



LORENZO MINIO-PALUELLO

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1907-1986

I

LORENZO MINIO-PALUELLO was born at Belluno on 21 September 1907 as the fourth son in a patrician family from Venice. One Minio is mentioned by Sanudo as an ambassador of the Republic, another as a military commander, and a third as an advocate whom the Council of Ten banished for life because he had made a radical proposal in the Grand Council. 'Paluello' was a recent addition to the family name, and Lorenzo, like his father, was commonly called Minio outside the family circle. In his manhood he looked like an exceptionally tall statesman of the old Republic, but his forbears for several generations had been teachers of mathematics and natural science. His father, Michelangelo Minio, and his mother, Ersilia Bisson, met as first-year students in Padua, where she was the first woman to graduate in science. Michelangelo started his married life as a science master in a *ginnasio-liceo* but became especially interested in botany. After identifying an Alpine flower not previously described and writing a handsome book on the flora of the Venetian lagoon he ended his working life as the Curator of the Natural History Museum of Venice. While the children were still young they were sometimes recruited as bearers in plant-collecting expeditions to the shores and islands of the lagoon. Another of his interests was the Venetian language, which he always spoke in preference to the Italian of united Italy. He and his wife had their children baptized according to custom but were not themselves practising Catholics and did not encourage their children to adopt any religious beliefs.

Most of the children showed the same scientific interests as their parents. One boy became an admiral and another a general in the air force. Lorenzo also retained throughout his life an interest in mathematics and natural science, but at the *ginnasio-liceo* Foscarini, where he followed the humanist (i.e. classical) course, he discovered that he had an aptitude for learning languages and began to hope for an academic career in which he could use his linguistic skills. In later life he attributed the awakening

of this interest to a teacher of Greek, who encouraged him to learn something of the history of the various alphabetic scripts. In the course of time he acquired enough Hebrew and Arabic to read the texts that interested him, and his first effort in serious composition (which did not find a publisher) was a translation of Spinoza's *Short Treatise* from Dutch into Italian.

When Lorenzo began his university studies at Padua, Gentile, the first Fascist minister of education, had already introduced some changes, but these did not affect his course of study, except perhaps by allowing him more freedom of choice, when the examination for the *laurea* was separated from the state examinations for entry to the professions. In 1925, however, Croce published a manifesto in which Fascism was denounced as a gospel of hatred and rancour. From that time all intellectuals were suspected of disloyalty to the regime, and some distinguished scholars who had signed the manifesto were forced into exile. In 1927, when Minio was in the middle of his university course, it was announced that in future candidates for university appointments would be accepted only if 'their moral and political behaviour was correct'. But when he graduated in 1929 he still thought it possible for one who was not a Fascist to have a honourable academic career. With this belief he took the post of Assistant Librarian in the University of Padua and went to Paris to study philosophy and Semitic languages in preparation for the quiet life of a scholar.

What finally drove him away from the profession he wanted to join was a decree of 1930 that required university teachers to take an oath to the truth of Fascist doctrine. There were only eleven professors in all Italy who resigned rather than take the oath, and some prominent individuals of liberal sympathies, including even Croce, defended the action of the majority by saying that it was better to submit to such 'formalities' than to leave the universities completely in the hands of the *arrivistes*. But at this point Minio thought it necessary to make a stand, although his decision involved loss of the small post to which he had been appointed. During his student days he had begun to take an interest in religion, but what moved him now was the simple consideration that teachers ought not to swear to the truth of what they knew to be false. From that time until he left Italy he supported himself by private teaching of Latin and Greek. For a short time he had a public appointment in Istria, but when that came to an end he returned to Venice and Padua, where he was

able to work in his own time on the project now called *Aristoteles Latinus*.

After the First World War the Union Académique Internationale had set up a committee to produce a *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi*, but at an early stage the committee defined its task more modestly as that of collating and publishing the translations by which the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were transmitted to the Middle Ages. There was therefore to be a *Corpus Platonicum*, which would contain the Latin sources of medieval Platonism, and a *Corpus Aristotelicum*, or *Aristoteles Latinus*, which would contain the texts of the translations through which philosophers of the Middle Ages got their knowledge of Aristotelianism. In 1930 a group of scholars began the preliminary task of identifying and describing the hundreds of manuscripts of various works of Aristotle that were to be found in European libraries from Portugal to Poland. After the death of Dr G. Lacombe the lead in this work fell to Professor Ezio Franceschini of Padua, who succeeded in producing the first volume of *Aristoteles Latinus: Codices* in 1939. It was through helping in the preparation of this volume that Minio became interested in the methods of the translators and was led to consider how their translations might be used by historians to give an accurate account of the reception of Aristotelianism. At this time he was especially interested in the translations attributed to Boethius, and it appears from an article of 1937 by Franceschini that he was already trying to establish the authenticity of the translation of the *Categories* attributed to Boethius in some manuscripts.

While living in this way as a private scholar he met Magda Ungar who had left Austria before the *Anschluss* and settled in Padua as a teacher of modern languages. In 1938 they were planning to marry when Mussolini, now a partner of Hitler, made a law whereby all Jews of foreign birth were to be expelled and all marriages between Jews and Italians prohibited or declared void. Within a month the couple went to Rome, where they found it possible to obtain a religious marriage in the Vatican City with dispensations from Cardinal Montini, later to be Pope Paul VI. The reigning Pope had recently shown some disapproval of racial intolerance in the academic world by appointing the well-known Jewish mathematician Levi-Civita to the Pontifical Academy soon after he had been omitted from a newly organized Italian Academy, but Minio and his wife could expect no further help from the Church within Italy, and they therefore decided to emigrate. Having heard of Sir David Ross, the Aristo-

telian scholar who was also a Vice-President of *CPMA*, Minio wrote explaining his situation and asking if he might come to work in Oxford. Ross, who was at that time Provost of Oriel and President of the British Academy but somewhat impatient of secretarial assistance, replied promptly in his own neat but barely legible hand inviting them to come to Oxford.

II

During his presidency of the Academy Ross had taken a leading part in the organization of help for refugees, and when the newly married pair arrived in Oxford at the beginning of 1939, he was able to get support for Minio to continue work on the *CPMA*, while his wife continued work as a teacher of modern languages. At first Minio worked on the *Corpus Platonicum* with Dr Raymond Klibansky, who had come to Oxford from Germany some years earlier. After revising a collation of the manuscripts of the Latin translation of part of Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides*, Minio went on to make detailed Greek-Latin and Latin-Greek indices to the Latin translation of the *Parmenides* itself, and later still he produced for the *Corpus Platonicum* an edition of the Latin translation of the *Phaedo* by Aristippus of Sicily with similar indices. These works could not appear in print until after the war, when Minio had been busy for some years with other things, but they are interesting as his first application of the method he had devised for close investigation of the work of medieval translators. Reporting on the progress of the *Corpus Platonicum* in the *Proceedings* of the Academy, Klibansky noted that Minio was making a special study of the vocabulary and technique of medieval translators, which had so far been little investigated, and he went on to say correctly that these indices should prove valuable instruments not only for future editors of medieval translations of Greek philosophical works but for all who were interested in medieval philosophical terminology.

After Hitler's invasion of Poland it seemed clear that Minio would do well to prepare for a career in some English-speaking country, and in order that he might obtain an Oxford degree Ross arranged for his admission to Oriel College as a Refugee Student with senior status. The title of the dissertation he undertook to prepare was 'The Methods of the Medieval Translators of Greek Philosophical Works into Latin'. But he did not ask leave to supplicate for the degree of D.Phil. until the autumn of 1947, when he was about to become a Fellow of the Warburg

Institute. During the seven years after his matriculation he was busy with many things besides the writing of a thesis.

In June 1940, when Mussolini declared war on France and Britain, Minio was interned as an enemy alien in the Isle of Man, where among other good company he met Momigliano. When after five months the security authorities were satisfied about his motives for coming to Britain, he was invited to help in broadcasting to Italy. He continued with this work for about eighteen months and then undertook the more congenial task of writing a survey of *Education in Fascist Italy* for the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This appeared in 1946, with a foreword by Ross and a note by the author acknowledging the encouragement and help he had received from Mr Ivor Bulmer Thomas, MP, but most of it had been put together before the end of Fascism, and it was, of course, written in the hope that it might be useful to those with responsibility for the restoration of democracy in Italy after the war.

Minio's conclusion was that until Bottai's 'second reform' of 1939 Fascism had not done much harm to higher education and that Italian scholarship might be expected to make a quick recovery from the evils of exaggerated nationalism. He added the charitable comment: 'If one wants to extirpate the Fascist disease, which lies primarily in disregard of individual rights and in aggressiveness, one must be careful not to kill the sources of life which have worked in or through Fascism.' Apart from his dispassionate account of the laws which had led to his own emigration, the part of the book which seems most interesting after forty years is his account of the changes introduced by Gentile, the self-appointed philosopher of Fascism and Mussolini's first Minister of Education. Although Mussolini declared that these were the most Fascist of all reforms, they were not in fact very revolutionary, and they had no obvious connection with anything said by Mussolini in writings that were undoubtedly his own, except for vague talk about the importance of national life.

In the time he was able to give to scholarly work Minio continued with the projects mentioned above and published some of his results in articles, 'The Genuine Text of Boethius' Translation of Aristotle's *Categories*' in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (1943), 'The Text of the *Categories*: the Latin Tradition' in *The Classical Quarterly* (1945), and 'Guglielmo di Moerbeke traduttore della *Poetica* di Aristotele' in *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* (1947). His interest in the translations of Boethius led him also to prepare an edition of the Greek texts of the *Categoriae* and the *De Interpre-*

tatione, which appeared from the Oxford University Press in 1949. For the translations which he had identified as the work of Boethius (from consideration of quotations in his *Commentary*) were older than any surviving Greek manuscripts of the works and therefore important evidence for the state of Aristotle's text in the sixth century.

III

Meanwhile in 1947 Ross had taken steps to revive the Union Académique Internationale, which originally sponsored *Aristoteles Latinus*, and in the *Proceedings* of the Academy for the next year there was a report that Franceschini's catalogue of Italian manuscripts had disappeared during the war, that much material had been destroyed in Poland, and that the Italian *Libreria dello Stato* felt compelled to abandon publication of the series. In 1948, however, when Ross was Vice-Chancellor, Minio was appointed to a Lecturership at Oxford in Medieval Philosophy (later converted to a Readership) and with the security of this position was able to give much of his time to helping Franceschini in preparation of the second volume of *Codices*. By 1950 Franceschini had managed to reconstruct his description of about 700 more manuscripts in nine different countries, while Minio had produced a new description of the manuscripts in Spanish libraries, so that plans could be made for publication in accordance with an offer from the Academy. The second volume was finally printed by the Cambridge University Press in 1955 with Minio as co-editor, and it was followed by a supplement in 1961. But work was already proceeding on some texts. In 1952 William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetica* was published from a text prepared by the late Signorina Valmiglia, and in 1954 there was an edition of the *Analytica Posteriora* by Minio himself. This, however, was only one result of his activity in this period. Apart from taking part in production of *Codices* II, he was busy comparing the methods of various translators from Boethius in late antiquity to the humanists of the Renaissance. This was a continuation of the work he had undertaken for his doctoral thesis, but with attention to more texts and more distinctions of style. As editor of the *Analytica Posteriora*, he was primarily concerned at this time to determine whether the 'vulgate' Latin version of the work was by Boethius, as sixteenth-century scholars assumed when making a collected edition of his works. His conclusions were: (a) that the author of the vulgate was certainly not

Boethius but almost certainly Iacobus Veneticus Graecus, 'a learned canonist and the most active and successful pioneer of Latin Aristotelianism in the twelfth century'; and (b) that the translation used by Thomas Aquinas for his commentary on this work was a systematic revision of the vulgate by William of Moerbeke, though this fact was not clear to the scholars who produced the modern printed editions of the commentary. His arguments about the roles of the various translators are derived from close examination of a great many manuscripts of many more translations by various authors, named or unnamed, and they show how it is possible to find order in what may seem at first sight a chaotic accumulation of material. His methods were expounded more fully in a series of fifteen 'Note sull'Aristotele latino medievale' published in the *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* between 1950 and 1962. Apart from different renderings of terms that were already technical in Aristotle's Greek, Minio noted systematic differences in the rendering of syntactical patterns peculiar to Greek and even differences in the rendering of very common small Greek words such as particles and conjunctions. In an article called 'Iacobus Veneticus Graecus, Canonist and Translator of Aristotle' in *Traditio* (1952) he wrote:

I give here a list of seventeen Greek words accompanied by our translator's, i.e. James's, Latin equivalents. Then I give the Latin equivalents which are consistently found in the version we have by the following translators: Boethius, the anonymous translator of the *Posterior Analytics*, Henricus Aristippus, Burgundio of Pisa, the twelfth century translator of the *De Generatione et Corruptione* and of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the twelfth century translator of the *Physica Vaticana* and of the *Metaphysica Media*, the twelfth century translator of the *De Somno et Vigilia* and *De Insomniis et de Divinatione per Somnum*, Robert Grosseteste, Bartholomew of Messina, and William of Moerbeke.

This work involved not only attention to the details of the manuscripts that were his special concern but also study of all the writings, medieval or modern, from which it seemed possible to learn something about the transmission of Aristotelianism in the twelfth century. During the investigations he made in this period of his life Minio came on a number of hitherto unprinted works of that century which he thought it important to publish in a series of books with the general title *Twelfth Century Logic: Texts and Studies*. He believed that the twelfth century, which saw the beginning of studies in the *logica nova* (i.e. the parts of the *Organon* then made available in new translations), should also be

'taken as the starting point for any serious understanding of the logical and linguistic doctrines of the Middle Ages and perhaps even of later times'. He did not wish to maintain that all the logical doctrines characteristic of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries could be traced back to twelfth-century translators, but there is one part of medieval logic, the study of logical form by analysis of sophismata, which seemed to him to be directly connected with interest in a part of the *logica nova*, namely the *Sophistici Elenchi*; and such study is to be found already in each of the two volumes he produced in his new series, i.e. the *Ars Disserendi* of Adam of Balsham, also called Parvipontanus, printed in 1956, and *Abaelardiana Inedita*, printed in 1958.

The first of these was contained in a manuscript known to Minio from a description in *Aristoteles Latinus: Codices I* and from his own work in editing *Phaedo interprete Henrico Aristippo*. He had written a long paper about it in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (1954). Both texts were now edited with meticulous care and equipped with elaborate indices of words and phrases through which it might be possible to trace unacknowledged influences. At this time it was his intention to proceed as he could with the production of texts from which he would then try to work out a history of this period of thought about logic. But in 1959 he became honorary director of *Aristoteles Latinus*, in succession to Mgr A. Mansion, and while he was engaged in organizing this work the manuscripts he had intended to edit were printed by another scholar. Meanwhile in the year 1956/7 the University of Padua had recognized the distinction of his work by inviting him back to a Visiting Professorship of Medieval and Humanistic Philology, and in 1957 he had been elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

IV

Soon after he had been appointed director of *Aristoteles Latinus* Minio held a meeting of collaborators at the Fondation Hardt near Geneva. Together they laid down lines for the continuation of the work and reported that there was now a prospect of the publication of a number of new texts in the near future. Within the first ten years of his directorship Minio sent to the press the following fascicules edited entirely, or for the most part, by himself:

I, 1-5 *Categoriae*. (All the ancient and medieval translations.)

- I, 6-7 *Supplementa Categoriarum*. (Boethius' translation of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and the *Liber Sex Principiorum* often attributed to Gilbert de la Porrée.)
- II, 1-2 *De Interpretatione*. (The translations of Boethius and William of Moerbeke, together with specimens of more recent translations.)
- III, 1-4 *Analytica Priora*. (The two recensions of Boethius' translation, the anonymous medieval version, a large collection of fifth- or sixth-century scholia in Latin translation, specimens of twenty post-medieval translations, testimonia, and indices.)
- IV, 1-4 *Analytica Posteriora*. (Second edition containing all four medieval translations.)
- V, 1-3 *Topica*. (Boethius' translation with fragments of a second recension and an anonymous medieval translation.)

These editions cover all the *logica vetus* and all the *logica nova* except the *Sophistici Elenchi*. Minio had collated the manuscripts of this last work soon after he became a member of the *Aristoteles Latinus* team, but he now left the final editing to Mr B. G. Dod who had worked with him on some other parts of the *Organon*. In addition, he re-edited two earlier contributions by other scholars, namely the volume containing the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Mundo* (to which he added a hitherto unknown translation by Iacopo Sadoletto and a revised text of the Apuleian paraphrase) and the volume containing the *Poetica* (for which he supplied revised texts of the translation by William of Moerbeke and the *Expositio Media* of Averroes). But his greatest contribution remained his editing of the various treatises of the *Organon*, which the Roman Academy had once claimed as a suitable task for all the Italians taking part in this international enterprise.

The scale of his work may be illustrated from the *Praefatio* to his second edition of the translations of the *Analytica Posteriora*. Here he reviews the evidence for the existence at any time of a translation by Boethius, then goes on to confirm his conclusion of 1952 that the vulgate of this treatise, which Grosseteste used for his commentary, was not by Boethius but by James of Venice, and shows by detailed comparisons that two less widely known versions from later in the same century were not wholly independent of the vulgate, though based on fresh reading of the Greek. The first of these is the *Nova*, also called the *Anonyma* or the *Toletana*, which he now ascribes to someone called John (possibly a friend of John of Salisbury) on the strength of references he has found in the margin of another manuscript; and the second is

the revision of William of Moerbeke. An independent version of Gerard of Cremona, with the title *De Demonstratione*, is shown to be not a direct translation from the Greek but a literal rendering of an Arabic translation, now lost. For each of the four translations he provides a critical text with reasoned conjectures about the history of the surviving manuscripts. In the case of the *De Demonstratione* this involves an excursus 'de textu arabico deperdito ex quo translatio haec facta est deque versionibus syris, arabicis, hebraicis, et latinis ex hebraico'. But the biggest undertaking is his review of the manuscripts of the vulgate. In the catalogue of codices prepared by Franceschini and himself there are records of 295 manuscripts containing this translation. Several perished in the war, including the oldest, Carnutensis bibl. munic. 92, 'omnium qui extabant fortasse pretiosissimus cum magnis literis saeculo duodecimo scriptus esset et Posteriora tantum contineret'. The others had many scribal errors, but after inspecting 150, including all whose description gave any reason to expect good quality, he collated ten in detail for his reconstruction of James's text and came finally to rely most on two manuscripts from the beginning of the thirteenth century, one in the Vatican, the other in Glasgow University.

In the same period Minio supervised the production of a supplement to the volumes of *Codices*, a handlist of manuscripts, and an archive of photographs, photostats, and microfilms for the use of his collaborators. Meanwhile colleagues were proceeding more slowly with other parts of the great corpus. But after the *Topica* he himself produced no more texts, because he felt he could no longer trust his memory to bring together all the details that were important in the work of editing. This did not mean that he lost all interest in the work to which he had devoted his life. In the year 1969/70, which he spent at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, he enjoyed discussing the Aristotelian tradition with a number of American scholars who admired his work and secured his election first to the Medieval Academy of America and later to the American Philosophical Society. But on his return he decided to retire from his post as Director of *Aristoteles Latinus* in the year 1972, when he would reach the age of 65. During his last year in office, when he was also British delegate to the Union Académique Internationale, he was elected president of the *CPMA*, and in the same year he published a collection of *Opuscula* with the subtitle *The Latin Aristotle*. This book, which was his last, gives the most easily accessible record of his achievement. For it contains all his working papers, that is

to say, the articles in which he expounded his aims, his methods, and his results. These are subject, as he said, to amplification and correction by the prefaces of the volumes to which they refer, but they are not superseded. There are also a number of occasional pieces in which he surveyed the whole enterprise, did justice to an individual translator, or made clear why he thought the Aristotelian tradition important. In a French lecture of 1960 he shows a certain distaste for talk of the history of ideas which is not based on a close study of texts and the usages of the words they contain. Without this linguistic preparation we may drift, he says, into 'un narcissisme de construction pseudo-historique et pseudo-philosophique'. Nor should we suppose that there is an Aristotelian system to be found neatly packaged in some manual called *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*. What Aristotle has transmitted to the successors who have read his works carefully and without prejudice is a spirit of methodical optimistic scepticism and a willingness to consider cases when it is difficult to generalize. The modern philosophers who call themselves analysts belong to the same tradition, though some may recognize no debt to any philosopher earlier than Frege.

V

The first two years after his retirement from the directorship of *Aristoteles Latinus* were spent in Oxford, where he was still Reader in Medieval Philosophy, and much of the next three in Princeton. During this time he completed a series of articles for the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* on Abailard, Aristotle, Boethius, James of Venice, Michael Scot, and William of Moerbeke. These were his last writings for publication, but in the year 1975, when he received the medal of the Collège de France, he gave a much-acclaimed lecture at Paris on *Boèce*, and a couple of years later he spoke on 'Dante's reading of Aristotle' in a series of lectures that were organized by the Oxford Dante Society and printed later by C. Grayson in *The World of Dante*.

During the previous twenty years Minio had published several papers on secondary sources from whom Dante drew some of his knowledge of Aristotelian doctrines. In his Oxford lecture he considered these sources once more but gave special attention to the translators from whom Dante got his more exact knowledge of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and a few other works. At this time he was especially concerned to refute a common view that Aristotle's works were known to medieval philosophers largely through

Latin versions from Arabic. Here he showed that when Dante was a young man most of Aristotle's works had been made available in Latin by nameable scholars who had good opportunities of learning Greek, understood the difficulties of Aristotle's terminology, and decided deliberately to render his texts word for word in a way suggested by his own theory of language. Although the results might seem uncouth to humanists of later centuries, they were at least clear enough to allow for recovery of Aristotle's thought by patient and persistent readers. Sometimes indeed a rendering made by these methods might be safer for a medieval reader than a more idiomatic translation made by Boethius at the end of classical antiquity. When Dante made Adam say (in a short lecture on language at the end of *Paradiso*, xxvi) that pleasure was a cause of the mutability of language, he was following Giles of Rome who mistakenly thought there was a reference to pleasure in Boethius' use of *placitum* as a rendering for *synthēkē* in the *De Interpretatione*.

Minio welcomed this opportunity of collecting his thoughts on Dante's relation to medieval Aristotelianism, because it enabled him to show with examples of general interest how knowledge of the translations might help to make intellectual history more precise. But he could not be persuaded to send his lecture on Boethius for publication, even when the editor of the appropriate journal assured him that she would be glad to print it as he had spoken it, without references and footnotes. The reason was not that he was dissatisfied with his own plain style of exposition. Nor had he lost interest in his earliest work. But he now mistrusted his memory, and therefore also his judgement, when trying to write afresh on subjects that he thought it impossible to discuss profitably without clear recollection of details. Unfortunately, though he was much pleased by the honours that came to him in old age from the Royal Academy of Belgium, where much of his work had been published, and from the Accademia Patavina and the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, the learned societies of the place where he had acquired his skills, he could not be convinced that he might now relax with a good conscience, and after a while it became clear that he was suffering from a progressive failure of memory.

Probably the happiest years of his life were in the period between his appointment to a lectureship at Oxford and his appointment to the directorship of *Aristoteles Latinus*. He had a young family to whom he was devoted, freedom to do work that gave him satisfaction, and the hope of making an important contri-

bution to the history of intellectual life in the Middle Ages. Although the Oxford system of honours schools had little space for his teaching and he had few graduate pupils for supervision, he was respected and consulted by colleagues who valued his advice. When, as sometimes happened, he was depressed by the thought that very few would ever read the editions of medieval translations over which he laboured for hours alone, he could express his feelings to friends who enjoyed his company and were able to assure him sincerely that they regarded his work as a necessary preliminary to a full and accurate history of medieval thought.

His interests were always linguistic and historical rather than philosophical, but during the early part of his life in Oxford he seemed to find pleasure in meetings where his philosophical colleagues discussed questions in a style different from that of Italy in his youth. As might be expected, he was most regular in his attendance at the Oxford Aristotelian Society, and he appeared to enjoy the Society's readings of ancient texts, even though he was sometimes more puzzled by the worries of the other members than by the text under consideration. Before he assumed full responsibility for *Aristoteles Latinus* he could find time to read very widely in medieval philosophy. If anyone asked him for help in tracing the history of an idea that seemed important to medieval philosophers, he was always pleased to think about the problem and could quickly suggest where the enquirer should look for what he needed.

In the later years of his illness he no longer read philosophical texts of any kind, though he sometimes revealed in conversation that he was still interested in Boethius. He always retained a high opinion of the poetry of Eliot and Montale, but he could find little else to hold his attention in reading except *The Scientific American* and books of maps. He rarely tried novels, and he confessed to a member of his family that he could not read fiction of any length without beginning to speculate about the composition of the text. During his stay in hospital for treatment of his last illness he had with him a book of short stories by Natalia Ginzburg, and when he died it was found he had pencilled in the margins a number of cross-references which made the pages look like those in his much-used copy of the Migne edition of Boethius. It is interesting also to note that after his memory of events had become very weak he still retained some of his linguistic skills and could translate from one familiar language to another without difficulty.

In his last years he could not enjoy social gatherings such as those in the Common Room of his College, where he was an Honorary Fellow, but he was glad to see an old pupil, and while he was still able to travel he said that he would like to see Venice once more. His wife, on whose care he was now dependent, arranged this with great success. When he died, on 6 May 1986, he was no longer able to acknowledge an invitation to a meeting in his honour that had been planned for the autumn of that year by his colleagues and successors in *Aristoteles Latinus*.

WILLIAM KNEALE

I have to thank Mrs Magda Minio-Paluello for most of the information contained in the first and the last parts of this memoir,