

BENEDYKT HESSE—the most eminent medieval Polish philosopher and theologian, b. around 1389 in Kraków, d. before November 12, 1456.

He came from a middle class family that had settled in Kraków in the fourteenth century. He began studies in 1407 in the faculty of arts of Kraków University where in 1411 he became a bachelor, in 1415 a master, and in 1421 and from 1424 to 1425 he was dean. In 1423 he began studies in the faculty of theology in Kraków. In 1425 under the direction of Francis of Brzeg he earned the degree of biblical bachelor, and in 1428 became a bachelor *sententiarius*. Around 1427 he became a canon in the Collegiate of St. Florian in Kraków. In 1431 he earned a doctorate in theology in took part in a dispute with the Hussites. After the death of Francis of Brzeg (1432) he took his chair. In 1440 Benedykt Hesse (along with several other professors from Kraków) was entrusted with developing a memorial in the matter of the obedience of the University of Kraków to the Second Council of Basle. In the same year Benedykt Hesse completed a treatise in which he argued that the council was superior to the pope. This treatise, based on the writings of Andrew of Escobar, was provided anonymously to Balse by William of Balme, an emissary of the antipope Felix V. Benedykt Hesse had the support of the Bishop of Kraków, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, who in 1448 and 1449 entrusted to him the office of vice-chancellor of the University of Kraków. In 1439 Benedykt Hesse was dean of the capital in the Collegiate of St. Florian, and in 1449 he was the general canon of the Kraków chapter. In 1449 he lectured as a substitute in the faculty of canon law. In the last years of his life, ill and burdened with many administrative duties, he wrote little.

Benedykt Hesse was a student of Andrew of Kokorzyń and Francis of Brzeg. He taught several eminent theologians, including Jacob of Paradyż, John of Dąbrowka, St. John Kanty, Thomas Strzemiński, Peter of Siena, and Andrew Gałka of Dobczyń, who later became a follower of Wycliffism and after fleeing to Silesia attacked his old master (in a letter to the University, dated June 2, 1449), accusing him of opportunism.

Benedykt Hesse's most important works (or adaptations by his students): *Disputata in veterem artem* (written 1418–1420); *Disputata in veterem artem secundum Benedictum H.* (written before 1423, mss BJ 2037, BJ 2455, BJ 2043; fragments in a critical edition by E. Zieliński, S. Wielgus, MPhP 14 (1970), 131–153 and AM 1 (1973), 159–297); *Quaestiones super octo libros “Physicorum” Aristotelis* (written around 1421, mss BJ 1367, BJ 2376, critical edition S. Wielgus, Wr 1984); *Puncta Cracoviensia secundum Benedictum H. de Cracovia in I–VIII libros “Physicorum” Aristotelis* (written in the mid fifteenth century, mss BJ 1972, BJ 207, BJ 2100, book I critical edition: S. Gutowski, M. Kowalewska, M. Niesobski, D. Sawicka, under the direction of S. Wielgus, AM 6 (1989); *Commentum super “Praedicamenta” Aristotelis* (written 1423–1424, mss BJ 1900, BJ 2037, BJ 2043, BJ 2455, critical edition, “*Quaestionum de quantitate et de qualitate*”, H. Wojtczak, AM 10 (1997); *Quaestiones super tres libros “De anima” secundum Benedictum H.* (written 1423–1430, mss BJ 2100, BJ 1901, BJ 2013, BJ 2075, BJ 2097, BJ 2118, book I critical edition W. Bajor, AM 12 (1999), 381–428; *Expositio I–IV librorum “Meteororum” Aristotelis* (from 1415–1430, ms BJ 674; his more important theological and other works: *Commentum super IV libros “Sententiarum” Petri Lombardi* (lectured in 1428–1430, ms BJ 1518— book I, BJ 1519 and BJ 1526 — book II, BJ 1531 — book III, BJ 2091 — book IV and mss BJ 1538 and the Library of the Gniezno Chapter nr 165 and 166); *Commentum in Evangelium s. Matthaei* (one of the most extensive medieval commentaries, written from 1432 to 1449 (mss BJ 1365, 1364, 1366, 1368, 1260, and in the Vatican Library Vat. Lat. nr 1464¹, 1464⁴, 1464⁶, 1464⁸), published (still not in completion) by W. Bucichowski in “*Textus et studia*”: 8

(1979), 13 (1982), 16 (1983), 18 (1985), 21 (1986), 24 (1987), 26 (1990); many minor theological questions contained in mss BJ 1368 and 1365, an introductory lecture on canon law *Deus dat sapientiam* (among other, in ms BJ 1369); *Tractatus brevior*—for the Counsel of Basle (ms BJ 1369 and 1217); *De reemptionibus* (*De usuris* on economics, ms BJ 1709, 2392, the Library in Kórnik nr 1122, 1383).

In philosophy, Benedykt Hesse supported Buridan's nominalism. He was especially influenced by Lawrence Londorius and Marsilius of Inghen. In the Kraków milieu he popularized Buridan's theory of impetus. Against Aristotle, he treated physics as the leading science among the speculative sciences and tried to make it methodologically independent of metaphysics. He regard physics as a theoretical science, but as possessing practical applications. In keeping with his tendencies of nominalism he supported the methodological separation of theology and philosophy. Following Buridan he accepted a threefold criterion of truth—faith, the light of reason (possessing absolute demonstrative power), and the opinion of philosophers (especially Aristotle) which are a criterion of truth insofar as they are in agreement with reason, which in turn cannot be in contradiction to faith.

Benedykt Hesse was the first eminent Polish logician; he made an important distinction between propositions concerning the past, present, and future. Departing from Aristotle in this question, he stated that propositions concerning the future are not necessarily true.

In the theory of universals Benedykt Hesse supported combining Ockham's conceptualism and Marsilius of Inghen's terminism with moderate realism, which was in agreement with the strong tendencies towards concordance apparent in his writings.

In his theory of man he accepted the Aristotelian-Thomistic conception and reconciled it with elements of Augustinianism and nominalism. His theological views are found mainly in over 1,000 questions in the commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew. This commentary was dependent mainly on the works of Thomas Aquinas and Augustine Triumphus (wrongly attributed for many years to John Kanty, who only transcribed them). It is a unique encyclopedia of the knowledge of the time (theological, economic, natural, social, and political—its position on the conditions for waging a just war, and other matters, are similar to those of Paul Włodkowic (Paul Vladimir) and Stanisław of Skarbimierz).

Benedykt Hesse was a resolute anti-Hussite. He expressed this in several treatises (mss BJ 418, 425, 1369), in which he discussed dogmatic and social questions. He offered these treatises, wrongly attributed to John Kanty, along with his entire library, to the University of Kraków. Benedykt Hesse had an important influence on the Kraków scientific milieu. His works, first in an unaltered form, later adapted in abbreviated, were the object of studies in the University of Kraków still in the second half of the fifteenth century.

M. Rechowicz, *St. Jean Kanty a-t-il ete l'auteur du commentaire conciliariste sur l'Évangile de St. Mathieu?*, *Collectanea Theologica* 26 (1955), 13–45; idem, *Św. Jan Kanty i Benedykt H. w świetle krakowskiej kompilacji teologicznej z XV wieku* [St. John Kanty and Benedykt Hesse in light of the Kraków theological compilation from the fifteenth century], Lb 1958; idem, PSB IX 485–486; M. Markowski, *Wykłady wstępne i komentarz do "Sentencji" Benedykta H. z Krakowa* [Benedykt Hesse of Kraków's introductory lectures and commentary on the "Sentences"], MHFS 4 (1965), 334–340; idem, *Problem uniwersaliów w "Quaestiones super Isagogen" Benedykta H. z Krakowa* [The problem of universals in Benedykt Hesse of Kraków's "Quaestiones super Isagogen"], MHFS 7 (1967), 77–100; idem,

Komentarz Benedykta H. z Krakowa do Isagogi Porfiriusza [Benedykt Hesse of Kraków's commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge], RuF 26 (1968), 222–224; Z. Siemiątkowska, *Benedykt H.*, FPS 17–18; *Historia Nauki Polskiej* [History of Polish Science], Wr 1974, VI 231; S. Wielgus, *Problem realności czasu w "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis" Benedykta H.—najznakomitzego przedstawiciela burydanizmu na Krakowskim Uniwersytecie w XV w.* [The problem of the reality of time in the "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis" of Benedykt Hesse—the most eminent representative of Buridanism at the University of Kraków in the fifteenth century], SF 10 (1979), 99–114; idem, *Über die Arbeiten zur kritischen Ausgabe des Kommentars von Benedikt H. zur "Physik" des Aristoteles*, SMed 20 (1980) n. 2, 3–27; idem, *Benedykta H. "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis" (Wstęp do krytycznej edycji)* [Benedykt Hesse's "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis" (Introduction to the critical edition)], Lb 1983; idem, *Poglądy na temat matematyki w "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis" Benedykta H.* [Views on the topic of mathematics in Benedykt Hesse's "Quaestiones super octo libros "Physicorum" Aristotelis"], AM 3 (1983), 73–82; W. Bucichowski, *Koncepcja "corpus politicum" w eklezjologii Benedykta H.* [Conception of the "pcorpus politicum" in Benedykt Hesse's ecclesiology], Przegląd Tomistyczny [Thomistic Review] 1 (1984), 193–203; S. Wielgus, *Ausgewählte Probleme der "Quaestiones in libros "Physicorum" des Benedikt H. von Krakau*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie 8 (1988), 81–101; idem, *The Medieval Polish Doctrine of the Law of Nations: Ius Gentium*, Lb 1998, 74–78.

Stanisław Wielgus