



TWO CRITICAL EDITIONS OF THE
DE PRINCIPIIS NATURAE

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In 1950, a critical edition of the De Principiis Naturae of Saint Thomas Aquinas, edited by John J. Pauson, was published by the Fribourg Société Philosophique, and it was fairly well received as a standard edition of the opusculum.¹ One reviewer went so far as to say, "The simplest thing that can be said about Dr. Pauson's edition is that, unlike several other recent editions of St. Thomas, it will not need to be done over again."²

However, there was also some dissatisfaction about certain features of the edition: many wondered about the genealogy arrangement, others wondered if it came as near as possible to the original, etc.³ The criticism can be summed up in this statement saying that Dr. Pauson seemed to have a "tendency to over-simplify and to consider as identical that which is only similar."⁴

In 1957, it was "done over again." In that year, Reverend Basil Mattingly, O.S.B., submitted another critical edition of the De Principiis Naturae to the Faculty of Philosophy of the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame as a part of his work to acquire the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Father Basil felt that the "presentation of another edition of this opusculum... seemed warranted by the conflicting

satisfaction and dissatisfaction attending the reception of the previous versions."⁵ He realized that the editions of this opusculum by Perrier and Pauson possibly could be accepted as sufficient, but because of the dissatisfaction, he decided that if his edition "were to do no more than independently confirm the conclusions of others it would be worthwhile."⁶ However, he also realized that his work could become a further cause for dissatisfaction with the previous editions.

An attempt has been made in this thesis to determine exactly what the edition of Fr. Basil accomplished. Did it merely confirm the conclusions of the previous editors, or is there a significant difference in his edition which makes it better or perhaps worse than the previous editions? To determine this, Fr. Basil's edition was compared with that of Dr. Pauson, since his edition was accepted as the best up to its time, as was shown at the beginning. In this comparison, first of all the method of each one was analyzed separately, and then the two texts of the De Principiis were compared to find if there were any differences, and if there were, exactly how many and how important they were. The results of this comparison are as follows.

Dr. Pauson states that

The primary and fundamental aim of all critical texts must be to restore as closely as possible both the sense and the words of of the original, whether that original might have been an autograph or the compilations of one or more authors.⁷

In a case where there is very much uncertainty about the original, the text could be called relatively critical "in the sense that the certitude of its identity with the true original is always relative."⁸ As used by him, "A definitive critical text....is envisioned as a critical text that has made use of all the sources humanly possible to obtain within a reasonable length of time."⁹

When he undertook this work, his purpose was to establish a critical text in the sense indicated here. He did not intend it to be a definitive one.¹⁰ In addition, he hoped that by establishing a critical text of the De Principiis, he would in some way assist the establishment of critical texts of all the smaller treatises of St. Thomas.¹¹

Dr. Pauson found that there were sixty-two versions, manuscripts and incunabula, of the De Principiis which had been recorded in various places, and of these, he was able to obtain forty-nine manuscripts and eight incunabula. All fifty-seven of these were consulted ei-

ther directly or through photographic reproductions.

However, after he had obtained these fifty-seven versions of the De Principiis, he felt that he was forced by the large number to adopt some principle of selection. It seemed that "To attempt to trace the sources of their numerous variations, omissions, and accretions would be both interminable and useless."¹² And the "reader would be left with a mass of unvalued variations which would do more to obscure than to bring to light the important variations."¹³ In addition to this, about twenty manuscripts written in or close to the fifteenth century plus the incunabula appeared to be corruptions and agglomerations of numerous earlier ones, so that they would be of little help in establishing a critical text.¹⁴

So having decided that some sort of selection was necessary, Dr. Pauson undertook to establish a genealogy. His basic principle in doing this was the "principle of the obvious importance of the earlier manuscripts."¹⁵ He felt that the older the manuscript was the more important it would prove to be. And because of this, he gave most of his attention to the manuscripts dating approximately between the death of St. Thomas in 1274 and his solemn canonization in 1323. He determined the approximate dates from the paleography and the internal evidence, and by means of these, he arrived at the most

important manuscripts.

With these basic manuscripts as parents, he put all the manuscripts and incunabula into six groups or families, which he formed "on the basis of similarity of reading and presumed sharing of some known or unknown thirteenth century source."¹⁶ The basic manuscripts and parents are:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Title and Library</u>	<u>Century</u>	<u>Symbol</u>
I.	Metz, Bibl. de la Ville, 1158.	XIII	M
II.	Toulouse, Bibl. de la Ville, 872.	XIII	T
III.	Napoli, Bibl. Nazionale, VII B. 21.	XIII	N
IV.	Section 1. Bologna, Bibl. Univ. 861.	XIV	B.
	Section 2. Roma, Vallicelliana, E. 30.	XIII/XIV	V
V.	Napoli, Bibl. Nazionale, VII B. 16.	XIII/XIV	
VI.	Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 14546.	XIII/XIV	P

Concerning this genealogy, Dr. Pauson later felt it necessary to make two qualifying statements:

The first is that the genealogy of the later manuscripts and incunabula are to be considered as approximate and incomplete, and the second is that the basis of the family groupings described is general similarity of reading and presumed sharing of some known or unknown thirteenth-century source. Although these statements obviously weaken the claim of the genealogical graph to accuracy, they are perfectly consistent with the purpose of the whole genealogical consideration, which was to bring to light the manuscripts most representative of the initial diffusion of the archetype.¹⁷

After he had established the genealogy, Dr. Pauson eliminated one group from the critical apparatus. Group V consisted of two manuscripts, which seemed to represent a combination of the family of Paris with either Metz or Toulouse. So Dr. Pauson did not include their variations in the critical apparatus, since he considered them to be represented by the families from which they were derived.¹⁸

So the final critical edition was derived from six manuscripts, the parents of Groups I, II, III, IV - section 1 and section 2, and Group VI. "Although other manuscripts were consulted, no reading was actually selected for the text, which could not be found in one of the six above-mentioned manuscripts."¹⁹

How Dr. Pauson proceeded from here is not too clear. He evidently took what was common to all six manuscripts and accepted that as authentic. Where there are variations, in general he seems to have taken that reading which the majority favored. But that is only in general, for in some instances, he took the reading of one manuscript against the common reading of four of the others. (e.g. M against TBVP, p. 79 and B Against MTVP, p. 104.) Frequently, there seems to be an even split between BVP and MTN, in which case he usually accepts BVP. In no place in his introduction to the text or in the text does he explain his method of judging whereby he arrived

at such conclusions. The closest he comes to saying anything about this is when he says,

the basis of establishing the critical text had to be determined mainly from the internal evidence contained in the six manuscripts chosen as representative of the earliest and best tradition.²⁰

In such a case as determining a critical text, we should have confidence in the ability of the editor, but it would seem better if we could have something objective, such as exactly how he did use this "internal evidence" to form his judgements.

In establishing his critical text of the De Principiis, Fr. Basil had a somewhat different aim than Dr. Pauson. For in determining exactly what he meant by "critical," he makes a distinction "using 'definitive' for the actually achieved original and reserving 'critical' for the distinct method of deriving a text from its sources."²¹ These are the same two terms used by Dr. Pauson, but they are taken in a different way.

Instead of any paleographical recension called "critical" and distinguished according to grades of absolute and relative...my usage rather distinguishes the final and formal causes of the method itself: respectively, certain authenticity (for definitive) and maximal control in procedure (for critical). But perhaps an even greater difference separates us in the assumptions regarding causality that affect our interpretations of the same facts (effects). Rather than assuming immediate causality and therefore necessity, valid enough in the context of a

known autograph or certain apograph, we rather assume, until otherwise certified, mediate causality and probability. Should one of our sources be de facto immediate, his method is far simpler; but our de jure caution, committing us to initial complexity, is in control whether a source emerges de facto immediate or not.²²

So for Fr. Basil, a definitive text is one that contains the exact words of the author, and he defines a critical edition as the "publication of a text as reconstructed from its extant traces, that is, together with all the available sources in evidence as determining that reconstruction."²³

Fr. Basil's purpose is to establish a critical text as explained here, which, it seems, would be called "definitive" by Dr. Pauson. He also intended his work to be of help in establishing critical texts of other opuscula of St. Thomas by determining the value of the various codices used for his text. Besides furnishing as perfect a text as possible, he also felt that it was the obligation of an editor to present "the data supporting his determinations: the evidence as well as the judgments."²⁴

Concerning his finished product, he says,

What we do have is offered as the best text that we can presently derive from the extant sources, together with the most feasible presentation of those sources and the evidence for the decisions forced upon the editor at nearly every phrase.²⁵

Father Basil found that there were fifty-seven codices and eight incunabula editions containing the De

Principiis, but he was able to obtain only fifty-three of the codices and six of the incunabula for actual use in determining the final edition. This might seem like more than enough, but Fr. Basil felt that he could not leave any of them out of his critical apparatus. Dr. Pauson admitted that his genealogy was "approximate and incomplete,"²⁶ and Fr. Basil felt that this inability to reduce the sources to more than probable unity required the presentation of all of them. He also states:

The curious notion persists that lack of important and decisive information about the sources justifies a mere sampling or cross-sectioning of material in making a critical edition. It is true that having all the information can replace having all the MSS... but not having this information all the more necessitates having the next best thing, the possible sources of information - the MSS, made as available as possible.²⁷

Since no manuscript is wholly good and none wholly bad, the individual testimony as well as that of the contextual groups seemed necessary.

In order to have some sort of order in his manuscripts, Fr. Basil felt that a genealogy was necessary. However, since there was no way of knowing to how many heads the manuscripts converged, nor any indication of the percentage of tradition retained, and no certain way of calculating degrees of kindred, he determined his genealogy "rather in terms of Fidelity than of Descent"²⁸

The manuscripts, according to their fidelity, fell into three groups: one which was apparently too exclusive; a second which was too inclusive; and a third, which seemed to avoid the excesses of each. These three groups were called classes or traditions. Class I had sixty unique readings and was further divided into four units plus one manuscript which did not fit into any of the units. Class II had fifty-six proper readings and was divided into three units plus two additional manuscripts. Class III consisted of those manuscripts which were in opposition to the other two or in conformity with one or two units of either of the other two classes. It was further divided into two units.

The manuscripts which seemed to be the best were:

1. Rome, Vallic. E. 30; 5. Rome, Casanat. 1533;
2. Basel, Univ. F VI 58; 6. Rome, Bibl. Leon;
3. Toulouse, Ville, 872; 7. Bologna Univ. 861;²⁹
4. Paris, Nat. 6738A;

Three of these, 1., 3., and 7., are included in Dr. Pauson's six manuscripts which he used to determine his text. Although these seemed to be the best, there still could be no functional stemma, and these were more important than the others only when a number of them from different classes were in conformity over a questioned passage. In that instance, they were more likely to be accepted than the others.

After he had arranged and evaluated the manuscripts, Fr. Basil set about establishing the critical text. First of all, he excluded all the doubtful passages in order to arrive at the common basic text which had been preserved unanimously, that is by all the manuscripts used. Beginning in this way with unanimity, he had the greatest possible assurance of true authenticity.

This common text served as a standard to help in judging the doubtful passages, and the behavior of the manuscripts with regard to this common matter helped to determine their conduct in the doubtful matter, for those that were seen to have a tendency toward additions here would be suspected of adding when such a doubtful passage arose, those that seemed restrained would be suspected of omitting, and those with least variations would be considered as rather faithful to the true text.³⁰

In dealing with the doubtful passages, the full agreement of the members of a unit, that is the individual manuscripts of a single unit, certified the authentic reading of that version. Since there were nine units, there would be nine versions. The full agreement of the units as members of their class certified the authentic reading of that tradition. From the three classes, three traditions could be derived. Full agreement of the classes certified the authentic and true reading of the text. The final text was not constructed in this

way, that is, built up from the smaller and inferior to the immediate superior and being replaced by it. For the variations of the units in a class may not be a defection from that tradition, but they may be a perfection in giving allegiance to another class.

The purpose of the authentic readings of the versions and of the traditions was not only to determine the number of times they furnished the true text, but also to help in judging the doubtful matter.

For example, faultiness is not so much attributed to F when it follows the authentic reading of its tradition as to the progenitor(s) of that tradition; but greater respect is due F when, inconsistent with its own version, it holds with the class or even breaks with the class to read authentically with, say Cl. III. Its testimony is in a way more valuable than that of the consistent members of Cl. III, appearing more critical in the implied deliberate rejection of an authentic reading and selection of the true.³¹

This gives a general idea of how he arrived at his final judgements concerning the doubtful matter. Father Basil explains this in great detail in his introduction, and he includes a special section dealing with forty-four problematic passages in which he explains exactly how he arrived at the conclusions he did concerning these passages.

In concluding his introduction, he gives the following outline of his procedure:

A. Recensio

I. Preliminary Reading of the MSS

- a. establishing a common basic text
- b. determining "families" of MSS

II. Evaluation of MSS (on basis of the common relatively sure text)

- a. relative value of individual MSS
- b. relative value of units
- c. relative value of the "families"

B. Emendatio

III. Application of evaluated MSS and establishment of authentic text:

- a. application of evaluated MSS to the bracketed passages
- b. re-evaluation of MSS in terms of the enlarged text
- c. checking of the whole text by means of final evaluations.³²

The difference in procedure between Dr. Pauson and Father Basil brought about a different effect, for a comparison of the two critical texts revealed a number of differences. These differences were divided into four groups: variants - use of a different word, such as iterum for item; omissions; additions; and inversions. In a few places, there was combination of two of these, such as a variation of a word which is at the same time inverted. In such an instance, it was noted in both groups. In this comparison, Father Basil's text was compared to that of Dr. Pauson, so that omissions are things that Fr. Basil omitted while Dr. Pauson included them, additions are things that Fr. Basil added and Dr. Pauson omitted, and the variants and inversions are differences of Fr. Basil's text from that of Dr. Pauson.

First of all, numerically considered, the differences were as follows:

1. Variants - 62 word differed. e.g. sicut in place of ut.

2. Omissions - 37 places where Fr. Basil omitted something included by Dr. Pauson.

31 of these places - only 1 word omitted.

1 of these places - 2 words omitted.

2 of these places - 3 words omitted.

2 of these places - 6 words omitted.

1 of these places - 15 words omitted.

Total words omitted - 66.

3. Additions - 22 places where Fr. Basil added something omitted by Dr. Pauson.

18 of these places - 1 word.

2 of these places - 2 words.

2 of these places - 3 words.

Total words added - 28.

4. Inversions - 14.

13 of these - one word was inverted with another.

1 of these - a three word phrase was inverted with another three word phrase.

All four groups taken together add up to a total of 135 general differences, and if the variants, the words omitted, and the words added are combined, this comes to a total of 166 differences with regard to the exact

words used.

The next thing to be considered was whether these differences made any significant change in the meaning of the text. For the most part, the answer to this is no. The variants in general were such things as quia for quod, etiam for autem, est for sit, etc. The most frequent omission was est, as in sciendum est. Other omissions were scilicet, vero, and prepositions before the ablative. The additions in general were of the same order as the omissions, and the inversions could perhaps influence the ease of rapidly understanding, but they did not influence the meaning. Such cases as these made little or no difference in the meaning of a sentence.

In about a dozen places, the meaning could be taken slightly different (e.g. "complemento"³³ for "imperfecto substantia" in the clause "...sed perfectum est prius in imperfecto substantia...."³⁴), but when taken in the context, the general idea conveyed seemed to be the same, and so an intensive study of them is not presented here.*

*If further examples of this are desired see:

Mattingly	Fauson
p. 2 words 54-55	p. 80 line 3
p.13 word 29	p. 85 line 11
p. 28 word 91	p. 95 line 7
p. 32 word 17-18	p. 97 line 7
p. 35 word 50	p. 99 line 3
p. 37 word 36-37	p.100 line 5

Only in one place, was a definite contradiction found, and this hinged upon the use of the word non. Dr. Pauson presents the sentence in this way: "Sciendum est etiam quod possibile est ut idem sit causa et causatum respectu eiusdem, sed diversimode;..."³⁵. He indicates that non was added before respectu in three of his manuscripts, MBV, and so it appears that he could have gone either way. If he consulted other manuscripts, besides the six he had chosen, to decide this case, he would have found only a minority in favor of the addition.

Fr. Basil presents the sentence in this way: "Sciendum est etiam quod possibile est quod aliquid idem sit causa et causatum, non respectu eiusdem sed diversimode:..."³⁶ Concerning this, he says,

The minority witness to non here in the MSS is strengthened by those having impossibile at 25:97* (and, I suppose, the emendation of this to non est impossibile in Yuvwyz²). Sed diversimode, seeming to make ambiguously tenable the omission of non, is deceptive enough to cause a fault in the rest; non seems authentic.³⁷

Thirty-eight of the manuscripts omit non while twenty-one include it.³⁸ If there is other evidence backing up this minority, it does seem sufficient to overthrow the majority, and in this instance here, non certainly seems more logical in the sense shown by the examples

*P. 25, word 97, which is possible in the above passage.

that follow it.

With this much consideration of the two critical editions, it may seem that the second was really unnecessary except in so far as it supported the first, for in the meaning of the two texts, there was really no significant difference except the one mentioned above. So we could be satisfied with Dr. Pauson's text, in so far as in it we have the actual thought of St. Thomas.

However, in their definition of a critical text, both Dr. Pauson and Fr. Basil stressed the importance of the exact words as well as the sense, so that the closer a text approached the exact words of St. Thomas, the better it would be. In this respect, we do have a significant difference, for in a text of approximately five-thousand words, there is a difference of 166 words between Fr. Basil's text and that of Dr. Pauson. This is only three per cent of the total text, but in striving for perfection, a three per cent difference is significant.

To determine exactly who approached the closest to the exact wording of St. Thomas would require, practically speaking, the writing of one's own critical text in which he would make his own judgements about the 135 differences from the manuscripts, internal evidence, etc. This is why the method and procedure of each edi-

tor was explained in a limited degree before the explanation of the results of the comparison of the two texts. For if we place equal confidence in both editors, the one with the better procedure will be the one who arrives at the better critical text.

From this study, it appears that Father Basil's procedure is the best. First of all, since he used all the manuscripts he could obtain, he had more evidence to guide him to make the correct judgments, and secondly, his method seemed more thorough, for because of the large number of manuscripts, he was required to check and recheck in order to arrive at some degree of certainty.

An example of the greater accuracy of the method of Fr. Basil is the choice of the very first word of the text. Dr. Pauson chose "Nota quod" and indicated that manuscripts BP gave "Quoniam autem," P added "Nota quod" in the margin, and V gave "Notandum quod." So he had MNT plus a marginal notation in P giving testimony to his reading.³⁹ However, Father Basil chose "Notandum quod." This reading has a minority testimony, but:

the abbreviated notandum is a plausible source for both Nota and Quoniam, while neither of these satisfies for both the others...the longer word is more likely to be misread to the shorter Nota than vice versa....it is a likely source for

Quoniam in those many instances where the initial is left blank or written small by the scribe to be supplied or covered over by an illuminator. The insertion of Q instead of N would then give Quoniam rather than the intended Notandum, the composition of the rest of the word in abbreviation admitting either. (Note 48. The word could be represented by an "o" followed by and/or preceded by two vertical strokes for an "n" terminated with a suprascript "m." An actual case is offered by manuscript 9, which provides a stem to which initial N has been later added to read Notandum, but which could have read Quoniam, had a Q been supplied instead.)⁴⁰

Fr. Basil says that his method offers a twofold advantage in so far as it avoids arbitrariness in the evaluation of the sources by proceeding from the fixed to the unsettled, taking the measure of a MS according to its reliability and affinity with others in fairly well determined matter, and secondly in so far as it reduces conjecture to a minimum by applying the progressively re-evaluated standards to the bracketed and problematic parts.

This secures on the one hand, an objective evaluation independent of the calculations of others working with other parts of the MSS, and on the other a flexible set of norms for handling different types of decisions.⁴¹

However, his method also has its disadvantages, such as

The tediousness of such deliberateness and the complication of the statistics tallied at the various stages, with the ensuing duplication and uselessness of much material.None of this, however, seems account-

able to this method as such but rather to the insufficiencies in our knowledge of the style of the author and the details of the sources.⁴²

The disadvantages, then, seem to be the result of the uncertainty of the matter treated, and it is this very uncertainty that seems to require such a method to obtain the best results.

In conclusion, it can hardly be denied that Dr. Pauson accomplished what he set out to do, that is, to establish a critical text taken in the sense that he defined "critical." For it seems that he did restore the sense, and also, to a great degree, the words of the original. However, Father Basil had a somewhat higher goal in his concept of a critical text, which seems to have been held also by those who criticized Dr. Pauson's edition, especially O'Reilly.⁴³ In so far as this concept concurs with Dr. Pauson's definition of a "definitive" text, it seems that it would be safe to say that even Dr. Pauson would recognize such a text as better, at least in some degree, than his.

FOOTNOTES

1. Vernon J. Bourke, Review of Pauson, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, The Modern Schoolman. XXVIII (Jan. 1951) 153-154. also F. Pelster, S.J., Review of Pauson, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, Gregorianum. XXXII (1951) 156. XXXIV (1953) 755. also J.P. Muller, O.S.B., Review of Pauson, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, Divus Thomas. XXIX (June, 1951) 249.

2. Vernon J. Bourke, *idem*. p. 153.

3. F. Pelster, S.J., *idem*. XXXII, pp. 156-157. also XXXIV, p. 755. also J.P. Muller, *idem*. pp. 249-250.

4. P. O'Reilly, Review of Pauson, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, Bulletin Thomiste. VIII (1951) 145.

5. Basil Mattingly, O.S.B., Saint Thomas Aquinas, De Principiis Naturae, A Critical Edition, A Dissertation. Faculty of Philosophy of the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame, 1957. p. 38*

6. Mattingly, *idem*. p. 38* and 39*

7. John J. Pauson, "Notes and Discussion: Postscripts and Addenda to De Principiis Naturae," The Modern Schoolman. XXIX (1952) p. 307. Hereafter cited as Notes.

8. Pauson, Notes. XXIX p. 307-308.

9. Pauson, Notes. XXIX p. 308.

10. Pauson, Notes. XXIX. p. 310.

11. John J. Pauson, Saint Thomas Aquinas, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, (Textus Philosophici Friburgenses, II). Friburg (Suisse) 1950. p. 7. Hereafter cited as Critical Text.

12. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 19.

13. Pauson, Notes, continued. XXX (1952) p. 142.

14. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 19.
15. Pauson, Notes. XXIX p. 309; XXX, p. 142.
16. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 19.
17. Pauson, Notes. XXIX p. 310.
18. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 57.
19. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 75.
20. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 62.
21. Mattingly, idem. p. 40*
22. Mattingly, idem. p. 40*
23. Mattingly, idem. p. 43*
24. Mattingly, idem. p. 38*
25. Mattingly, idem. p. 41*
26. Pauson, Notes. XXIX, p. 310.
27. Mattingly, idem. p. 55*
28. Mattingly, idem. p. 48*
29. Mattingly, idem. p. 73* & p. 74*
30. Mattingly, idem. p. 53*
31. Mattingly, idem. p. 57*
32. Mattingly, idem. p. 58*
33. Mattingly, idem. p. 29, word 36.
34. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 95.
35. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 93.
36. Mattingly, idem. pp. 25-26.
37. Mattingly, idem. p. 94*
38. Mattingly, idem. p. -99-

39. Pauson, Critical Text. p. 79.

40. Mattingly, idem. p. 82*

41. Mattingly, idem. p. 123*

42. Mattingly, idem. p. 124*

43. P. O'Reilly, Review of Pauson, De Principiis Naturae, Introduction and Critical Text, Bulletin Thomiste. VIII (1951) p. 144.

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XXX (1952) 55-59; 141-144.

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