

# Convertibility of Being and One in a Sophism Attributed to Robert Kilwardby

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*Summary:* The present article deals with a collection of sophismata found in Erfurt WAB, ms Q. 328. The collection was probably written between 1237 and 1245 and has traditionally been ascribed to Robert Kilwardby. After initial discussion of both formal and doctrinal aspects of the sophismata collection as a whole, the article gives a detailed analysis of the sophism 'tantum unum est', which is in effect a discussion of the convertibility of being and one. This analysis includes an historical reconstruction of the semantic and ontological thought milieu in which the sophism was written, through an examination of the views on the subject by, among others, Peter of Spain, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas.

It was M. Grabmann who, in his pioneering study on the sophismata literature of the 12th and 13th centuries, first drew attention to the collection of sophismata found in Ms. Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek, CA, Q. 328, ff. 1-73v.<sup>1</sup> Grabmann suggested that this collection be attributed to Robert Kilwardby, mainly on the grounds that he also considered the latter to be the author of the other works found in the same manuscript. This is correct, indeed, with respect to the *Commentary on the Prior Analytics*, which is found from f. 94 onwards. The attribution of the sophismata to Kilwardby is by no means secure, however, since the *Syncategoremata* treatise that follows the collection of sophisms and precedes the *Prior Analytics* commentary, most probably is not by Kilwardby, as Grabmann suggested, but by Robert Bacon.<sup>2</sup> Of course this matter of attribution can only be determined with certainty on the basis of thorough analyses both of the works on the arts we know to be by Kilwardby and of our sophismata collection. However, in view of the fact that an expert on Kilwardby, the late Father Lewry, considered our collection to be by Kilwardby,<sup>3</sup> we may, for the time being, assume this to be so, if only to save the

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1 See Grabmann 1940: 41-45.

2 For this treatise and its attribution, cf. Braakhuis 1979, pt. I: 106-67.

3 See Lewry 1981: 382.

work from the abyss of anonymity. At any rate, the date of composition seems to correspond to the period of time when Kilwardby was a master of arts at Paris, i.e. c. 1237-1245.<sup>4</sup>

The collection is interesting from a formal perspective. Grabmann noticed that the collection contains passages that serve to connect the discussions of the various sophisms, which allow us, in his opinion, to characterize the collection as a *sophisteria* treatise, i.e. a theoretical treatise on the art of dealing with sophisms. On closer inspection, however, these passages tend to be more characteristic of a treatise on syncategorematic terms that starts with a discussion of the *signa quantitatis*, the quantifiers. In fact, these passages are remarkably similar to and sometimes even identical with the discussion on the *signa* found in the treatise on syncategorematic terms that was attributed to Robert Bacon and referred to earlier. In both texts we find the same division of the discussion of the *signa* into discussions of their signification and their virtue (*potestas*), and the latter topic is subdivided in both texts into discussions on their *potestas in oratione* and their *potestas in argumentatione*. The discussion of the sign 'omnis', too, follows the same course in both texts. These general passages, then, found connecting the discussions of the first eleven sophisms, and the explicit discussions of 'preter', 'tantum', 'nisi', and 'non' found in the following sophisms, show that the organizing principle underlying the discussion of the sophisms is in fact an analysis of the syncategorematic terms and the semantic difficulties they present.<sup>5</sup>

The discussion of the sophisms together with the general passages result in the following structure of the text:

infinita sunt finita		f. 1a
general passage on syncategorematic terms, especially on 'omnis'	f. 2vb	
omnis homo est omnis homo		f. 3a
general passage	f. 4va	
omne animal fuit in archa Noe		f. 4vb
general passage	f. 7vb	
omnis homo de necessitate est animal		f. 7vb

<sup>4</sup> For this date see Judy's Introduction (pp. XIV-XVI) to Kilwardby's *De ortu*, and Lewry 1978: 6.

<sup>5</sup> For this point, cf. Braakhuis 1979, pt. I: 84-90.

general passage	f. 10b	
omnis anima necessario est iusta		f. 10b
omnis homo est animal et econverso		f. 13b
omnis homo est unus solus homo		f. 16b
omnis fenix est		f. 19a
general passage	f. 27b	
omnis propositio vel eius contradictoria est vera		f. 27b
general passage, especially on 'totus'	f.35va	
totus Sortes est minor Sorte		f. 35vb
general passage	f. 39vb	
impossibile potest esse verum		f. 39vb
tantum verum opponitur falso		f. 47vb
decem preter quinque sunt quinque		f. 51a
si tantum pater est non tantum pater est		f. 53va
tantum unum est		f. 59a
nichil est verum nisi in hoc instanti		f. 61va
duo patres et duo filii sunt tria et non plura		f. 68a
Sortes dicit verum si solus Plato loquitur		f. 70va

Another formal characteristic of the text is its focus on the distinctions to be made in the sophismatic sentences; the discussion of each of the sophisms begins with a discussion of the proposed distinctions. This puts our text on a par with the so-called *distinctiones* treatises, for example Roger Bacon's *Summa de sophismatibus et distinctionibus*.

The text is also very interesting from a doctrinal perspective. Ebbesen and Pinborg took the considerations found in the discussion of the sophism 'omnis homo de necessitate est animal' to form part of the corpus of texts they presented, when they first investigated the 13th-century discussions of the problem of the truth-value of propositions about empty classes, i.e. whether a general proposition such as '(omnis) homo est animal' is true even if there is no man in existence.<sup>6</sup> Later, de Libera was able to show that in that same discussion views are referred to that are verbatim the same as those voiced by Roger Bacon with regard to

<sup>6</sup> See Ebbesen & Pinborg 1970: 37(87)-40(90).

this problem. Bacon was, as we know, of the opinion that every noun should refer to (an) existing thing(s) and hence that the above question should be denied completely.<sup>7</sup> Later Braakhuis showed that, in the discussion of the sophism 'omnis fenix est', views that are nearly verbatim those of Roger Bacon are referred to so often that one might get the impression that the consideration of Bacon's views, or views similar to his, forms the real focus of the discussion in this sophism.<sup>8</sup>

Our text is also doctrinally interesting inasmuch as it allots so much space to the discussion of each sophism (see the list of contents presented above); this sets our text off from most other contemporary *syncategoremata* treatises or *sophismata* collections.

Thus our text presents a number of substantial discussions of problems having to do with the sophisms under consideration. In addition to the doctrinal points referred to above, the section on the sophism 'omnis anima necessario est iusta', for example, includes an interesting discussion on whether the mode of necessity ampliates the tense of the substantive verb (an 'necessario' habeat virtutem ampliandi compositionem importatam per hoc verbum 'est'; f. 11va). In the section on the sophism 'omnis propositio vel eius contradictoria est vera' we find a thorough discussion of the relationship between two syncategorematic terms and of the question of whether one of two syncategorematic terms can include the other and how this relates to the formation of speech (f. 28b). Finally the section on the sophism 'impossibile potest esse verum' includes an interesting discussion of *privatio* and of analogy vs. univocity and equivocity (f. 40b). The space allotted in the text to the discussion of each sophism also leaves room for a presentation and discussion of the different solutions that had been offered. In this way the text effectively constitutes an overview or catalogue of these different viewpoints and provides an important source of information on the development of logico-semantic views in the second quarter of the 13th century.

This contribution will deal with the discussion of the sophism '*tantum unum est*'. In fact, the discussion found in this sophism

<sup>7</sup> See de Libera 1981.

<sup>8</sup> See Braakhuis 1985.

amounts to a consideration of the convertibility of being and one.<sup>9</sup>

The general structure of the discussion of ‘tantum unum est’ is similar to that of other sophisms. A short introduction, which sets out the way the sophism was usually solved, is followed by a three-fold discussion. This discussion begins with a consideration of the distinction used in the usual solution to the sophism. This is followed by a consideration of the truth or falsity of the sophistical proposition. Next the ways in which the proposition is proved to be true or false are considered. The next section is the *responsio* or *determinatio* which includes a discussion of the various solutions proposed for the sophism and presents the view of the author himself. Finally the text ends with a discussion of the arguments that support the views rejected by the author. The discussion as a whole presents the structure of a scholastic question in a somewhat more elaborated form.<sup>10</sup>

The distinction that is presented in the introduction is the distinction between *one* taken as convertible with *being* and *one* taken as the principle of number (in Antiquity and the Middle Ages *one* – or the unity – was considered to be the principle of number and not a number in itself).<sup>11</sup>

In the first section of the discussion, which is devoted to the proposed distinction, two arguments are given to support this distinction. The first holds that *being* and *one* are convertible, since what has being, has being one and vice versa; on the other hand, *one* taken as a principle of quantity is inferior to *being* and is therefore not convertible with *being*. The second holds, with regard to convertibility, that it is the form that gives both being and being one.

Next the arguments are given that support a rejection of the proposed distinction. With reference to Boethius and Aristotle it is first argued that *one* as principle of number is also convertible with *being*. Then two further arguments are presented which hold that the distinction is not valid, since *one* is not convertible with *be-*

<sup>9</sup> For a thorough treatment of the discussions of the sophism ‘tantum unum est’ in the context of the 13th-century sophismatic discussion, see Ebbesen 1995.

<sup>10</sup> The entire text is edited in Ebbesen and Braakhuis 1997.

<sup>11</sup> For this distinction with regard to the sophism under discussion, cf. also Ebbesen 1995: 190ff.

ing. The first of these is based on the view that *one*, like any other accidental term, like 'white' for example, is predicated denominatively of *being*.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, it is argued that the distinction is useless with regard to the sophism under discussion since the sophistical proposition is false, not only when *one* is taken as the principle of number but also when *one* is taken as convertible with *being*. This latter part of the argumentation is based on the view that the *significatio specialis* of a word presupposes its *significatio generalis*, the latter term being used to refer to the structural elements of language, such as whether a word is singular or plural, etc. It will become clear that this is a view shared by our author.

In the second section of the discussion, which is devoted to the question of truth or falsity, the author begins by presenting proof that the sophistical proposition is false. This proof is based on the thesis that a proposition is false when a higher or more extensive predicate is predicated with exclusion of a subject(term) that is less extensive; an example is the proposition 'only man is a living being'. It is argued that 'tantum unum est' is such a proposition, not only when *one* is taken as the principle of number, but also when it is taken in other senses. It is further argued that *one* taken in any of its senses is an accidental term, since it signifies unity which is a form resulting from the union or composition of form with matter. It may be true that *one* supposit materially for a being; nevertheless, since the imposition of *one* is formally based on unity, its signification will always be connected with unity.<sup>13</sup>

The counter-argument that is presented next holds that a distinction can be made between unity as essential unity and unity as accidental unity. Accidental unity is dependent on a thing that is already constituted in its specific being; essential unity, on the other hand, is given by the nature of the form, which also gives something its being. It is on the basis of essential unity that *one* is convertible with *being*.

12 For a discussion of predicating denominatively in relation to the sophism in question, see Ebbesen 1995: 181-84 and 187-89.

13 "'Unum', quocumque modo accipiatur, est terminus accidentalis; significat enim unitatem, que est forma derelicta ex unione forme cum materia, et talis forma est accidentalis. Sed <sciendum> quod hoc quod est 'unum' formaliter imponitur ab unitate, quamvis materialiter supponat ens. Cum igitur suum significatum nullo modo possit absolvi ab unitate ..."

Two counter-arguments are presented to reject this view. The first maintains that even if essential unity can be given by the nature of the form, that form, like matter, has only the status of potentiality in the composite being, and it is only the composite being that has/is really or actually being. Potential unity, however, given that it is only potential, cannot be convertible with (actual) *being*. Thus the sophistical proposition will also be false on the basis of potential unity. The second argument simply rejects the notion of essential unity and argues that unity, given that it is the principle of quantity, can only pertain to something which is a composite being of matter. Therefore actual unity can belong to an actual composite being only and will thus be an accidental form.

In this discussion, which has, in effect, an entirely ontological or metaphysical nature, it is interesting to note that we find such an outspoken view on the rôle played by (substantial) form and matter in the constitution of a composite being. This view, which as we will see, is supported by our author, seems remarkably similar to the view Thomas Aquinas held on this matter throughout his career. It is well known that Thomas Aquinas, like our author, regarded both (substantial) form and (quantitative) matter as necessary ingredients in the constitution of a composite being, and that it is only a composite being, composed of form and matter, that is a (real) being.<sup>14</sup> It may be the case, then, that we have found in our text evidence for the intellectual milieu which formed the background to the development of the ontological views held by Thomas Aquinas.

The third section of the discussion is rather technical and considers the proofs and disproofs presented in the introduction.

The *responsio* or *determinatio* consists of no less than a discussion of several different ways that had been proposed to solve the sophism.

In the first of these proposals a distinction is made between *one* in the sense of convertible with *being* and *one* as meaning the principle of number; this is, in fact, the same distinction that was presented in the introduction as the common one used to solve the sophism and has already been discussed. Here the author presents a new argument in support of the distinction: it is argued

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14 See e.g. his *De ente et essentia*, c. 2.

that *one* in the sense of the principle of number adds something to *being*, to wit the division or distinction of one being from any other being (*discretio*), whereas *one* in the sense of convertible with *being* does not do this. After what we have seen so far, it is not surprising that our author rejects this distinction by arguing that there is convertibility of *being* and *one* with respect to the *supposita*, i.e. the concrete instances or the actual beings to which both these terms refer. There is no convertibility, however, with regard to the proper *significata* of these terms, for the imposition of *one* is based formally on the nature of the discretion. In other words what makes *one* have signification at all is that it signifies the nature of discretion and ultimately the nature of quantity. Because, however, the nature of discretion is found in everything to which the term *being* refers, the range of reference of *one* matches exactly that of *being*, and thus there is convertibility of *being* and *one* with regard to the *supposita*. Through this distinction between the proper signification of a term or the presentation of a nature on the one hand, and its supposition or the reference or the actual beings referred to on the other, it is shown that even when *one* is taken as the principle of number it is convertible with *being*, at least as far as concerns the *supposita*. Thus it is shown that the distinction is useless.

The second proposal for a way to solve the sophism distinguishes between exclusion made with regard to the substantial form and exclusion made with regard to an accidental form, where the sophistical proposition in the first case is true and in the second case is false. This proposal is also rejected, because it is stated that such a distinction can only be valid with regard to a composite term consisting of a term indicating a substance and of an accidental term (such as e.g. '*homo albus*'). However, *one* is not such a term, and even if distinctions could be made with regard to *one*, our author would regard these as invalid. When someone is both pale and musical, it is impossible when referring to that person with the expression 'only pale' to exclude the musical reference, for in that case what is pale is musical, both these terms being used concretely.

The third proposal presented distinguishes between *one* as indicating essential unity, in which case the sophistical proposition is true, and *one* as indicating accidental unity, in which case the proposition is false. This proposal is also rejected. First, because,



according to our author, *one* always indicates accidental unity since it indicates a form that is dependent on something that is constituted already in its specific being. Secondly, because essential unity is only potential, whereas *one* indicates an actual unity. Thirdly, he argues that the distinction presented here is useless because the sophistical proposition can be proven to be true and false in both senses.

Here we see, then, that our author supports the rejection of the applicability of the distinction between essential and accidental unity to the solution of the sophism – a rejection which was already advanced in the section on the truth and falsity of the sophistical proposition – and that he supports the ontological reasons for that rejection. Thus, he thinks *one* always indicates an accidental unity, since it indicates a form that is dependent on something that is already constituted in its specific being. Furthermore, although he does not entirely reject the notion of an essential unity, he states expressly that such a unity is merely potential, which means that he agrees with the view that form and matter as principles of the constitution of the composite being have merely potential being, and that it is only the composite thing that has real or actual being. With his rejection of the view that unity, like being, is bestowed by (substantial) form, he rejects the Neoplatonic interpretation of the rôle that form, as the primordial source of being and unity, plays in the composition of form and matter,<sup>15</sup> and instead appears to adhere to the Aristotelian view, which holds that being is the result of the composition of form and matter.

The solution rejected by the author here, is similar to the solution that Peter of Spain defends in his *Synkategoremata*.<sup>16</sup> Peter of Spain also applies a distinction to the sophistical proposition ‘tantum unum est’: *one* is equivocal, concerning essential unity in one sense and accidental unity in the other. In his explanation of the essential unity, Peter too clearly maintains that the (substantial) form plays a double rôle; in his opinion, form not only grants being to a thing but at the same time separates and distinguishes that thing from all others that belong to the same species.

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15 For this view on the double rôle of form in the sophistical discussions of the 13th century, cf. also Ebbesen 1995: 191.

16 See Peter of Spain, *Synkategoremata*, III, 11-17: 110 - 14.

Solutio. Prima duplex, quia hoc nomen 'unum' est equivocum, eoquod est quedam unitas que est essentialis, ut illa per quam res existit in esse speciali sive in esse specifico. Et hec unitas est per formam completivam dantem esse rei in separando et distinguendo ipsam rem ab omnibus aliis in sua specie, ut Sortes non solum est in specie hominis per suam formam completivam sed etiam per ipsam perficitur in suo esse proprio et separatur et distinguitur ab omnibus aliis hominibus. Et hec est unitas essentialis. Alia autem est unitas accidentalis, que est principium numeri. Unde sicut numerus accidit rebus que numerantur, similiter et unitas per quam numerantur et que est principium numeri, accidit eis. Quicquid enim numeratur, per hanc unitatem numeratur, quia numerus nichil aliud est nisi aggregatio unitatum. Numerus enim est multitudo ex unitatibus aggregata.<sup>17</sup>

Surprisingly enough Peter declares both forms of unity to be convertible with *being*, yet he goes on to state that the sophistical proposition is true when taken in the sense of essential unity and false when taken in the sense of accidental unity.

Et utraque istarum unitatum convertitur cum 'ente'. Sed differunt in hoc quod prima est essentialis (ut dictum est) et secunda accidentalis; et etiam in hoc quod secunda est in prima ut accidens in subiecto; unde secunda accidit prime. Et sicut 'unitas' dicitur equivoce, similiter et unum. Dico ergo quod si accipiatur unitas essentialis sive unum essenziale, sic prima est vera. Si autem accipiatur unitas accidentalis sive unum accidentale, sic prima est falsa, quia dictio exclusiva adiuncta parti numerali destruit suum totum, ut 'tantum duo currunt; non ergo tria'; similiter 'tantum unum est; non ergo duo' vel 'non ergo multa'.<sup>18</sup>

In a further explanation, the (Neo)Platonic character of Peter's views becomes clear: according to Peter, an individual human being is separate and differs from any other being in virtue of its (substantial) form, namely its soul.<sup>19</sup> It is apparent, therefore, that, in his view, one does not need to have a body to be separated

<sup>17</sup> See *ibid.*, III, 12: 110 - 12.

<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*, III, 13: 112.

<sup>19</sup> See *ibid.*, III, 15: 112: "...secundum quod 'unum' dicit unitatem essentialem, quoniam quicquid est, per suum completivum est, quod dat ei esse. Ut Sortes per suam formam completivam, que est anima ipsius, separatur et differt a qualibet alia re; et dat ipsi unitatem essentialem. Et sic est de omnibus aliis." Peter refers to a second solution, which he, however, regards as less successful than the first; see *ibid.*, III, 14: 112: "Alii autem dicunt quod prima est duplex (hec scilicet 'tantum unum est') eoquod potest fieri exclusio ratione suppositi (et sic est vera); vel potest fieri exclusio ratione accidentis sive forme (et sic est falsa). Et tunc sequitur 'non ergo multa sunt'. Sed primam solutionem credo esse meliorem." This solution is similar to the second one discussed by our author.

in this way; in other words, the body is not required in order to be an individual person.

The fourth proposal discussed by our author, and one which he declares from the outset to be a probable one, is the view that *one* always indicates accidental unity or unity which is the principle of number. Even so, according to this view, a distinction can be drawn, since accidental unity can be taken absolutely or respectively. When taken absolutely, it indicates a disposition of the subject, the subject being considered as something on its own. In this case the term indicating the disposition is a categorematic term, in fact, it is an adjective, like 'white'. When taken respectively, it indicates a disposition of the subject(term) in relation to the predicate(term); in this case the term that indicates the disposition is a syncategorematic term, namely a quantifier. This distinction is not only true for *one* but for all numerical terms.<sup>20</sup> When *one* is taken absolutely, the sophistical proposition is true, because in that case *one* and *many* do not conflict, *one* being a common noun like 'man'. When *one* is taken in the second sense, however, the proposition is false, since it means: only this one thing is.

The fifth proposal discussed by the author states that the sophistical proposition is false, whether *one* is taken as a quantifier or as an adjective. The reason given is that whichever way *one* is interpreted it runs counter to multiplicity, since *one* signifies precisely in the way of a singular term that cannot have a plural form, because that plural form implies multiplicity which would conflict with what is the proper signification (*res significata*) of *one*.<sup>21</sup> In answer to further objections it is emphasized that *one* combined with an exclusive term ('tantum unum') differs from other nouns like 'man' and 'white' in combination with such a term, because whereas man and white have opposites that can participate in being under the same mode of signification, this is not the case for *one*.

... iste terminus 'homo' habet oppositum sibi consequens in modo significandi, quod idem oppositum potest participare idem predicatum, quod est 'esse', sub eodem modo significandi sub quo 'homo' participat, scilicet sub modo singularitatis, et tale oppositum est sicut 'asinus' vel 'capra' vel aliquid huiusmodi .... Sic autem

<sup>20</sup> For this distinction in relation to the sophism under discussion, see also Ebbesen 1995: 189.

<sup>21</sup> "Hec vox 'unum' imposita fuit ad significandum per modum singularitatis nec potuit habere plurale, eo quod multitudo actualis per plurale importata omnino repugnabat rei significate per hoc quod est 'unum'."

non est de hoc quod est 'unum', et de hoc quod est 'multa', quod est eius oppositum, quia oppositum *unius*, scilicet *multa*, non potuit participare istud predicatum quod est 'esse', sub eodem modo significandi sub quo participabat li 'unum', immo sub alio, quia sub modo pluralitatis, 'unum' vero sub modo singularitatis.

Furthermore, it is emphasized that despite the fact that *being* and *one* are convertible – we could add: as far as their *supposita* are concerned – the inference from *being* combined with an exclusion ('tantum ens') to *one* combined with an exclusion ('tantum unum') is invalid, since the opposites of *being* and *one*, i.e. *non-being* and *many*, are not convertible.<sup>22</sup>

Our author considers the last two proposals, the fourth and the fifth, to be probable and defensible. In my opinion these proposals, of which, as we have seen, the former states that the sophistical proposition is true when *one* is taken to signify unity as an adjective noun, whereas the latter states the proposition to be false even in that case, may be in agreement with each other according to our author, since in the fourth proposal the emphasis is on the supposition of the term *one*, while in the fifth proposal the emphasis is on the signification and the mode of signifying of that same term.

In the last part of the text, which consists of refutations of the arguments not supporting the author's views, some of the main elements of the author's view are touched upon again. Thus, it is repeated that *being* and *one* are convertible with regard to the *supposita*, but not with regard to their *significata*, since the essence and nature signified by *one* is inferior to what is signified by *being*. Furthermore it is repeated that *one*, particularly in combination with an exclusive term, has its own mode of signification, which is different from that of normal (common) nouns.

If we summarize the views of our author, we see that with respect to the convertibility of the terms *being* and *one* he distinguishes between the *supposita* and the *significata*: the terms are convertible with regard to their *supposita*, but not with regard to their *significata*. They are not convertible with regard to the *significata*, or with regard to essence and nature, because the *significatum* of *being* dif-

<sup>22</sup> "Dicendum est ad hoc quod quamvis *unum* et *ens* convertantur, tamen ab uno ad alterum cum dictione exclusiva non tenet argumentum. Et ratio huius est quia opposita eorum non convertuntur."

fers from the essence and nature signified by *one*, this latter signification being the nature of discretion or unity, which necessarily belongs to the category of quantity and which therefore is inferior to what is signified by *being*. However, since the nature of discretion or accidental unity pertains to whatever the term *being* refers to, the terms *being* and *one* are always convertible with regard to their referents, the *supposita*. Based on this argument, our author rejects the distinction between *one* taken as convertible with *being* and *one* taken as the principle of number, because for him, *one*, even as the principle of number, is always convertible with *being* as far as their referents are concerned. He also regards the distinction between essential and accidental unity to be insufficient. Although he does not seem to reject the notion of essential unity altogether, such unity, in his opinion, can be no more than potential. With this he reemphasizes that *one* signifies accidental or quantitative unity, which he regards as the only real or actual unity. Although the author regards the sophistical proposition 'tantum unum est' to be false, he allows for its truth if *one* is taken as a categorematical adjective term, since then it says no more than that the referents of the term *being* match those of the adjectival term *one*. In his additional explanation of the meaning of the sophistical proposition, he emphasizes the special mode of signification of *one* as a mere singular compared to other terms.<sup>23</sup>

Our author's rejection of the distinction between *one* as convertible with *being* and *one* as the principle of number did not mean that this distinction fell into disuse; not only did Thomas Aquinas use it extensively,<sup>24</sup> but Henry of Ghent interestingly also applied it in his little-studied *Synkategoremata* to provide a solution to the sophism under discussion here:

<sup>23</sup> For a comparison of the view expressed in the Sophism and that by Kilwardby in his *Sentences* commentary, and how this affects the attribution of the text to Kilwardby, see the Appendix, below.

<sup>24</sup> See *STh.*1, 11, 1 and 2, and also *In Metaph.* IV, 2, 559-60 and *De Pot.*IX, 7, but also already *In 1 Sent.*, d.24, qu. 1, a. 3. Ebbesen 1995: 192 suggests that Thomas, since he accepts the distinction with so few questions asked, may not have been quite abreast of developments in the arts faculty. It is doubtful that this was the case, not only because Thomas does raise some tough questions about this distinction in texts other than the *Summa Theologiae*, but mainly because in this kind of problem there are various ontological views at stake.

Regula est: quotienscumque dictio exclusiva additur termino habenti in se suppositum et accidens, duplex est locutio ex eo quod potest facere exclusionem suam circa ipsum ratione suppositi vel ratione accidentis, sive ratione forme vel materie, vel ratione forme substantialis vel accidentalis; quod idem est.

Et per hoc solvitur hoc sophisma TANTUM UNUM EST.

Probatio: unum est; et nichil est quod non sit unum; ergo tantum unum est.

Contra: tantum unum est; non ergo multa sunt. Quod falsum est.

Solutio: dicendum quod prima est duplex ex eo quod iste terminus 'unum' significat idem quod: *aliquid sub unitate*, et ita includit in se accidens et subiectum. Et sic potest fieri ab ipso exclusio ratione forme substantialis; et sic est vera, ut probatur. Et est sensus: 'tantum unum est', idest: *tantum aliquid sub unitate est*. Et tunc non sequitur quod multa non sunt, quia quod est sub unitate per se cum alio sumptum simul potest esse sub multitudine. Vel potest fieri exclusio ratione forme accidentalis, que est unitas; et tunc excludit eius oppositum, quod est multitudo; et sic est falsa, ut improbat. Et est sensus: 'tantum unum est', idest: *tantum unitas habet esse in re et non multitudo*.<sup>25</sup>

In view of the continued use of the distinction between *one* as convertible with *being* and *one* as the principle of number, it may be useful to briefly consider the ontological discussion on the convertibility of being and one in order to provide some background to our author's views.<sup>26</sup> The consideration that follows below will be confined to the discussion by Albert the Great, because he explicitly enters into debate with the sophists.<sup>27</sup>

In his Commentary on Ps.-Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus*, Albert the Great discusses the relationship between being and one, true and good. In dealing with the question whether being is first with regard to the other qualifications,<sup>28</sup> he remarks that there are terms that are convertible with regard to the *suppositum*, the nature, and the mode, like synonyms. In addition, there are terms that are convertible with respect to the *suppositum*, but not with regard to the nature; these terms are *being* and *true* and *good*, because *true* and *good* add something to *being*, namely a mode that consists in an affirmation or, effectively, in a relation. Finally, there are terms that are convertible with regard to the *suppositum* and the nature, but not with regard to the mode, for example *be-*

<sup>25</sup> Ms Brugge Stadbibliotheek 510, f. 230vb. For Henry's *Synkategoremata*, probably dating from ca. 1260, see Braakhuis 1979, pt. I: 340-73.

<sup>26</sup> For the background to the sophistical discussion, see Ebbesen 1995.

<sup>27</sup> I thank mr. J. Remmé, who is preparing a thesis on the views of Albert on unity, for pointing me to the relevant texts.

<sup>28</sup> See *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 5, 20. The work dates from 1249-50.

*ing* and *one*. *One* must add a mode to *being*, because otherwise *one* would be synonymous with *being* and the combination of *one* and *being* would constitute a *nugatio*: a meaningless repetition. The mode added by *one* to *being* is a negative mode, namely indivision. Thus, although *one* does not add a nature to being, it differs from being nevertheless, because of the mode it adds:

Ad primum vero dicendum, quod quaedam convertuntur secundum suppositum et secundum naturam et secundum modum, ut quae sunt synonyma, ut *micro* et *ensis*, quaedam vero secundum suppositum, sed non secundum naturam, sicut *ens* cum *vero* et *bono*, quia de quibuscumque praedicatur *ens*, praedicatur *bonum* et *verum* et *e converso*. Sed tamen *bonum* et *verum* addunt modum quendam, qui consistit in affirmatione, supra *ens*, scilicet respectum quendam .... Quaedam vero convertuntur secundum suppositum et secundum naturam, sed non secundum modum, sicut *unum* et *ens*, quia de quibuscumque dicitur *unum* et *ens* et *e converso*, tamen *unum* addit modum quendam supra *ens*. Alioquin essent *ens* et *unum* synonyma et haberent eandem expositionem, et esset *nugatio*, quando *unum* determinatur per alterum, et hoc totum falsum est. Modus tamen, quem addit, non consistit in affirmatione, sed tantum in negatione; *unum* enim est, quod est indivisum in se et divisum ab aliis .... Et ideo nullam naturam addit supra *ens*, sed tamen ratione illius modi est posterius ente.<sup>29</sup>

In order to clarify this, Albert refers to the double activity of the (substantial) form: it gives being and limits (the potentiality of) matter. Because the activity of limiting comes after that of giving being, it tends towards the nature of an accident, thus resulting in *one* that is the principle of number. However, as far as the nature of being is retained in the nature of *one*, *one* is convertible with *being*.<sup>30</sup> We see, then, that Albert states explicitly that *being* and *one* are convertible with regard to the *supposita* and the nature and that these terms differ only in negative mode. Furthermore, he seems to make some sort of distinction between *one* taken as convertible with *being* and *one* taken as the principle of number referring to the double activity of the form.

<sup>29</sup> See *ibid.*: 314, 14-45.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: 314, 46-57: "Quod sic patet: forma enim et est forma et est terminus potentialitatis materiae, et in quantum quidem est forma, dat esse, in quantum vero est terminus, terminat distinguendo ab aliis. Horum autem actuum prior est dare esse, et ideo *ens* quod relinquitur ex tali actu, est prius uno, quod relinquitur ex secundo actu, et in quantum ille actus est consequens, vergit in naturam accidentis, quia omne quod consequitur esse rei, est accidens; et sic est 'unum', quod est 'principium numeri'. Ex parte vero altera, qua est in ipso natura entis, supra quam nihil addit positive, est unum, quod convertitur cum ente."

Albert returns to this last point later on in the same work, when he discusses the generality of *one*.<sup>31</sup> Here, although the gist of the argument is similar to that we have already seen, there are some differences. For one thing, it is stated that *being* and *one* are convertible with regard to the *supposita*, but it is not stated explicitly that they are also convertible with respect to the nature, although this seems to be understood. The mode that is added to being by *one* is said to be based on an aspect (*ratio*); interestingly enough, it is characterized as a *modus significandi* (in the earlier passage it could at least be understood as a type of mode of being). Next, after a discussion of the double activity of the form, which is similar to that found in the earlier passage, Albert states explicitly that the *one* that is convertible with *being* is the same as the *one* that is the principle of number:

Dicendum, quod ens et unum convertuntur secundum supposita; hoc est, quia quicquid est ens, est etiam unum. Sed unum addit supra ens secundum rationem, et ratio illa est secundum modum significandi, quia aliter ista non possunt habere rationes. Modus autem significandi, quem addit unum supra ens, fundatur in negatione; importat enim unum aliquid indivisum in se et divisum ab aliis, quod non importatur per ens. Sed huiusmodi negatio consequitur ex actu formae, in quantum est terminus. Habet enim forma duos actus; eadem enim est quae dat esse et terminat materiam, et secundum quod dat esse, facit ens, secundum autem quod terminat, facit indivisum in se et divisum ab aliis, et sic facit unum. Et quia terminare est posterior actus et dare esse principalior formae, ideo unum consequitur esse et sic accipit naturam accidentis, quia omne quod est post esse, est accidens, ut dicit Boethius. Et ex hac parte efficitur principium numeri, quia et idem est unum, quod convertitur cum ente et quod est principium numeri, et ideo numerus invenitur in omnibus entibus, ut dicit Avicenna.<sup>32</sup>

This remark could be taken as an indication that Albert's view on this matter changed: whereas in the earlier passage he somehow distinguishes between one as convertible with being and one as principle of number, he now declares them to be the same. In my opinion, however, it is better to take the later remark as a clue to the correct interpretation of the earlier one. *One*, since it is convertible with *being* with regard to the *supposita* and the nature, differs only from *being* in a negative mode, namely indivision. Because of this mode that *one* adds to *being*, it is posterior to *being*,

<sup>31</sup> See *ibid.*, XIII, 7.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*: 436, 8-29.



even though it still indicates the same things and the same nature as *being* does. An explanation for this lies in the double activity of the form, because form first gives being and in the second instance limits (the potentiality of) matter. Because the limitation of matter is subsequent to the giving of being, *one* tends towards or receives the nature of accident and thus becomes the principle of number. In this way it is the same *one* that is convertible with *being*, since it indicates the same *supposita* and the same nature as *being* does, and that forms the principle of number, because of its negative mode of signification which differentiates its signification from that of *being*. If this interpretation of Albert's view is correct, Albert holds in this work the convertibility of *being* and *one*, even when *one* is taken as the principle of number.

Not surprisingly, Albert also discusses the relationship between *being* and *one* in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*.<sup>33</sup> First he presents the general principles underlying his own view, which are in line with what we have seen so far, namely that *being* and *one* are the same or convertible both with regard to the *supposita* and with regard to the nature, and that they differ only in that *one* adds the negative mode of indivision. The explanation for this difference is said to lie in the double activity of the form:

Et similiter est de modis entis et unius. Ens enim est a forma; forma autem duo facit per suam essentiam et non per accidens: unum quidem, quia dat esse per hoc quod est actus, alterum autem est, quod terminat per hoc quod est terminus entis; terminat autem per hoc quod facit indivisum in se et ab aliis divisum. Indivisum autem in se est non-divisum et divisum ab aliis est per hoc quod est non-alia, et sic terminatio formae consistit in negatione, quae consequitur entitatem formae in eo quod est. Nomen ergo entis est naturae formae per hoc quod dat esse, et nomen unius est eiusdem naturae per hoc quod est terminus, nec addit super ens naturam, sed modum, qui consistit in negatione consequenti hanc affirmationem, qua dicitur hoc ens esse ens.<sup>34</sup>

The interesting thing about this commentary is that in it Albert devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of the opposing view, i.e. that *being* and *one* do *not* signify the same nature. Albert attributes this view to the sophists and puts it on a par with that of Avicenna. Arguments put forward by Albert in support of this

<sup>33</sup> See Albertus, *Super Metaphysicam*, lib. 4, tr. 1, cc. 4 and 5. This work dates from 1263-67.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*: 166, 2-15.

view include the *nugatio*-argument, and that *one* added to *being* is a denominative noun, and that *one* is the principle of number.<sup>35</sup> In his response, Albert repeats his own views, reemphasizing that *being* and *one* are the same with regard to the nature, that they differ only in mode, and that the negative mode suffices to bring about that they are not synonymous. He adds that *one* is, as a result, not a denominative noun, but only has the mode of a denominative, and that this is perhaps what Avicenna had meant.<sup>36</sup> In reply to the objection that *one* taken as the principle of number adds the accident of quantity to being, Albert states that, just as the term ‘principle’ is equivocal, so is the term ‘unity’: there is unity as the limitation of the substance or of being, and there is unity as an accident. He adds that *one* is convertible with *being* only when it indicates the former unity, and not when it indicates the latter unity:

Quod autem dicitur, quod unum est principium numeri, dupliciter accipi potest propter aequivocationem principii. Est enim principium connaturale ei cuius est principium, et reductum ad genus principii, et hoc est quasi principium intra, sicut punctus est principium continui et nunc temporis. Et est principium, quod est causa non intrans in genus causati, sicut substantia causa est accidentis et subiectum passionis. Et hoc modo duplex est unitas. Quarum una est terminus substantiae vel entis, et unum huiusmodi est entis terminativum, et hoc est causa unitatum, non de genere unitatum existens. Alia est unitas, quae est indivisibile sive indivisibilitas causata et abstracta ab hoc uno, et hoc est accidens, cuius collectio facit numerum, et hoc unum non est convertibile cum ente, sed primum.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*: 166, 67-167, 14: “Et est digressio declarans solutionem rationum sophistarum inductarum ad hoc quod ens et unum non sint natura una et eadem. Dubitabit autem aliquis de inductis, an unum et ens consequuntur se ad invicem sicut unam et eandem rem et naturam significantia. Obicit enim contra hoc Avicenna dicens, quod si unum et ens significant eandem naturam, tunc ista nomina, unum et ens, sunt synonyma, et est *nugatio*, quando unum alteri additur .... Videtur igitur, quod unum iungatur enti per denominationem et informationem .... Unum ergo dicit aliquam formam enti additam, cum dicitur ‘unum ens’ .... Amplius, unum principium est numeri .... Cum igitur dicitur ‘unum ens’, addit unum quoddam accidens super ens.”

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*: 167, 33-43: “Et licet unum ponat modum suum, quem importat circa ens sicut circa suppositum suum, tamen modus ille non est alicuius formae alterius ab ente, sed modus negationis, qui sufficit grammatico. Et ideo non est denominativum, sed modum habens denominativi. Et hoc forte attendit Avicenna, cum dixit esse denominativum.”

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 167, 44-59:

Here, thus, in contrast to his earlier work, Albert defends the distinction between the two senses of *one*.

It would appear, then, that the view that *being* and *one* are convertible with regard to the *supposita* but not with regard to the nature signified, and that what is properly signified by *one* is the accident of quantity as the principle of number, is considered by Albert as a typically sophist view that can ultimately be traced back to Avicenna. Furthermore, we see that by rejecting this view, insofar as it claims that *one* signifies the principle of number and thus always brings with it the accident of quantity, Albert supports the distinction between *one* as convertible with being and *one* as the principle of number, a distinction that he had not made at the earlier point in his career.

If we examine the discussion found in our sophism against the background of Albert's discussions, we find that, with its emphasis on the fact that *one* signifies the nature of discretion as the principle of number and thus the accident of quantity, and with its rejection of the distinction between *one* as convertible with being and *one* as the principle of number, our sophism is more in line with Albert's earlier views (1240-1250) than with his later views (from ca. 1265 onwards). With this in mind, we might claim that our sophism represents an older view, a view that was both thought to have been influenced by Avicenna's views and that was considered to be an older view in the 1260s.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand,

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38 For the point that this view was thought to stem from Avicenna, cf. the remarks by Albert referred to earlier; but cf. also the exposition by Thomas Aquinas of Avicenna's view, which looks remarkably similar to an exposition of our author's view, *In Metaph.* IV, 2, 556-57: "Sciendum est autem quod circa hoc Avicenna aliud sensit. Dixit enim quod unum et ens non significant substantiam rei, sed significant aliquid additum .... De uno autem hoc dicebat, quia aestimabat quod illud unum quod convertitur cum ente, sit idem quod illud unum quod est principium numeri. Unum autem quod est principium numeri necesse est significare quamdam naturam additam substantiae: alioquin cum numerus ex unitatibus constituatur, non esset numerus species quantitatis, quae est accidens substantiae superadditum. Dicebat autem quod hoc unum convertitur cum ente, non quia significat ipsam rei substantiam vel entis, sed quia significat accidens quod inhaeret omni enti, sicut risibile quod convertitur cum homine." One person in the 1260s who sees this view as an older view was Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, IX, 7: 285: "Et haec fuit positio Avicennae; quam quidem videntur secuti fuisse omnes antiqui doctores. Non enim intellexerunt per unum et multa nisi aliquod pertinens ad genus quantitatis discretiae."

the fact remains that our author presents the distinction between the two senses of *one* as the distinction on which the usual way of solving the sophism is based. This would mean that this distinction, which came to prominence under the influence of Averroes' views,<sup>39</sup> was already widely in use. Both these points seem to offer support for the date of composition that was suggested above for our work, ca. 1237-1245. The fact that our author rejects this distinction rather emphatically, gives us the impression that he is taking a stand against an increasingly popular view that he deems reprehensible on semantic and ontological grounds. A further point is that Albert regards the view that *being* and *one* are convertible only with regard to the *supposita* and that they are not the same with regard to the nature signified, as a typically sophist perspective. As such, with his emphasis on the distinction between *supposita* and *significata*, and his strong defense of the difference between the *significata* of *being* and *one*, our author appears to be a typical representative of the sophist view. However, in the sophistical discussions of the 13th century, (as far as they are known to us at least), the view in question seems less widespread than we would expect on the basis of Albert's testimony. Should we take this to mean that Albert, in voicing his opinion, had our particular sophisma(ta) in mind? We may never know, but what we do know is that our sophisma constitutes an interesting chapter in the history of the 13th-century discussions on the convertibility of being and one.

## Appendix

It should be noted that our author's views do not seem to agree with the views on the convertibility of *being* and *one* found in Robert Kilwardby's *Quaestiones in Librum primum Sententiarum*, which was written after 1256 (cf. Kilwardby *Sent.*: 56\*). In this work the distinction between essential and accidental unity is advanced in answer to the objection that *one*, as a member of the category of quantity, cannot be convertible with *being*. In addition, Kilwardby seems to defend the distinction between *one* in the sense of convertible with *being* and *one* in the sense of the princi-

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. e.g. Ebbesen 1995: 191 (cf. also the reference to Averroes found in the text quoted in our Appendix).

ple of quantity (see *ibid.*: 142, l. 35-143, l. 59: "Item unum est de genere quantitatis. Ergo non potest circuire omnia genera sicut ens. Ergo non convertitur enti .... Ad secundum quod tam unitas quam multitudo quaedam est essentialis, quaedam accidentalis. Unum quod convertitur enti, communiter se habet ad utramque unitatem. Sed oppositio processit de unitate accidentali. Haec est enim principium numeri qui est discreta quantitas. Unde Averroes super IV 1. et X *Metaph.*: 'Unum quod significat numerum et est principium quantitatis, est accidens. Unum autem quod significat genus et est synonymum enti, significat unumquodque decem praedicamentorum multipliciter.'").

On the other hand, it should be noted that Kilwardby also states that *one*, as far as it is convertible with *being*, includes both types of unity. Furthermore, he says elsewhere that *being* and *one* are convertible with regard to the *supposita*, yet differ with regard to their imposition (see *ibid.*: 145, ll. 47 - 49: "Dicendum ergo quod ens et unum, verum et bonum sunt idem in re et convertibilia in suppositis, sed sunt rationes et intentiones diversae, quibus haec nomina imposita sunt et penes illas differunt."; cf. also p. 148, ll. 21 - 26). Finally he also claims that unity belongs to the category of quantity or is similar to it (see *ibid.*: 146, ll. 69 - 72: "Et ex ista descriptionum differentia elucet quaedam alia, scilicet quod unitas vel est de praedicamento quantitatis vel assimilatur ei, veritas vel est de praedicamento qualitatis vel ei assimilatur, bonitas de praedicamento relationis vel ei assimilatur.").

Thus, although there may indeed seem to be a difference between the views of our author and those put forward by Robert Kilwardby in the *Quaestiones*, this difference, in my opinion, is not great enough to be considered as evidence that our *Sophismata* should not be attributed to Kilwardby.

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