

**Review of Brian P. Copenhaver, with Calvin Normore and Terence Parsons, *Peter of Spain: Summaries of Logic, Text, Translation, Introduction, and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).**

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In this book, Copenhaver, Normore, and Parsons provide the first complete, reliable translations of one of the most influential logic textbooks ever written (after Aristotle – if you can call his works ‘textbooks’ – and Euclid – if you can call his book ‘logic’), in bilingual Latin-English edition, aiming to make this important treatise accessible to those outside the sometimes-niche field of medieval logic. To highlight all of the important doctrines that are found in the *Summaries* would be to rewrite the introduction, so in this review, I will concentrate not so much on Peter’s views, but on the contributions to the field of this translation and commentary, with a discussion of who can benefit from reading both the text and the comments.

The book opens with an extensive introduction (nearly 100 pages), the first 20 of which are devoted to the historical context of the *Summaries*, revisiting the important historiographical questions of *who* wrote them and *when* they were written. In addressing both these questions, the editors summarize the state of scholarship, but do not come down definitely on an identification, except in so far as to note that “that this last work – the textbook of logic read by more people than any other before the twentieth century – should not be credited to Pope John XXI is the considered, if not settled, judgment of current scholarship, though that judgment contradicts longstanding opinion” (p. 4). The bulk of the introduction is made up of an indepth and systematic account of the doctrines found in the *Summaries*, laid out in a clearly accessible way with cross-references to other relevant 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century texts and doctrines. For the most part, the introduction is clear, straightforward, and correct; in only a few places would I quibble with what the editors have to say (William of Sherwood’s *Introductiones ad Logicam* also contained the “Barbara Celarent” mnemonic and contributed to its dissemination, p. 19, and to say that Aristotle’s syllogisms “dominated...a good deal of non-Western thought”, p. 35, inaccurately represents the reality. Presumably the editors were thinking of the Arabic tradition, but this, being firmly rooted in Aristotle, still counts as “Western thought”. In truly non-Western philosophy, such as developed in medieval India, Tibet, and China, there is nothing like the syllogism.)

The introduction ends with a discussion of the translation practices, which are grounded in two principles “maximizing consistency” and “minimizing transliteration” (p. 89). These principles result in a translation that “sometimes bypasses renderings of words and phrases that some of our readers (especially our more experienced and expert readers) might expect as normative” (p. 89); but the translators argue that this is not problematic because (a) these norms are not universal and (b) the accompanying Latin text allows readers to clarify any vocabulary whose translation they are uncertain about. Unfortunately, while some choices of translation, for example “in a certain way and unqualifiedly” for *secundum quid et simpliciter* result in a clear, easily graspable, and accurate conception of the original phrase, others do not. Single words in Latin which can only be translated by phrases in English (for example, to indicate gender, or definite/indefinite articles, or predication+predicate) are translated by phrases which are hyphenated, e.g. “able-to-whinny” for *hinnibilis*. The presence of the hyphens only occasionally clarifies rather than distracts; it would have been better to sacrifice consistency in this case and only include the hyphens when necessary to disambiguate. As another example, the translation of *locus* by “place”, instead of the more usual “locus” or “topic” (from the Greek root *topos*). It can be argued that the translation of *locus* by “locus” or “topic” is universal enough to be normative, and that to use something other than these is likely to irritate the expert and to confuse the novice. If one is to deviate from “locus” or “topic”, English “place”, being more closely tied to physical geography than Latin *locus* is, is potentially misleading. If

the translators wanted to eschew the transliteration, “location” might perhaps have been a better alternative.

The introduction is followed by a bibliography of primary and secondary sources cited (a bit unexpected if you’re looking for it before or after the index, as is usual). The text is followed by two indices, one of terms, phrases, and names in English, the other of the same in Latin. These indices are, sadly, a bit of a disappointment. The English index has the following caveat: “Unlike the Latin index, this index...does not aim at complete coverage of Peter’s usage...[or] of the English in the Introduction to this book and the notes to the English translation.” There is no explanation for why, and given that the primary new contribution of this edition is the extensive introduction, it is disappointing that it is not fully indexed. The Latin index is problematic in that, despite the implication of its completeness in the English caveat, certain words are marked with an asterisk and not indexed. For these the reader is directed to “see the corresponding entries in the English index”, and go on to give some examples, e.g., for *est*, see ‘is’, for *et*, ‘and’, etc. Unfortunately, this relies on the reader being sufficiently well-versed in Latin to know the appropriate translation to look up in the English index, an assumption which may not be warranted. Further, there are words that do not have a single straightforward English translation, and no indication is given what the reader should be looking for in the English index; for example, *autem* is marked with a star, but there is no entry in the English index for “however”, “and yet”, “moreover”, or “but”, the most common translations of this word.

In terms of production, the book is almost impeccable. Out of 550 pages, I found only one typo (in fn. 47 on p. 301, “than” should be “that”), an impressive result, and the only other quibble that I have is that the abbreviation “LS” used throughout the introduction (first on p. 8) is never glossed. It is clear that it refers to the *Summaries of Logic*, but one is left a bit unsure why it is “LS” instead of “SL”.

How are we to evaluate the contribution of this book to the field? There is no doubt concerning the legacy of the *Summaries*, their influence on the development of scholastic logic, and their importance in the 13<sup>th</sup> C and beyond; there is no doubt that this new translation with its extensive commentary provides us with a priceless resource in the context of the history of logic. Because Parsons drew substantially on the material in this translation in the preparation of his *Articulating Medieval Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), the two books make excellent companion pieces for someone looking to learn more about the teaching and practice of logic in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Western Europe.

But acknowledging these facts still leaves open another question: How useful is this book, as a *textbook of (medieval) logic*? Should the scholar wishing to learn more about medieval logic be pointed to the content of the *Summaries* itself, as opposed to the eminently valuable commentary the editors provide? In my considered opinion, no. The medievalist wanting to be introduced to logic through one of its own textbooks would do better to read William of Sherwood’s *Introductiones ad Logicam*, translated as *Introduction to Logic* by Norman Kretzmann (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), which covers much the same topics as the *Summaries* but in a much less prolix manner. The logician looking for the medieval antecedents of his field would find much of the *Summaries* puzzling and unfamiliar, would do better to read John Buridan’s *Tractatus de Consequentibus*, translated as *Treatise on Consequences* by Stephen Read (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), with its more familiar format of definitions, proofs, and conclusions. From the modern point of view, there is too much in the *Summaries* which is not what we would call logic nowadays (even if ‘logic’ is taken broadly to encompass reasoning and argumentation in general), and too much of it is focused on particular properties of case-based languages such as Latin and Greek. Many of the fallacies considered in Chapter 7 – by far the longest chapter, comprising nearly half the text and more than four times longer than the next longest chapter (Chapter 12 on distributions) –

cannot be translated into idiomatic or even non-idiomatic English because they depend on specific accidental features of the words involved. As a result, the conclusions that are drawn from these examples leave the reader unsatisfied as to their general applicability. If logic is supposed to be a universal science, then one is right to be suspicious of a logical doctrine that only works for particular languages or particular examples.

In conclusion, it is probably only a very niche set of people who will benefit from reading the *Summaries* cover to cover. But a very large set of people could benefit from reading the introduction, and then reading the *Summaries* piecemeal, selecting out the topics relevant to their interests and research. From that point of view, the value of this entire product – the introduction, the Latin text, the translation – cannot be underrated.