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## Castellani, Giulio



**Born:** 1528, Faenza

**Died:** 23 October 1586, Roma

Olivier Dubouclez  
Department of Philosophy,  
University of Liège, Liège, Belgium

### Abstract

Giulio Castellani was an Italian nobleman, Aristotelian scholar, and clergyman born in Faenza, Italy, who is mostly known for his *Adversus M. Tullii Ciceronis academicas quaestiones disputatio* (1558) where Castellani defended dogmatic Aristotelianism against Cicero's *Academica* and Skepticism in general as exposed by the influential humanist Francesco Pico della Mirandola. Castellani also published a book entitled *De humano intellectu libri III* in Bologna in 1561, where he gave an important contribution to the controversy on the immortality of the soul raised by Pomponazzi and Averroism. In this book, Castellani favors Alexandrist positions against the trend of Simplician Averroism defended by the Paduan scholar Marcantonio Genua. As a professor, Giulio Castellani taught at the Accademia degl'Invaghiti in Mantua where he lectured on Aristotle's *Ethics* at the beginning of the 1560s. At the end of his life, he received the chair of philosophy at the Sapienza University

in Rome. Castellani also developed an important career in Italian religious institutions. Named Canon of the Cathedral of Faenza by Pope Pie V in 1571, he was later appointed Bishop of Cariati (Calabria) by Pope Sixtus V, but he died in October 1586 just before being consecrated.

### Alternate names

Julius, Iulius; Castellanus, Castellanius.

### Biography

Giulio Castellani was born in 1528 in Faenza, a city located in Northeastern Italy in a family pertaining to the old nobility. He was the nephew of Pier Nicola Castellani, a physician, teacher, and philosopher who, among various treatises, published a *De immortalitate animorum secundum Platonem et Aristotelem* in 1525. As a young man, Castellani devoted himself to the study of Humanities, first in Faenza under the supervision of the orator Sebastiano Regoli da Brisighella and then pursued his education at the University of Ferrara, benefiting from the courses of Vincenzo Maggi. He took part to the foundation of the Accademia degl'Invaghiti in Mantua in 1562 where he lectured on Aristotle's *Ethics*. From 1560 onwards, his career in ecclesiastical institutions developed as he was named Canon of

the Cathedral of Faenza by Pope Pie V in 1571. He moved to Rome in 1577 under the request of Gregory XIII where he received the chair of philosophy at the Sapienza University. Appointed Bishop of Cariati (Calabria) by Pope Sixtus V, Castellani died in October 1586 just before being consecrated (Schmitt 1978).

Apart from a vast correspondence that is largely unedited (with prestigious correspondents like Ulisse Aldrovandi, Carlo Borromeo, or Federico Pendasio), a few poetical works and a book on the miracles of the saints published in 1569, Castellani's contribution to philosophy amounts to two treatises published early in his career. "A work nearly unique in the Italian Cinquecento" (Schmitt 1972), his *Adversus M. Tullii Ciceronis academica quaestiones disputatio* published in Bologna in 1558 is a defense of dogmatic Aristotelianism against Cicero's *Academica* and skepticism in general as exposed by Francesco Pico della Mirandola in his *Examen vanitatis doctrinae genitum* of 1520 (Schmitt 1967). While this first opus entails an interesting use of experience and observation, his *De humano intellectu libri III*, published in Bologna in 1561, is a contribution to the controversy on the immortality of the soul raised by Pomponazzi and Averroism (Mahoney 1970; Kessler 1988). In this book, Castellani's position is more original, favoring Alexandrist positions against the trend of Simplician Averroism defended by Marcantonio Genua. While he identifies the Agent intellect with God, Castellani nonetheless holds the human intellect as a substance endowed with real cognitive power, a claim that pushes him to reduce the Agent Intellect to a distant cause of the actualization of forms inherent to the human mind, presenting then a "moderate innatism" (Spruit 1995). In the same context, he develops a naturalistic epistemology which amounts to immersing the human intellect within duration, giving an important contribution to a debate about the

instantaneousness of intellectual acts, and more generally about the temporal nature of thought, which is carried on by Antonio Montecatini and also Francesco Piccolomini at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Dubouclez 2015).

## Cross-References

- [Aldrovandi, Ulisse](#)
- [Aristotelianism](#)
- [Genua, Marco Antonio](#)
- [Intellect](#)
- [Porzio, Simone](#)
- [Time](#)

## References

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