinis, médico e secretário de D. Afonso IV, professor na Universidade de Paris*, in «Itinerarium» 3 (1957), pp. 370-417, pp. 491-607; A. BIRKENMAJER, *Études d'histoire des sciences et de la philosophie du Moyen Age*, Wrocław-Warszawa 1970, *passim*; W. J. COURTENAY, *Parisian Scholars in the Early Fourteenth Century. A Social Portrait*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999, pp. 66, 99, 220, 130-131; C. STEEL-G. GULDENTOPS, *An Unknown Treatise of Averroes Against the Avicennians on the First Cause. Edition and Translation*, in «Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale» 64 (1997), pp. 86-135; J. F. MEIRINHOS, *Afonso de Dinis de Lisboa: percursos de um filósofo, médico, teólogo, tradutor e eclesiástico do século XIV*, in «Península. Revista de estudos ibéricos» 4 (2007), pp. 47-64.

⁹ The work is published and translated by C. STEEL-G. GULDENTOPS, *An Unknown Treatise*, cit., pp. 94-134.

¹⁰ A. BIRKENMAJER, *Études d'histoire des sciences*, cit., p. 143.

the King of the Barbarians.¹¹

This statement, not being properly understood by his king, led Averroes to forfeit royal favour and be sent into exile, where he allegedly wrote his philosophical works. Later, in restoring him to favour, the King made him Governor of Cordoba and Marrakech, and it was as such that Averroes held the judicature in service of the king's government, and in that period he promulgated and enacted very good civil laws in accordance with the principles of philosophy, laws by which the Saracens still govern themselves today.

Alphonsus includes several biographical details of Averroes, no doubt with the intention of dispelling some of the slander about him circulating among the Latins, and shows a high esteem for the conception of philosophy as intellectual contemplation and the importance of the «philosophical life» in the creation of a just society ruled by law. Alphonsus explicitly mentions that he obtained this information about Averroes from a «credible Jew [...] the best and most truthful Jew I have ever found» (ed. cit., pp. 130-131). Another Jew, Master Alfonso, «*conversus sacrista Toletanus*», assisted Alphonsus in the translation of Averroes' text (*idem*, p. 130). It must be stressed that it is from the Jews that Alphonsus receives assistance both in translating the text and in composing the *accessus* with biographical information favourable to Averroes.

Alphonsus Dionisii is, no doubt, an admirer of Averroes. He has extensive knowledge of the work of the Commentator and he translates a text which deals with the most incisive debates on the nature of the possibility of proving the existence of God by means of natural knowledge and which develops arguments used by Averroes in other works. Alphonsus's «translation» of a text whose Arabic original has been lost is also a contribution to the survival of Averroes's work, at the same time allowing for the linguistic scope of its diffusion, limited by the passage of time and loss of interest, since only one manuscript remains, at Oxford, and there is no known mediaeval reference to this treatise.

For some time after the translation Alphonsus probably taught medicine or at least had some connection with the Portuguese University when he returned to Lisbon in 1338, since in 1337 he was nominated by Afonso IV as general medical examiner of the kingdom.¹²

Alvarus Pelagius, a contemporary of Alphonsus, had a much more negative view of Philosophy and of Averroes and the Arabs in general.

2. Alvarus Pelagius

The Franciscan canonist Alvarus Pelagius,¹³ in his longest and most famous work,¹⁴ *The*

¹¹ C. STEEL-G. GULDENTOPS, *An Unknown Treatise*, cit., pp. 130-131. Due to limitations of space all the citations will be made only in English.

¹² *Chancelarias portuguesas. D. Afonso IV*, 3 vol., Lisboa, INIC-Centro de Estudos Históricos da Universidade de Lisboa 1990-1992, vol. II: (1340-1344), doc. 92, pp. 171-172.

¹³ Alvarus Pelagius was born in Salnés, Galicia, c. 1275/80; he studied Canon Law in Bologna (it is not certain whether he had studied Theology in Paris). In 1304 he joined the Order of Friars Minor under the auspices of Gundisalvus Hispanus, Master of Theology in Paris and at that time General of the Order. In 1329, in Avignon, he was one of the lesser penitentiaries of Pope John XXII, of whom he was to remain a loyal defender in

State and Lament of the Church (De statu et planctu Ecclesiae), deeply deplores the harm philosophy has done to Christian society and schools:

The holy Scriptures and the holy canon are seen as fables. The philosopher rejoices and triumphs in the cathedras of the Christians, especially in those of the religious. There is no wise man today who does not find novelties, which give rise to real disputes among the scholars. Every lesson of the Church consists of laying out questions and opinions and not only is there no solution and no truth, but there is confusion between the legitimate and the illegitimate. Our iniquity is, indeed, greater than that of those who never knew the way to the truth and so deserved lesser punishment (*De statu et planctu Ecclesiae*, II, art. 7; vol. II, p. 344-245).

Alvarus, who in other sections of this work violently criticises the political philosophy of Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham in defence of John XXII,¹⁵ has a keen disdain for the subtlety of the philosophers and is horrified to realise they have also infected the theologians and canonists. When he enumerates the vices of doctors and masters he writes as follows:

<They sin>, fourthly, because they try to present different questions which are subtle but useless [...] On this point, those who sin the most are the masters of Paris and Oxford in England, both secular and religious, and especially the Preaching Friars and the Minors, some of whom are possessed of such arrogance that it comes close to that of Lucifer, who was brought down [...] In their schools you don't hear the prophets, or the holy law of Moses, or Christ the wisdom of the Father, or his most holy Gospel, or the Apostles, or the holy Doctors of the Church. All that rings and resounds is the idolater philosopher and his commentator, with the rest of the pedagogues of Liberal Arts; to such an extent that in the Schools of sacred Theology you no longer read the sacred word, but philosophy. Not even the professors read the catholic text of the *Sentences* in the schools any more, nor the lecturers those of the masters, but they move on instead to intriguing questions, so as to appear learned according to the letter, when they are not [...] (*De statu et planctu Ecclesiae*, II, art. 13; vol. V, pp. 314-317).

Philosophy is simply useless, because it distracts people from salvation; and in this it is close to the most abhorrent heresies:

Plato, Aristotle and Averroes together with other pagan philosophers, Origen and Arrio, along with other subtle heretics, inhabit the outer darkness because they do not glorify God [...]. That which saves is not prophesying, preaching, knowing the mysteries of the Two Testaments,

subsequent works. On 16th June 1332 he was consecrated Bishop of Corona/Koron on the Peloponnese, a function which he never fulfilled, since on 9th June 1333 he was designated Bishop of Silves (in southern Portugal). Opposed by the local clergy and by King Afonso IV of Portugal, he sought exile in Seville in 1348, where he died in 1349 and where he is buried. On Alvarus' life see: A. D. DE SOUSA COSTA, *Estudos sobre Álvaro Pais*, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1966; for further bibliographical information see the following notes and J. F. MEIRINHOS, s.v. *Alvarus Pelagius O.F.M.*, in *CALMA*, vol. I.2, Ed. del Galluzzo, Firenze 2000, pp. 194-196.

¹⁴ Alvarus Pelagius' published works are *De statu et planctu Ecclesiae* (first redaction in Avignon 1330-1332, revised twice: in Algarve 1335 and in Santiago de Compostela 1340) in ÁLVARO PAIS, *Estado e pranto da Igreja*, 8 vol., ed. and transl. M. P. MENESES, INIC / JNICT / FCT, Lisboa 1988-1998; *Speculum regum* (Tavira 1341-1344) in FREI ÁLVARO PAIS, *Espelho dos reis*, 2 vol., ed. and transl. M. P. MENESES, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1955-1963; *Collyrium fidei adversus haereses* (concluded after 1344) in FREI ÁLVARO PAIS, *Colírio da Fé contra as Heresias*, 2 vol., ed. and transl. M. P. MENESES, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1954-1956; V. MENEGHIN, *Scritti inediti di Fra Alvaro Pais*, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1969.

¹⁵ See *De statu et planctu ecclesiae*, I, art. 68-70 (= *Apologia pro Iohanne XXII contra Marsilium Patavinum et Guilielmum Ockamum*), ed. cit., vol. III, pp. 322-417; and *Collyrium*, Pars V, i-iii, ed. cit., vol. II, pp. 23-34 (against Marsilius); *Id.*, Pars I, lxiv-lxv; vol. I, pp. 224-231 (2 errors attributed to Amalric of Bena).

converting many people, hearing penances, giving advice, or even performing miracles and living poorly, but rather observing God's commandments and loving him with all our heart [...]
(*De statu et planctu Ecclesiae*, II, art. 49; vol. VI, pp. 34-35).

It is true that in this same work Aristotle is sometimes quoted in a neutral tone or even as an authority, but these are surely extracts which have been taken exactly as they are or paraphrased from other authors, a method Alvarus abundantly uses in his works.

After 1344 Alvarus Pelagius finished the *Collyrium fidei adversus haereses*, a *summa* in VI books of ancient errors and some others of more recent diffusion which are in conflict with the Catholic faith. Occasionally he argues that «dialectica disputatio ad haeresim se trahit»,¹⁶ and in a well known section of this same work he harshly criticises an enigmatic and heterodox Thomas Scotus, to whom there are no references in any other source.¹⁷ In fact, all we know about Thomas Scotus comes from two sparse references in the work,¹⁸ and from an entire section devoted to him in book V, errors 7 to 26.¹⁹ We know absolutely nothing else about Thomas except what his critic tells us. Even if this Thomas was a moderate, Alvarus portrays him as the most extreme of contenders and describes him in very harsh terms. For this reason nothing allows us to conclude that Alvarus' accusations actually correspond to Thomas's thinking, because we know that other public denunciations that Alvarus made in his sermons provoked the anger of the citizens of the diocese of Silves, who denounced him to the king, factors which would also lead to his voluntary exile in Seville.²⁰

Alvarus' accusation begins with these words:

¹⁶ *Collyrium*, Pars II, error xxix; vol. I, p. 294; *Collyrium*, Pars V, error xv; p. 60: «Quibus standum est [sc. fides et auctoritates Sacrae Scripturae et decreta et decretales], non philosophiae et dialecticae disputationi, quae haereses nutrit et fidei simplicitatem minuit et enervat».

¹⁷ On Alvarus' critique of Thomas Scotus, see P. DURÃO, *Thomas Scotus, aristotelicus, qui saeculo XIV Olypsipone docuit*, in P. WILPERT (hrsg.), *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter. Ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung*, (Miscellanea mediaevalia, 2), Berlin 1963, pp. 472-474; A. D. DE SOUSA COSTA, *Estudos sobre Alvaro Pais*, cit., pp. 65-71; and the bibliography cited in notes 20-22.

¹⁸ In error 40 of book I (*Collyrium*, vol. I, p. 144) Thomas is called Arrianus and is associated with Alphonsus Geraldus of Montemor («qui se bachalarium in teologia nominat, qui de me Colimbriar murmuravit», vol. I, p. 294), another Portuguese heretic (only known through these two Alvarus citations) who will not be discussed here.

¹⁹ *Collyrium*, ed. cit., Pars V, vii-xxvi; vol. II, pp. 40-78. Previous editions with the Thomas attributed errors, for the most part extracted, can be found in: J. J. I. V. DÖLLINGER, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, 2. Teil, C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München 1890, pp. 615-617; M. MENENDEZ PELAYO, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, vol. I, Librería Católica de S. José, Madrid 1880, pp. 782-784; A. AMARO, *Fr. Alvaro Pelagio, su vida, sus obras y su posición respecto de la cuestión de la pobreza teórica en la Orden Franciscana, bajo Juan XII (1316-34)*, in «Archivo Ibero-Americano» 3, 14 (1916), pp. 205-209, cit. in J. DE CARVALHO, *Aditamentos e notas* to F. L. FERREIRA, *Notícias chronologicas da Universidade de Coimbra*, 3 vol. (Lisboa 1729), Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra 1937-1944², vol. I, pp. 638-642, note not included in J. DE CARVALHO, *Obra Completa*, vol. VII, Lisboa 1992; M. ESPOSITO, *Les hérésies de Thomas Scotus d'après le «Collyrium fidei» d'Alvaro Pelayo*, in «Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique» 33 (1937), pp. 56-69, cfr. pp. 59-64. Thomas' table of errors is in the selections of the *Collyrium* published by R. SCHOLZ, *Unbekannte Kirchenpolitische Streischriften aus der Zeit Ludwig des Bayern (1327-1354). Analysen und Texte*, 2 vol., Verlag von Loescher & C. 1911-1914, vol. II, pp. 492-514.

²⁰ Cfr. D. M. G. SANTOS, *Cartas de Alvaro Pais*, in «Brotéria» 81 (1965), pp. 669-673; A. D. DE SOUSA COSTA, *Estudos sobre Alvaro Pais*, Instituto de Alta Cultura, Lisboa 1966, p. 87 and n. 119; J. A. C. R. SOUZA, *D. Alvaro Pelayo O. Min. y D. Alfonso IV de Portugal y las relaciones de Poder*, in «Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía» 20 (2003), pp. 51-67, cfr. pp. 65-67.

These are the heresies and errors that Thomas Scotus, apostate of the Friars Minor and Preachers, has made public in some parts of Hispania and other places. Some he confessed in court, others he holds fast to and for that he is incarcerated in Lisbon (*Collyrium*, Pars V, Error VII; vol. II, p. 40).

Generally, Alvarus gives no details about Thomas's theories, but presents them in sometimes blunt formulas, which are immediately crushed by a sequence of biblical and canon law authorities, enough, according to Alvarus, to show their complete falsity.

Thomas Scotus is presented as a public offender, a follower and admirer of Aristotle, who apparently professed in Lisbon and other parts of Iberia a number of heresies and other positions. Due to these attributed doctrines, Thomas Scotus was later described as an «Averroist» (although Averroes is never named by Alvarus in this context).²¹

The error generating a lengthier discussion, and the one which is most informative regarding Thomas's position, is the following:

He said to myself and to several scholars, at the School of Canon Law, that faith is better proven by Philosophy than by Decree, by the Canon Law and by the New and Old Testament – a statement which is heretical for many reasons (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xv error; vol. II, p. 56).

In this discussion, as we shall gather from the following text, Thomas (or Alvarus?) seems to be linking together in a confused manner the results of two different problems, one concerning whether science proves the existence of God and the other concerning whether natural science can give proof about what is believed through faith.

For Thomas, not even Theology is necessary to prove faith, which proves itself, just as natural Philosophy is useless for explaining what one believes through faith. The natural philosopher, therefore, must abstain from issues such as the creation of the world, the virginity of Mary, the resurrection of the dead, the remission of sins in baptism, or the incarnation of Christ. The source of Thomas's position is manifold, as are the implications

²¹ Among the historians that dubbed Thomas Scotus an averroist we must note: MENÉNDEZ PELAYO, pp. cit.; R. SCHOLZ, cit., vol. I, p. 200, n. 2; J. DE CARVALHO, cit., p. 642 («não podem contrastar-se estas notícias; talvez apaixonadamente exageradas; no entanto, revelam a infiltração averroista no Estudo lisbonense, e não repugna admitir que os escolares de Lisboa repetissem as blasfêmias e ditos dos seus colegas de Paris»); M. MARTINS, *As acusações contra Tomás Escoto e a sua interpretação*, in «Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia» 8 (1952), pp. 29-49, now in ID., *Estudos de literature medieval*, Livr. Cruz, Braga, pp. 285-305 (calls him «a victim of averroism», p. 49/305); F. G. CAEIRO, s. v. *Averroísmo em Portugal*, in *Enciclopédia Verbo, ed. séc. XXI*, Lisboa 1998, vol. III, coll. 1132-1135, cfr. col. 1133; P. GOMES, s.v. *Averroísmo*, in *Dicionário de Filosofia Portuguesa*, Ed. D. Quixote, Lisboa 2003², pp. 52-59, cfr. pp. 56-57. Reviewing the earlier literature, Mário Santiago de Carvalho argues that, in view of what Alvarus Pelagius writes, it is not possible to sketch the intellectual or philosophical profile of Thomas Scotus and that, this being the case, he cannot be classified as an averroist; furthermore, in view of unquestionable errors, Thomas was not attacked as a philosopher but «was considered an antichristian: seductor» by Alvarus, see M. S. CARVALHO, *O «sedutor» Tomás Escoto*, in «Humanística e Teologia» 11 (1990), pp. 171-198, now in ID., *Estudos sobre Álvaro Pais e outros franciscanos (séculos XIII-XV)*, INCM, Lisboa 2002, pp. 95-120, cit. p. 122. A new perspective on how to link Alvarus with political averroism can be fin in F. BERTELLONI, *Sobre la existencia de un averroísmo ibérico en los siglos XIII y XIV*, in J. A. C. R SOUZA, *Idade Média: tempo do mundo, tempo dos homens, tempo de Deus*, Ed. EST, Porto Alegre 2006, pp. 470-481, cfr. pp. 478-481 (*passim* n. 28).

of his position:

[...] what natural reason can infer that something comes from nothing? This is why the Philosopher [sc. Aristotle] says, naturally speaking, that nothing comes from nothing, and for this he said the world is eternal, but he fell into heresy, because he had no faith. In fact, almighty God created all things in essence from nothing, for he himself is the highest being and the first uncreated, from which all beings exist through creation, so that he himself exists by himself and all beings by him (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xv error; vol. II, p. 58).

Errors 19 and 21 will return to this issue, when the question of the eternity of the world is discussed, and in both errors Aristotle is mentioned as Thomas' source, who simultaneously denies the creation of the world and the creation of Adam:

Item, said the aforementioned heretic Thomas that before Adam there were men and that by them Adam has been made and thus infers that there have always been men in the world, supposing, together with his idolater Aristotle, that the world is eternal (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xix error; vol. II, p. 66).

One of the consequences of this is a new error in Alvarus' classification, because if the world was not created, then it will have no end, so there will be no resurrection of the dead:

Item, said the aforementioned heretic Thomas that the world must have no end. And this he said, for he supposes, together with the heathen Philosopher, the world to be eternal, as I mentioned before in heresy 19. And thus he denies future judgement, Resurrection, and life of the future century, which are articles of faith [...] (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xxi error; vol. II, p. 68-71).

Going back to Error 15, we do not know how Thomas argued for his scientific rationalism speaking naturally about nature, and what in fact he set out to demonstrate; but for Alvarus, Philosophy is useless and must not be called upon to discuss that which is beyond it. Clearly he does not accept that because natural philosophy has nothing to say on the articles of faith these should be excluded from the realm of certainty.

Who can prove by nature [...] that a virgin gives birth, that the dead come back to life, that water consecrated at the baptism washes away all sins, that God suffers in the flesh, and other articles of faith which are proven by the Holy Scripture, because you believe in them? True faith proves itself, because you believe [...]. Believing any other way, that is, proving faith by nature, is not to prove. Nature must yield to miracle [...] (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xv error; vol. II, p. 58).

It is not clear whether these positions have indeed been held by Thomas, but Alvarus uses them to show that in fact the Philosopher cannot speak about them. Besides, for Alvarus, «unbelieving and idolater philosophers» cannot prove faith which, as he finally says, can be proved only by itself and by the authority of the Scriptures, the *Decretals* and the authorities which Alvarus himself invokes throughout the work to refute each of the listed heresies. «Philosophy and dialectic disputation» only serve to diminish and disband the simplicity of faith. There is yet another ramification to Error 15, because: «[...] vainly proud of his philosophy, he gloried that the world is better ruled by Philosophy than by the Decrees, Decretals and other laws [...]» (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xv error; vol. II, p. 62).

In the discussion of Error 15 we find echoes of the theses on the eternity of the world, the limits of physics and theology, the superiority and autonomy of philosophy to rule the

world (v.g. to achieve happiness), which had been condemned in 1277. All of these are averroistic stances for many contemporary authors, as for Raymond Lull among others.²² And in the background, to Alvarus there seems to be a blatant defence of the «double truth», which he denounces in what he sees as the cynical and opportunistic way in which Thomas, being ill, has agreed to confess and take communion, because it was «convenient to believe the things the clerics said about the body of Christ and the absolution through the keys», giving us to understand that he did not believe in them (see error xxiv).

By affirming the mortality of the human soul, a position described elsewhere by Alvarus as a heresy coming «from the Arabs»,²³ Thomas denies the resurrection of souls: «Thomas has further claimed that the souls, after death, are reduced to nothing [...]. By speaking thus, this wretch, blinded by his fatuous philosophy, denies the resurrection of man, who is made of soul and body» (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xii error; vol. II, p. 54).

The miracles of Christ are also nothing but natural virtue and magic:

This heretic Thomas has also blasphemed against Christ, by saying that he performed miracles not through divine virtue, but by means of magical arts and natural virtue. Yet, in this as is many aforementioned heresies, he jewifies with the Jews, with whom in fact he converses night and day [...].

This one then, as unfortunate as the Jews, says that Christ the God expelled demons in the name of Beelzebub [...] (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xxv error; vol. II, pp. 74-77).

The healing virtue, again, is something that is naturally transmitted and hereditary, and not received or activated by miracle (see error xvii).

This same natural method used to understand facts can even be applied to the understanding of the life of peoples. For instance, the antichrist is seen as a historical and social need and not as a revelation or a sign of the end of times: «Item, this wicked Thomas has dogmatized in Lisbon, when speaking of the antichrist, that it is necessary that in every age there should come a man to deceive the world [...]» (*Collyrium*, Pars V, x error; vol. II, p. 50).

We may infer from this discussion on philosophy as proof of faith that the main point of Thomas's thought seems to be the desire to speak according to nature and according to philosophical reason, separating it from that which is beyond its frontiers. From the other Errors denounced by Alvarus, Thomas can be seen to be going even farther from an epistemological point of view, and to be trying to show that that which Christians believe to be miracles and divine interventions is really better explained by means of natural arguments; and these, obviously, detract from the divine character of those events, which turn out to be simply natural phenomena and instances of human virtue, erroneously explained by faith. If this is the case, Thomas would be more than a defender of the «double truth»; he would be a clear defender of the position that in religion and in faith there is no natural truth. Thomas was never accused of atheism but rather of a form of naturalization of the Trinity, when even the Holy Ghost is reduced to a natural explanation: «In my presence he confessed, and he said it in court, before the vicars, that the Holy Ghost

²² For Lulle's works against averroists, see R. IMBACH, *Lulle face aux averroïstes parisiense*, in *Raymond Lulle et le Pays d'Oc*, (Cahiers de Fanjeaux, 22), Privat, Toulouse 1987, pp. 261-282, now in ID., *Quodlibeta. Ausgewählte Artikel. Articles choisis*, (Dokimion, 20), Universitätsverlag, Fribourg 1996, pp. 365-383.

²³ *Collyrium*, Pars II, lviii error; vol. I, p. 346.

or his power is given by nature» (*Collyrium*, Pars I, xl error; vol. I, p. 144).

Two symmetrical and opposing schemes emerge: for Thomas, only Philosophy leads to the truth; for Alvarus, only in faith is there truth. This is a combat between «spiritual science» and «aristotelian science»:

Item, [claimed] the aforementioned heretic Thomas that Aristotle had been wiser, more subtle, and had spoken higher than Moses. It is not surprising that he should say this, for in the heresy above [...] [sc. ix error] he said that Moses had been a deceiver of the Jews. But, just as in the other one he speaks falsely, in this one he does so also. In reality Aristotle's natural science cannot be compared to the spiritual science of Moses [...]. Aristotelian science is folly before God [...] Moreover, the wisdom of philosophers is not only earthly, it is also often devilish [...] (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xxiii error; vol. II, p. 72).

Each of the two authors is entrenched in his own position; they both seem to be tenaciously coherent and it is not surprising that Alvarus should say that they have often argued together in Lisbon: in the Schools, at the Church of the Saints, when Thomas was in court.

And as far as it is possible to ascertain from the words of an opponent, Thomas seems to be a consistent aristotelian, looking for natural assumptions for all facts. As we only know his positions from a censor's writing, it seems that his only concern was to defy and refute the religious form of expression.

Thomas holds to a principle of suspicion in the face of religions, and he does not hesitate to use it and denounce them as a hoax, each of them having at its origin a deceiver of men. Thomas is presented as an open defender of the theory of the three impostors.²⁴

This wicked heretic has also spread through Iberia that there have been three deceivers in the world, to wit: Moses, who deceived the Jews; Christ, who deceived the Christians; and Mahommed, who deceived the Saracens. / What he says of Mahommed is true, because he deceived the Arab people and because he came from Arabia, where the Saracens come from [...] But when he says that Moses is a deceiver he speaks falsely and in this he belongs to that group of heretics who condemn the fathers of the Old Testament, who are precious gems [...] And when this villainous seducer calls Jesus Christ a seducer, he becomes Jewish (*judaizat*) in his heresy. The Jews also called and still call Christ Our Lord a seducer. Matthew: «we remember what that seducer said» [...] Yet, by calling Christ a seducer, this wicked Thomas, the worst of all heretics, denies all articles of faith which speak of his divinity and humanity and that show in both symbols, «I believe in God» and «I believe in one God» [...] (*Collyrium*, Pars V, ix error; vol. II, pp. 48, 50).

The only point of agreement between Alvarus and Thomas, albeit partial and strictly topical, is where Mohammed, deceiver of the Arab people, is concerned. In everything else they are opposed, because Thomas is presented as an impudent enemy of faith and of all religions.²⁵

²⁴ On Alvarus Thomas and the «three impostors», see M. ESPOSITO, *Una manifestazione d'incredulità religiosa nel medioevo. Il detto dei «Tre impostori» e la sua trasmissione da Federico II a Pomponazzi*, in «Archivio storico italiano» serie VII, 16 (1931), pp. 3-48, cfr. pp. 38-41. Among the bibliography on the «three impostors» in the Middle Ages, see G. RUSSINO, *Un medioevo incredulo. A proposito di scetticismo e imposture*, in «Mediaeval Sophia» 3 (2008), pp. 162-168 <<http://www.mediaevalsophia.net>>.

²⁵ In his demolition work, Thomas also refutes the ethical authority of the saints (he quotes Augustine, Bernard and Antony of Padua) who, since they were also men, had concubines, whom they kept hidden away, and

At least one of the errors is concerned with political issues associated with the so-called political averroism.²⁶ It is no wonder that Alvarus, the hierocrat,²⁷ should also come to blows with Thomas on the issue of the origin of the temporal power of the Church. On this point Thomas must have also been rather violent, saying that Christ could not have transmitted his temporal power to Peter:

Item, the afore-mentioned Thomas maintained in the Schools, when I argued against him personally concerning his heresies, that Christ had not given St. Peter and his successors and bishops the power he had on earth just as he had it (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xv error; vol. II, p. 66-67).

Therefore neither the Church nor the Pope could claim what they did not receive, because it could not be transmitted to them.

In another dispute, Thomas seems to admit that there is in fact a transmission of power from Christ to Peter and the Apostles, but he thinks that they could not in turn transmit that power to their successors (error xx). Thomas, «the worst of all men» (*pessimus hominum*), is mainly despicable because he follows Aristotle, a philosopher and a pagan, whom he had the daring to compare with Christ:

Item, this heretic Thomas blasphemed, when he said that Aristotle was better than Christ, who had been a bad man and had been nailed [to the cross] for his sins and went alone to speak to cheap women [...].

Why does he also compare the idolater Philosopher to his maker [...] and, what is more, why does he exalt him, blaspheming against Christ?

In truth, this Thomas, the worst of all men, takes part in the errors of all those heretics and drags the world into idolatry (*Collyrium*, Pars V, xxii error; vol. II, pp. 70, 72).

this detracts from everything they said and wrote (see error xvi, pp. 62-64).

²⁶ The existence and profile of «Political averroism» is discussed by A. GEWIRTH, *Natural Desire, the Unity of the Intellect, and Political Averroism*, Appendix II to Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, Columbia University Press, New York 1956; G. PIAIA, «Averroïsme politique»: *anatomie d'un mythe historiographique*, in A. ZIMMERMANN (hrsg.), *Orientalische Kultur und europäisches Mittelalter*, (Miscellanea mediaevalia, 17), W. de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1985, pp. 328-344; C. BUTTERWORTH, *What is Political Averroism?*, in F. NIEWÖHNER-L. STURLESE (hrsg.), *Averroismus im Mittelalter*, cit., pp. 239-250; J. A. CASTELLO DUBRA, *Nota sobre el aristotelismo y el averroismo político de Marsilio de Padua*, in «Veritas» 42 (1997), pp. 671-677. It must be noted that the first 3 errors in book V of the *Collyrium* are by Marsilius.

²⁷ Alvarus «è in certa misura l'ultimo, e anche in certo senso un estremo, difensore delle più ampie rivendicazioni della sovranità temporale del papa», J. MIETHKE, *Ai confini del potere. Il dibattito sulla potestas papale da Tommaso d'Aquino a Guglielmo d'Ockham*, trad. C. Storti, rivisione R. Lambertini, Editrici Franciscana, Padova 2005, p. 201. There is an abundant bibliography on his political positions: N. IUNG, *Un franciscain théologien du pouvoir pontifical au XIVe siècle. Alvaro Pelayo, évêque et pénitencier de Jean XXII*, Vrin, Paris 1931; M. DAMIATA, *Alvaro Pelagio teocratico scontento*, Biblioteca di Studi francescani, Firenze 1984; J. MIETHKE, *Alvaro Pelayo e la chiesa del suo tempo*, in *Santi e santità nel sec. XIV. Atti del XV convegno internazionale, Assisi 15-16-17 ottobre 1987*, (Convegni 15) Pubblicazioni dell'Università degli Studi di Perugia – Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, Napoli 1989, pp. 253-293; P. CALAFATE, *Frei Álvaro Pais*, in ID. (Ed.), *História do pensamento filosófico português*, Lisboa 1999, vol. I, pp. 221-251. Francisco Bertelloni regrets that the appearance of political Averroism in the Iberian peninsula has not yet received attention, and considers that the thesis of Thomas Alvarus are not expression of fanaticism, but the testimony of an «aguda percepción de las posibilidades que ofrecía el llamado *agostinismo político*, derivado de los libros morales de Aristóteles», to destroy the arguments about the supremacy of papal power, cfr. F. BERTELLONI, *Sobre la existencia de un averroismo ibérico en los siglos XIII y XIV*, cit., cfr. p. 480.

Not even the text of the Bible escapes Thomas's naturalistic scrutiny. His knowledge of languages, in this case that of the Hebrew language, is his means of dissecting the Christian exegesis of the Scriptures, which distorts the original meaning of certain words and expressions:

Item said the seducer Thomas in public, in the Schools of Decretals in Lisbon, that the words of Isaiah IX, «strong God, father of the century to come, etc.», that *strong God* was a proper name and it had not been said because of Jesus Christ, which is a heretical thing to say and it perverts the understanding of the word [...] One must resort to the common understanding of the word (*Collyrium*, Pars V, x; vol. II, p. 52-54).

Thomas' method of refusing to interpret certain passages of the biblical text gives us an interesting clue to the understanding of his intellectual milieu. Every time he resorts to this method he is accused of «jewifying» (*iudaizare*), that is, of following what he has learned from the Jews (*iudaizans cum eis*),²⁸ a people Alvarus considers abominable for their condemnation of Christ. The same argument from an etymological interpretation of the Scriptures gives textual backing to the claim that Christ is only God's adopted son (error xiii) and that Mary was not a virgin as she conceived (error xiv).

Alvarus links Thomas to the Jews in several other passages, saying, for instance, that he is a «blasphemer like the Jews» (*ipse blasphemus cum iudaeis*),²⁹ or when he says that, like them (*iudaizans cum iudaeis*), he also denies the existence of angels and demons.³⁰ And in a passage already mentioned, Thomas is denounced for «jewifying with the Jews, with whom in fact he converses night and day» (*cum iudaeis iudaizat. Nam cum eis nocte et die conuersatur*).³¹

From the vantage point of viewing this double denunciation of Thomas's positions as stemming from either Judaism or Philosophy, we see that they acquire at least a cultural coherence which is lost when they are filtered through Alvarus's Christian and juridical interpretative grid and accusation of incoherence and blasphemy. They might even be considered as two sides of the same coin.

We have no other elements from which to evaluate Thomas's proximity to the Jewish community in Lisbon. And very little is indeed known about the cultural life of Lisbon Jews at this time.³² But it would not be impossible that there should have been some school or that some Aristotelian commentaries, or even works by Averroes, might have been in

²⁸ «The mentioned Scotus has also claimed, and confessed in court, that the prophecy in Isaiah VII «And, lo and behold, a virgin shall conceive» he did not understand as coming from Saint Mary, just as the Jews do not, jewifying with them (*iudaizans cum eis*)», *Collyrium*, Pars V, viii error (vol. II, p. 42) and «said the seducer Thomas Scotus publicly in the Schools of Decretals of Lisbon that in the words of Isaiah IX, «strong God, father of the century to come, etc.», that «strong God» was a proper name and it had not been said because of Jesus Christ», *Collyrium*, Pars V, xi error (vol. II, p. 52).

²⁹ *Collyrium*, Pars V, xxiv error; vol. II, p. 74.

³⁰ «This grand heretic Thomas also denies that there are angels and demons, jewifying with the Jews, who have established that there are no angels and that the bad angels have not fallen», *Collyrium*, Pars V, xxvi error (vol. II, p. 76).

³¹ *Collyrium*, Pars V, xxv error; vol. II, p. 75.

³² M. J. P. FERRO, *Os judeus em Portugal no século XIV*, Guimarães Ed., Lisboa 1979.

circulation among the Portuguese Jewish communities, which Thomas Scotus might then have come to know by this means and not just from his possible Arts (Parisian?) education. This is a hypothesis in need of more thorough confirmation. It must be noted that every one of Thomas's philosophical «errors» denounced by Alvarus is in some way connected to the so-called Latin averroism. The connection could be an involuntary side effect of Alvarus' means of expression, but it could also be a result of Thomas' committed and explicit philosophical position, in some way misunderstood and distorted by Alvarus. In any case it would be necessary to set all the philosophy-connected-errors against the so-called Jewish averroism as one of its possible sources.

The horror of Alvarus when he asks «what fool or heretic taught as this Thomas has in the Schools?»,³³ shows mainly a concern with the spread of such heterodox and areligious positions. The attacks on Thomas do indeed embody Alvarus's animosity towards philosophy, that is, towards Aristotle and his commentator, Averroes, which we have found in his *The State and Lament of the Church*. Refusing Philosophy any influence on Theology, Alvarus reacts violently against a master who, with his natural way of speaking, interfered in matters of faith. And it is for this reason alone that we know something about Thomas Scotus. Or perhaps it is because Alvarus's reaction was so violent and effective that we know nothing more about the thought of Thomas Scotus.

3. Weak and hard averroism

Whether it is an aristotelianism compounded with militant averroism, or simply an occasional defence of controversial positions originating mainly from the energetic reaction of an overexcited canonist, the thought of Thomas Scotus, such as it is known to us from the rebuke of Alvarus Pelagius, seems to be that which comes the closest to the stereotype of averroism, and it is for that reason that it has been so labelled by past historians. This averroism in a weak sense, as it does not coincide with Averroes's texts or thinking, was once outlined by Renan as involving the denial of the supernatural, of miracles, angels and devils and divine intervention, and the explanation of religious and moral beliefs as the result of imposture, positions that we find attributed to Thomas Scotus. Furthermore, Thomas was accused of having firmly defended positions having to do with the defence of the autonomy of reason and philosophy, the eternity of the world and of species, the mortality of the human soul, positions that Alvarus generally associates with Aristotle and not with Averroes. The positions attributed to Thomas Scotus could have been poorly understood, or distorted, or even invented by Alvarus Pelagius. Even so, the latter author turns them into a description which brings them closer to the way in which the positions of the «averroists» were described or criticised in that period by authors such as Raymond Llull. In this sense we can justify the fact that historians had classified Thomas as an averroist, in spite of his connection with this way of thinking possibly having been weak or non-existent.

That these three masters (Alphonsus, Alvarus, and Thomas) coincided in Portugal in the

³³ *Collyrium*, Pars I, xl error; p. 144.

thirties and forties of the fourteenth century, and that they should have attacked and defended philosophy in such a sanguine manner, are testimony to the extent of the influence and the height of authority achieved by the work of Aristotle, but also by that of his commentator Averroes. This certainly is not enough to prove that there was indeed an averroist trend at the Portuguese *Studium generale* (existing in Coimbra until 1338 and again in Lisbon after that year); much less does it prove that it was some variant of averroism with local specificities. But some of the positions that his adversaries identify with Averroes seem to have constituted the core of Thomas Scotus's thought, at least in Alvarus Pelagius' mind. It is the same Averroes whom Alphonsus Dionisii explicitly praises. From that, we can at least say that in Alphonsus we do find averroism in the hard sense, as a regard for and defence of the thought of the philosopher from Cordoba.