



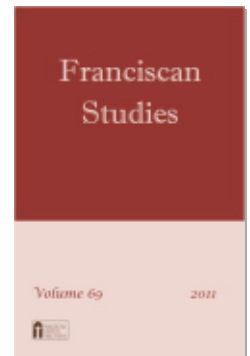
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Richard Rufus of Cornwall In Aristotelis De generatione et corruptione (review)

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Neil Lewis and Rega Wood, eds., *Richard Rufus of Cornwall In Aristotelis De generatione et corruptione*. Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 21. Oxford University Press, 2011.

We have here the critical edition of Richard Rufus's commentary on Aristotle's treatment of generation and corruption. The Greek philosopher explained how living beings came about and passed on. His text was much studied by scholastics in the latter part of the thirteenth century. Rufus's commentary is, as far as we know, "the earliest surviving commentary" on the text. Understandably it influenced succeeding commentaries. This edition has come about as the continuation of Rega Wood's study and use of the one manuscript (Erfurt, University Library, Amploniana, Quarto 312, on folios 14ra-19ra) that has the text, a manuscript that contains other texts ascribed Rufus. Wood used the manuscript for her edition of Aristotle's *In Physicam*. In that book she described the manuscript and her use of it for the edition. The edition of *In De Generatione et Corruptione* follows the critical procedure discussed there. The long introduction to this further edition of a commentary on a work by Aristotle presents the case for its authorship by Rufus, examines the arguments of Rufus, and surveys its influence on later commentators.

The key point, of course, is authorship. Did Rufus write the commentary? First the editors show that *In Physicam* and *In De Generatione et Corruptione* have a common author. Then, on pages 17-48, they offer their argument for Rufus as author. The two editors tread carefully, for Wood's argument on Rufus as author of the *In Physicam* has been contested at length (and more than equally answered). Once Rufus is established as author, they proceed to date its composition. It is clear that it was written between 1225 and 1245. They narrow the date to "ca. 1232-1236."

The editors' proof of Rufus's authorship brings together a number of indications that invite us to look in Rufus's direction as author. Wood and Lewis have found no evidence out of which Rufus springs, with a smile, confessing: Yes, it is I, Rufus, speaking. Someone did write it, however, and possible authors are definitely not legion. The indications fit our smiling Rufus as they fit no other. It is definitely something that Rufus might well do in the time frame of its production and he would have done it in that way and with those sources. The text lines up well doctrinally with certified Rufus texts, though not verbally. Moreover, the text occurs in the manuscript quires that contain authentic works of Rufus. I do not belong to those who have studied Rufus and his learned production. I understand that there exists actually a critical process that is putting together the writings and the role of Rufus in scholasticism. I find this book's argument a valid and serious contribution to the process.

Once authorship and then date and place of the authoring have been decided, the editors speak to the sources on which Rufus drew and may have drawn. Then they examine three topics, infinite divisibility, growth, and mixture, which show that, however appreciative of Aristotle's ideas, Rufus was a critical reader of Aristotle's writings. The editors finish their study of Rufus's *In De Generatione et Corruptione* by showing the influence of the text in the history of the following decades.

After the thorough scrutiny of the text there comes the critical edition of the text itself. Wood and Lewis follow the method used by Wood in her edition of *In Physicam*. The edition is an excellent piece of work.

It is not without trepidation that I have seen to the publication of this review in *Studies*. I think it merits a place here, for *Studies* has published previously on Rufus, while scholarship will not advance if the various contributions to scholarly discussion do not circulate well.

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