

John Buridan and Beyond

Topics in the Language Sciences,
1300-1700

Edited by

RUSSELL L. FRIEDMAN
& STEN EBBESEN



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Abstract

Whereas the impressive contributions made by John Buridan (d. after 1358) to medieval logic and linguistics are widely recognized today, his influence in the later Middle Ages and Early Modern period remains largely uncharted, as indeed does the development of the language sciences more generally in that period. The eight articles and the introductory essay collected in this volume explore topics in logico-linguistic theory from Buridan in the fourteenth century through Hobbes and Vico in the seventeenth and eighteenth. The focus of the articles range from grammar and logic to epistemology and philosophical psychology, and in nearly every case they demonstrate the impact of Buridan's ideas in the centuries following his death. Moreover, by investigating early modern thought against the backdrop of medieval ideas, the articles address the issue of the continuity or discontinuity of thought in this period on the border between medieval and modern, and indicate possible avenues of future research.

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Introduction

STEN EBBESEN

In the second half of the 20th century scholarly research uncovered a wealth of interesting medieval discussions about issues relating to language in one way or another, be it in the context of grammar, logic, psychology, metaphysics, or even theology. At first, the twelfth and, especially, the thirteenth century received the lion's share of attention, but the appearance of a critical edition of Ockham's works helped turn the gaze of many scholars towards the early fourteenth century. Once Ockham had been resuscitated and the standard perception of him had changed from the neo-scholastic caricature of the corruptor of the salutary philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, the time was ripe for serious study of John Buridan, Ockham's younger contemporary, who taught philosophy in Paris from the 1320s till the late 1350s, and who was to wield immense influence in many universities until the late 15th century.

The first conference ever on Buridan was held in Copenhagen in 1975 at the initiative of the late Jan Pinborg, and it dealt with Buridan's work in the *scientiæ sermocinales* – logic in particular, but also rhetoric – on which there were very few earlier studies. During the conference the idea was born to produce an edition of his *Summulæ*, which had never appeared in print, not even in the early 16th century when some of his other works went to the press. The edition of the *Summulæ* is slowly but steadily advancing, and editions of other works of Buridan's have also appeared in the last decades, as have a significant number of studies of his thought, including an English translation of the *Summulæ* and a recent monograph, the first ever dedicated to the philosophy of John Buridan.¹

1. The acts of the 1975 symposium are available in J. Pinborg (ed.), *The Logic of John Buridan. Acts of the 3rd European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics*. (Opuscula graecolatina 9). Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1976. The edition of the *Summulæ* is appearing as: Johannes Buridanus, *Summulæ*. (Artistarium 10). Nijmegen/Groningen, 1994ff. Each *tractatus* is published separately and has its own editor (editor-in-chief: Sten Ebbesen). English translation: G. Klima (trl.), *John Buridan: 'Summulae de Dialectica'*, New Haven, Conn. – London: Yale University Press, 2001. Monograph: J. Zupko, *John Buridan. Portrait of a Fourteenth-Century Arts Master*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Given this background, around the turn of the millennium it seemed to make sense to gather a number of scholars together to talk once more about Buridan and the *scientiæ sermocinales*. But while there is still much work to be done on Buridan, we may say that by now scholarship has pushed the border between *terra cognita* and *terra incognita* forward to the mid-14th century. Some intrepid explorers have ventured into the unmapped lands of the period 1350-1500, but very few, and just as we know rather little about the last century and a half of the Middle Ages, so we know very little about the degree to which late medieval theories survived or influenced early modern thinkers. Many now think that there is much less of a divide between the 14th and the 17th centuries than used to be believed, but whether the traditional picture of the history of thought should merely be nuanced or totally discarded is a matter that only further research can decide.

So, in order not only to strengthen our grasp of Buridanian theory but also to help with charting the *terra incognita*, so that one day someone can tell a coherent and continuous story about Western theories having to do with language in the period 1300-1700, it was decided to dedicate a symposium to Buridan *and* what happened after him for the next three and a half centuries. The symposium, named *John Buridan and Beyond, The Language Sciences 1300-1700*, took place on the premises of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in Copenhagen in early September 2001. The articles in this volume were first written for that occasion.

Of course, eight articles cannot by any means cover the field suggested by the grandiloquent title of the symposium. But at least the present volume spans the time from Buridan to Hobbes and Vico.

With one exception, all the articles focus on logic and related matters of psychology and epistemology rather than on grammar. The sad reason for this is that very few people have the expertise to deal with late scholastic grammar, and the lack of scholars with the requisite skills is in turn partly the result of what looks like a deplorable development at the arts faculty of Paris in the early 14th century. Earlier, theoretical grammar had thrived thanks to a tradition for lecturing on Priscian at the Parisian arts faculty, but about 1320 Parisian masters of arts seem to have stopped teaching Priscian, leaving all occupation with grammar to more lowly institutions and thus in effect ensuring a drop in theoretical sophistication. We have no questions on Priscian by Buridan, Albert of Saxony, or Nicole Oresme to match those by Boethius of Dacia or other famous masters of the 13th century, and so there is not the same incen-

tive for the modern scholar to plunge into the grammatical literature of the 14th and 15th centuries. One of the few to have done so, C.H. Kneepkens, in this volume discusses two 15th-century texts, one of which manages to combine features of all the three major currents in late medieval grammar: modism, ultra-conceptualism, and humanism! Though intellectually less exciting than the study of 12th- and 13th-century commentaries and questions on Priscian, further investigation along Kneepkens' lines will indubitably help us better understand what sort of grammatical theory scholars had in their baggage towards the end of the Middle Ages, and this, of course, is what we need if we do not want our history of grammatical thought to jump from the great modists to the humanists or to the 17th century.

Though he seems never to have written about grammar, Buridan must carry a great part of the responsibility for the appearance of ultra-mentalistic grammarians, for they took their cue from the logicians' doctrine of a mental language, the terms of which are concepts. As the mental correlate of the sentence 'Socrates is a man', John Buridan had operated with a proposition consisting of a concept of Socrates, a concept of man, and a "complexive" concept uniting the two, thus introducing a three-part analysis of propositions instead of the two-part analysis that most people had adhered to before him. And then, of course, he was a nominalist, and also a great believer in the utility of the notion of supposition. His analysis raises a number of questions that were to be debated for centuries. How is it possible to acquire substance concepts, such as that of man, if concept formation starts from contact with the sensible accidents of objects? How is it possible to acquire singular concepts and to signify them by means of singular terms in the vocal medium? Does the proposition have an extramental *significatum*, and if so, how does it differ from the sum or product of what the subject and the predicate signify? How is it possible for a mental proposition to have parts, and ordered parts at that, which must somehow be assumed if a mental proposition is to have a syntax similar to a vocal sentence? These were issues that were to be discussed for centuries, and various members of this cluster of interrelated issues will be in focus in several of the contributions to this volume.

Sadly, though hardly surprisingly, it repeatedly turns out that valuable insights of Buridan's were lost or at least neglected by later authors, even by the likes of Jerónimo Pardo who thought he was basically following Buridan.

Excursus

One relevant theme, which is barely touched on in this volume, is the revival of certain parts of medieval logic in 17th-century Aristotelianism. This is a little-studied part of the history of logic, and in particular little has been done to investigate the neo-Aristotelian logic of the Lutheran lands in Germany and in Scandinavia. Admittedly, most of the products of Lutheran neo-Aristotelianism are rather elementary, and rather dull, compendia and dissertations. Yet, they have a claim on our attention, if for no other reason than because they ensured that people were at least superficially acquainted with some of the key ideas of scholastic logic.

I have recently had occasion to work my way through the logical texts produced in the united kingdom of Denmark and Norway in the 16th and 17th centuries, and shall briefly mention some of my findings.² In the main, the Nordic material is representative of what went on in all Lutheran kingdoms, principalities, and cities, though new developments usually became visible in Wittenberg several years before becoming noticeable in Copenhagen.

When Denmark-Norway went Lutheran in 1536 a major reform of the school curriculum followed, including a reform of the curriculum at the University of Copenhagen, the only such institution in the united kingdom. Just two philosophical disciplines were retained at the university: logic and natural philosophy (*physica*). Logic was now called *dialectica* following humanist fashion, and for the whole of the 16th century the logic book was Melanchthon's *Erotemata dialectices*. From about 1570 and for about 50 years afterwards there were a number of Ramists in Copenhagen, some of them really strong believers in the wonderful and easy message of Pierre de la Ramée, some just sympathetic. By 1605, however, a clear-sighted person might have known that their days were numbered. In that year a new official logic book for the schools of the realm was printed, the first, in fact, to be printed in Denmark and the first to be authored by a Dane (Hans Poulsøn Resen). The new school-book did not mark a shift from Melanchthon to Ramus, it was not Melanchthonian, but neither was it a Ramist book. It was not plainly neo-Aristotelian either, but it marked a move in the direction of

2. A fuller report of my results is available in S. Ebbesen & C.H. Koch, *Dansk filosofi i renessancen* (= Den danske filosofis historie 2). Copenhagen: Gyldendal 2003.

this new philosophical orientation.³ In 1619 a professorship of metaphysics was instituted – a sure sign that the neo-Aristotelian wave had hit Copenhagen. The same year it was decreed that an official logic book for the schools of Denmark and Norway was to be issued, and two years later the Ramist-leaning professor of dialectic was demoted to the chair of Greek and replaced with a neo-Aristotelian. The man charged with writing the new logic book was Caspar Bartholin, a Wittenberg-trained Dane, whose tiny and literally as well as metaphorically meagre surveys of logic, metaphysics and other disciplines were marvellously popular in the Lutheran lands.

Bartholin's logic for the Danish schools was an ever so slightly modified version of the thin pocket-book first published in Strassburg in 1608 under the title *Enchiridion Logicum*. It resembled the works produced by moderate 16th-century humanists in avoiding the specifically medieval branches of logic, the *parva logicalia*, that were still thought to have merited Melanchthon's contemptuous remarks:

People have added to Aristotle's dialectic a doctrine which actually belongs to grammar rather than to dialectic, and which they called *Parva logicalia*. While piling up an indecent amount of rules and to no avail at all constructing inextricable labyrinths, such as 'None and nobody are biting themselves in a bag', they even shrouded in darkness those pieces of advice that are of some use.⁴

But Bartholin gave back to the full Aristotelian *Organon* the importance it had had for the scholastics. He was heavily, though perhaps only indirectly, influenced by Zabarella, but more important in the present context: in his interpretation of the *Organon* he repeatedly shows the influence of 13th-century exegesis, whereas Ockham and Buridan have left very few traces indeed.⁵ Bartholin's logic was to dominate the schools of Denmark-Norway for generations, but in the disputations from the

3. Johannes Pauli Resenius, *Parva Logica Philippi et Aristotelis &c. Selecta et ordinata per Joh. Paul. Resenium. Pro Junioribus*. Copenhagen, 1605.

4. Philippus Melanthon, *Erotemata dialectices* (3rd ed., first printed in Wittenberg 1547), ed. K.G. Bretschneider in *Corpus Reformatorum* 13. Halle 1846, col. 750. "Addita est Aristotelis Dialecticae, doctrina verius Grammatica quam Dialectica, quam nominarunt Parvalogicalia, in qua dum praecepta immodice cumularunt, et labyrinthos inextricabiles, sine aliqua utilitate finxerunt, ut: Nullus et nemo mordent se in sacco, etiam illas admonitiones, quarum aliquis est usus tenebris involverunt."

5. Cf. S. Ebbesen, 'Caspar Bartholin', in: M. Pade, ed., *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001: 207-24.

University of Copenhagen one can observe a development in which the recovery of the full *Organon* was followed up by a gradual recovery of the *parva logicalia*. How far some people moved away from Melancthon's appraisal of the specifically medieval sections of logic appears from the following corollaries of a 1667 dissertation:⁶

1. Whoever does not know his logic knows nothing.
2. Whoever does not know the doctrine called the *Parva logicalia*, knows nothing of logic.

– and a decade earlier another writer of dissertations, Christian Schioldborg, while gently criticizing the scholastics for their long-winded and intricate treatment of *parva logicalia*, fully accepted the importance of knowing about the properties (*affectiones*) of terms and hence of propositions treated there, which he divided according as they affect the terms:⁷

1. absolutely: supposition.
 2. relatively to the verbal copula: state, ampliation, and distraction.
 3. relatively to some connected term: alienation, diminution, infinitation, restriction, appellation.
2. and 3. may, he tells us, also be spoken of together as relative suppo-

6. Erasmus Claudii Rosingius, *Thematum philosophicorum mixtura*. Copenhagen, 1667. Corollaria 1-2: "1. Qvi ignorat Logicam, omnia ignorat. 2. Qvi doctrinam, quæ parva logicalia, dicitur, ignorat, is totam ignorat Logicam."

7. Christianus Schioldborg, 'Εξάς *disputationum logicarum*. Copenhagen, 1658 (a collection of six dissertations originally published separately 1655-58), *Disp. 2 (Delineatio Enuntiationis in genere)*, sect. II, thesis 1: "Afficiuntur dictæ partes Enuntiationis variè, non secus ac ipsa Enuntiatio, ut integra considerata. Sed quæ inde nascuntur affectiones, dicuntur competere ipsi Enuntiationi, *mediantibus* dictis *partibus* vel *materialibus* vel *formalibus*, atque juxta Scholasticos *parva Logicalia* partem absolvunt. Quoniam autem prolixè satis ac intricatè doctrina hæc a dictis Auctoribus traditur, ea solùm, quorum potior videtur esse usus, quàm fieri poterit, maximè perspicuè trademus. Competunt itaque dictis partibus quædam *absolutè*, ut Suppositio; quædam *respectivè*, ratione sc. vel *copulæ verbalis*, ut Status, Ampliatio & Distractio; vel *termini alicuius connexi*, ut Alienatio, Diminutio, Infinitatio, Restrictio, Appellatio; quæ singulæ etiam aliis dicuntur Suppositiones *respectivæ* in oppositione ad *absolutam*, quam præsupponunt." Like several other Danes at the time, Schioldborg acknowledges a great debt to the German, Georg Gutke's, works from the 1620s. I have not investigated whether he owes his scholastic material to Gutke.

sitions. His division of supposition into types, while not beating the most elaborate ones from the scholastic period, has a decent degree of complexity:

1. materialis
2. formalis
- 2.1 simplex
- 2.2 personalis
- 2.2.1 discreta
- 2.2.2 communis
- 2.2.2.1 distributiva (= universalis = copulativa)
- 2.2.2.2 copulata (= collectiva)
- 2.2.2.3 determinata (= disiunctiva)
- 2.2.2.4 confusa (= disiuncta)

In connection with *suppositio distributiva* it is mentioned that distribution may be *pro singulis generum* or *pro generibus singulorum*, the distinction usually illustrated in the scholastic period by means of the example *Omne animal fuit in arca Noe*, which is false according to the former and true according to the latter type of distribution.

Schioldborg also has a treatment of explicable propositions, which comprise exclusive, exceptive, restrictive, and comparative propositions. Moreover, he distinguishes clearly between mental, vocal, and written propositions, and just like Buridan he assigns to the mental propositions the role of the primary signs of things, while vocal propositions are signs of mental ones, and only indirectly of things. Unlike Buridan, however, he operates with a sort of *propositio in re*.⁸

* * *

8. Schioldborg, *op. cit.*, *Disp.* 2, sect. I, theses 3-5: "Constat verò omnis Enunciatio partibus & formalibus & materialibus, quæ variant ad varietatem ipsius *objecti mediati* Logices, quod vel *Res*, vel *Signa rerum*. Res, in quantum, nobis non cogitantibus, actu conveniunt vel non conveniunt, postea tamen sub ea habitudine intellectûs denominationem substant, appellantur partes *signatæ*, ex quibus quæ constat Enunciatio, *dicitur signata sive objectiva*, éstque ipsa ante mentis operationem convenientia vel non convenientia rerum enunciandarum. Hujus partes *materiales* sunt duæ res qualescunque, *formalis* verò ipsa convenientia sive unio unius ad aliud, vel non convenientia. [4] Quia verò dictæ res *objectivæ* sive *πράγματα* extra mentem posita in actu cognitionis intellectui præsentia sisti nequeunt, in horum locum subrogantur *signa doctrinalia*, se invicem consequentia, súntque *νοήματα*, *ρήματα*, *γράμματα*, latinis *conceptus*, *vox* & *Scriptura*, quorum posteriora semper sunt priorum signa, quæ quia in docendo & discendo quasi sola vim aliquam habent significandi, dicuntur respectu *Objectorum*, quæ

In 1666 *professor theologiae* Christian Nold published a *Logica recognita* for use in *Collegium Regium* in Copenhagen.⁹ The division of supposition into types is less elaborate than in Schioldborg, but the subject is treated; *status*, *ampliatio*, and *distractio* are now gathered under the heading of *suppositio temporalis*. Distribution *pro singulis generum* and *pro generibus singulorum* is mentioned, and so is Noah's ark. Exponible propositions are likewise treated. Thirty-five years later an outline of Nold's version of the *parva logicalia* was included in a new logic for the schools of Denmark-Norway authored by Søren Glud.¹⁰ Since his book remained in use for decades, we can be sure that far into the 18th century virtually every educated man in the twin kingdoms of Denmark and Norway had been introduced to some of the elementary ideas of terminist logic, be it ever so superficially.

Conclusion

We are still far from being able to tell a continuous, coherent and reasonably detailed story about the development in fundamental logico-linguistic thought from Buridan to Hobbes and Vico. But at least the issues discussed in this volume will have to figure in that story.

signant, partes signantes, ex quibus formaliter Enunciatio constituitur, itidem ex parte suæ materiæ dicenda *signans* sive *formalis*, quæ *divisione analogâ* propter attributionem intrinsecam veram, & modum significandi inæqualem in *Mentalem*, *Vocalem* & *Scriptam* dividitur, de quibus in Specie. [5] Mentalis est propositio formalis, constans ex conceptibus subjecti et prædicati, res objectivas immediatè signantibus, & juxta judicium intellectus combinandis, unde prout conveniunt vel non conveniunt, alterum de altero affirmatur vel negatur. Dicitur hæc & propositio, & formalis, κατ' ἐξοχήν, tanquam cui *primò* insunt & *formaliter* competunt affirmatio & negatio complexæ & in judicando consistentes; reliquæ verò, vocalis & scripta, non nisi *instrumentaliter* rem; verè tamen, repræsentant.

9. The title was probably inspired by David Derodon's *Logica restituta* (Geneva 1659).

10. Severinus Gludius, *Logica erotematica*. Copenhagen, 1701. Several later reprints.

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Sten Ebbesen

John Buridan on the Acquisition of Simple Substantial Concepts

GYULA KLIMA

Summary: The main aim of this paper is to identify the philosophical principles that allow Buridan's Aristotelian empiricism to avoid the sort of "medieval Humeanism" from which he took great pains to distinguish his own nominalism. The paper argues that once two crucial principles endorsed by Buridan against contemporary skeptics are acknowledged (dubbed *the principle of the activity of the intellect* and *the principle of the substantial content of sensory information*, respectively), any empiricist should be able to provide a plausible account of our ability to acquire *genuine* substantial concepts from sensory information, which is all that is required for rebutting the relevant skeptical arguments concerning the scientific knowability of sensible substances.

1. The Problem for Empiricists

Scientific knowledge of physical reality, at least in the strict, traditional sense, has to be based on necessary, universal generalizations. Such generalizations, in turn, are impossible without universal, substantial concepts of extramental objects. For if none of our concepts represents substantial characteristics of extramental objects, then our concepts can only represent contingent features of their objects, and so they cannot provide us with universal, necessary knowledge of these objects. It is therefore crucial to any epistemology upholding the possibility of scientific knowledge in this sense to account for the human mind's ability to acquire substantial concepts of things in extramental reality.¹

Such an account, however, is particularly problematic for empiricists, who, for the purposes of this paper, will broadly be characterized as philosophers holding that the human mind begins its existence in this

1. To be sure, our ability to acquire such concepts will still not guarantee that we know *which* of our concepts are the essential ones. That is the task of empirical research to find out. But we can know *a priori* that if we *cannot* have such concepts, then we *cannot* have scientific knowledge in the specified sense. For more on this issue see Klima 2002.

life without any definite mental contents about extramental reality, in short, without any categorematic concepts,² but has to acquire its concepts in a natural process from experience.

To be sure, this is a somewhat broad characterization, which will turn out to comprise philosophers whom we usually would not subsume under the label 'empiricist' without reservation.³ Nevertheless, this characterization certainly distinguishes a number of medieval Aristotelians from Platonists, Augustinians, and Cartesians, who would hold that the human mind begins its existence in this life in possession of at least some categorematic concepts, which therefore it does not acquire in this life from experience. Consequently, for these philosophers the acquisition of these concepts in this life is not a problem at all. They rather have trouble with accounting for the apparent lack of these concepts in children and mentally impaired adults, as well as the apparently mysterious match between these prenatal or innate concepts and the objects of empirical reality, and, in general, the supernatural dependency of what appears to be a natural operation of the human mind, namely, understanding.⁴

By contrast, the acquisition of substantial concepts in this life is a problem for empiricists, for they have to be able to show that these concepts can somehow be derived from the natural input the mind receives in this life, namely, sensory experience. However, sensory experience apparently can only provide the mind with information about sensible qualities of objects of experience, which are all accidental, non-substantial features of these objects. To be sure, if substantial concepts can be derived as various sorts of combinations of the concepts of these

2. Obviously, syncategorematic concepts, such as the concepts of the Boolean operations of negation, conjunction, etc., may consistently be treated even by empiricists as innate operations of the mind, not carrying any information about extramental reality, but simply operating on categorematic concepts which do carry such information.

3. For a discussion of the issue of 'empiricism' in late medieval philosophy, see Zupko 1997.

4. As Matthew of Aquasparta (*Quaestiones Disputatae*, pp. 94-96) remarks in connection with the doctrine of divine illumination: "... if that light were the *entire* and *sole* reason for cognition, then the cognition of things in the Word would not differ from their cognition in their proper kind, neither would the cognition of reason differ from the cognition of revelation, nor philosophical cognition from prophetic cognition, nor cognition by nature from cognition by grace." - "... si lux illa esset ratio cognoscendi *tota* et *sola*, non differret cognitio rerum in Verbo a cognitione in proprio genere, nec cognitio rationis a cognitione revelationis, nec cognitio philosophica a cognitione prophetica, nec cognitio per naturam a cognitione per gratiam."

sensible qualities, then the problem may seem to be solved, in the way proposed by the British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. However, as John Buridan's argumentation in q. 4 of bk. 1 of his *Questions on Aristotle's Physics* had shown centuries before the British empiricist approach emerged, such a derivation is impossible.

In this paper, I will first argue, rather anachronistically, that Buridan's discussion in this question amounts to a principled refutation of the British empiricists' conception of our substantial concepts as "collections of simple ideas of sensible qualities".⁵

After identifying the principles that allow this refutation, I will show that on the basis of two further Aristotelian principles Buridan can successfully defend the possibility of scientific knowledge of physical reality, while staying within the bounds of the broadly interpreted empiricism characterized above.

In conclusion, I will argue that it was precisely Buridan's insistence on these Aristotelian principles that allowed him to be a thoroughgoing empiricist without slipping into the sort of "medieval Humeanism" from which he took great pains to distinguish his own nominalism, namely, the skepticism of Nicholas of Autrecourt and his ilk (i.e. whomever else Buridan is opposing in this question).⁶

5. John Locke: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (hereafter: *Essay*), bk. II, c. 23, §14, p. 305, ll. 2-13: "I say our *specifick* Ideas of *Substances* are nothing else but a *Collection of a certain number of simple Ideas, considered as united in one thing*. These *Ideas* of *Substances*, though they are commonly called simple *Apprehensions*, and the *Names* of them simple *Terms*; yet in effect, are complex and compounded. Thus the *Idea* which an *English*-man signifies by the Name *Swan* is white Colour, long Neck, red Beak, black Legs, and whole Feet, and all these of a certain size, with a power of swimming in the Water, and making a certain kind of Noise, and, perhaps, to a Man who has long observed those kind of Birds, some other Properties, which all terminate in sensible simple *Ideas*, all united in one common subject."

6. See Rashdall 1907, and Scott 1971. In Thijssen 1987, Hans Thijssen has plausibly argued that since some of the theses and arguments Buridan opposes here do not reflect Nicholas' doctrine as we know it, Buridan may well have had other opponents in mind. On the other hand, since the theses and arguments in question are at least not incompatible with Autrecourt's known doctrines, it is still possible that Buridan had in mind some further works or even just oral presentations of Autrecourt's that we simply do not know of from other sources. Indeed, this latter alternative has the advantage of explaining the phenomena *per pauciora*. In any case, my subsequent argument is not dependent on the identity of Buridan's actual target of criticism in this question.

2. Buridan's "Refutation of British Empiricism"

In his question-commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, Buridan raises the question "whether in every science the knowledge and understanding of things arises from the preexisting cognition of their causes, principles, and elements".⁷

After advancing a number of arguments supporting the negative reply, Buridan begins his discussion by expounding an opinion on the issue, which he will then go on to refute:

This question and the arguments brought up in connection with it raise several difficulties. One such difficulty is whether from the cognition (*notitia*) of one thing one can obtain the cognition of another; for there are two sorts of cognition, namely, complex and incomplex. About the incomplex sort some people say that no incomplex cognition can be obtained from another, since no cognition can be obtained from another except by means of a consequence; but a consequence can only lead from a complex [cognition] to a complex one; therefore, etc. In the second place, they infer as a corollary that we have no cognition of any substance in terms of incomplex cognition, for we can arrive at the cognition of substances only by means of the cognition of accidents; and so by means of some consequence, which can only obtain between complex [cognitions]. But I do not agree with this opinion, and I posit two conclusions against it.⁸

Buridan's first conclusion directly attacks the first claim of this opinion, namely that no simple cognition can be obtained from a simple cognition. He points out that the claim is self-defeating insofar as the simple intellectual cognitions it involves had to come from some simple sensory cognitions, in line with the common assumption of the broadly understood empiricism described above; and so, some *simple intellec-*

7. Buridan: *Quaestiones super Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis* (hereafter: QiP), lib. I, q. 4.

8. *Ibid.*, f. 5r: "Ista quaestio et rationes ad eam adductae implicant in se plures difficultates. Una difficultas est utrum ex notitia unius potest fieri notitia alterius, cum sit duplex notitia, scilicet complexa et incomplexa. Quidam de incomplexa dicunt quod nulla notitia incomplexa fit per aliam, quia non fit una notitia per alteram, nisi virtute consequentiae; sed consequentia non est nisi complexi ad complexum; igitur, etc. Secundo illi inferunt correlarie quod nullam substantiam cognoscimus notitia incomplexa quia non venimus in notitiam substantiarum nisi per notitiam accidentium, igitur in virtute alicuius consequentiae, quae non est, nisi complexorum. Sed huic opinioni non assentio; ideo pono contra eam duas conclusiones."

tual cognition had to come from some *simple sensory cognition*, whence some simple cognition had to be obtained from some simple cognition, contrary to the original claim. As he writes:

The first [conclusion] is that some incomplex cognition can be obtained by means of another. For there are incomplex intellectual cognitions, and all intellectual cognitions are obtained by means of another [act of cognition]; therefore, some incomplex cognition is obtained by means of another [act of cognition]. The major premise has to be accepted, for if a caviller were to deny it, then [by virtue of this denial] he would have to concede at least the existence of some complex intellectual cognition; but the complex [cognition] would have to be composed of simple ones, for it is not divided to infinity as the continuum would be, and an intellectual cognition is not composed of sensory cognitions; therefore, it is composed of simple intellectual ones. But the minor of the principal argument is also clear, for at least the first intellectual cognition has to be obtained from a sensory one, and, in general, every intellectual cognition must be obtained from sensory cognition either directly or indirectly, since one who understands has to attend to (*speculari*) the phantasms, as is stated in book 3 of *On the Soul*; and for this reason it is also claimed in book 1 of the *Posterior Analytics* that if we lose one of our senses, we also lose the knowledge of the proper object of that sense.⁹

So, simple intellectual cognition must somehow come from simple sensory cognition. But how is this possible? And even if we can provide an explanation of the derivation of simple intellectual cognition from simple sensory cognition in general, how do we know that we have such a simple cognition *of substance* obtainable from sense experience? Indeed, why would the intellectual cognition of substance have to be simple? After all, if the British empiricists are right, then the only way we can *make sense* of our substantial terms is to conceive of them as being associated with relatively stable collections of sensory ideas. The reason for this is that these terms certainly cannot be associated with

9. *Ibid.*, f. 5ra: "Prima est quod aliqua notitia incomplexa potest fieri per aliam. Quia aliqua est notitia intellectiva incomplexa, et omnis notitia intellectiva fit per aliam; igitur aliqua notitia incomplexa fit per aliam. Maior concedenda est, quia si cavillator vellet eam negare, saltem ipse concederet noticiam intellectivam complexam, et oportet complexam esse compositam ex simplicibus, non enim dividitur in infinitum, sicut divideretur continuum. Et notitia intellectiva non est composita ex sensitiva; igitur est composita ex intellectivis simplicibus. Sed etiam minor principalis rationis manifesta est, quia saltem prima notitia intellectualis oportet fieri ex sensitiva, et universaliter omnem notitiam intellectualem ex sensitiva oportet fieri vel mediate vel immediate, cum intelligentem quemcumque necesse sit phantasmata speculari, ut habetur tertio De Anima, propter quod etiam dictum est primo Posteriorum quod deficiente nobis aliquo sensu deficit nobis scientia de obiecto illius sensus."

anything over and above the sensory ideas we can gain from experience, whence they have to be associated with those relatively stable bundles of these ideas that the mind usually perceives together, and so associates them with substantive names, for practical reference.¹⁰ Buridan's second conclusion addresses this issue as follows:

The second conclusion is that we have simple concepts of substances, for the concept of man from which we take the substantial term 'man' is a concept of substance, if man is a substance. And that concept supposit only for a substance, for if it supposed for an accident or for something composed from substance and accident, then it would not be true that man is a substance, for neither an accident nor something composed from substance and accident is a substance; but precisely a substance is a substance, and that concept, while it supposit for a substance, does not even connote an accident other than that substance, for then it would not belong to the category of substance, but to that of an accident, as do the terms 'white' or 'big' or 'small', etc. For these terms supposit for substance and not for anything else, just as the term 'man' does, but they leave the category of substance because of their connotation; therefore, a concept from which a term in the category of substance is taken is not a concept of any accident or of something composed from substance and accident, but only of a substance or substances.

And if anyone were to say that they are complex, then the complex ones are combined from simple ones, for in the analysis of concepts one cannot go to infinity; and then those simple ones and the ones composed from them are only of substances; therefore, there are simple concepts of substances.¹¹

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10. See Locke, *Essay*, bk. II, cc. 22-23 and bk. III, cc. 5-6; George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (hereafter: *Principles*), nn. 1, 24, 54; David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (hereafter: *Treatise*), bk. I, sect. VI.
11. QIP, lib. I, q. 4, f. 5ra: "Secunda conclusio est ista quod de substantia habemus conceptum simplicem, quia conceptus hominis a quo sumitur iste terminus substantialis 'homo' est conceptus substantiae, si homo est substantia; et ille conceptus non supponit nisi pro substantia, quia si supponeret pro accidente vel pro composito ex substantia et accidente, tunc non esset verum quod homo est substantia, quia nec accidens est substantia, nec compositum ex substantia et accidens est substantia, sed praecise substantia est substantia. Et ille conceptus etiam supponendo pro substantia non connotat aliquod accidens aliud ab ipsa substantia, qui tunc non esset de praedicamento substantiae, sed accidentis, sicut ille terminus 'albus', vel 'magnus', vel 'parvus', etc. Illi enim termini ita supponunt pro substantia et non pro alio sicut iste terminus 'homo', sed exeunt a praedicamento substantiae propter connotationem: igitur talis conceptus substantialis a quibus sumitur terminus de praedicamento substantiae nec est conceptus aliquorum accidentium, nec compositorum ex substantiis et accidentibus, sed solum substantiae vel substantiarum. Et si quis dicat quod sint complexi, tunc complexi sunt compositi ex simplicibus, cum in resolutione conceptuum non sit processus in infinitum; et tunc illi simplices et compositi ex eis non erunt nisi substantiarum; igitur substantiarum sunt conceptus simplices."

The first important thing to note about Buridan's argumentation here is his insistence on the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accident, and his combination of this Aristotelian doctrine with his own semantic analysis of the terms and the corresponding concepts belonging to the Aristotelian categories. The point of the argument is that even if substances had complex concepts, those complex concepts would have to be made of simple concepts. But those simple concepts cannot be concepts of accidents, so those simple concepts would have to be simple substantial concepts, so we would still have to have some simple substantial concepts, which was the point to be proved. On the other hand, the claim that complex substantial concepts cannot be made up from accidental concepts (contrary to the British empiricists' conception of collections of sensory ideas) is proved here with reference to Buridan's doctrine of the semantics of substantial vs. accidental terms and concepts, as being absolute vs. connotative terms and concepts.

For Buridan, concrete substantial terms are distinguished from concrete accidental terms by their different modes of signification due to the different sorts of concepts to which they are subordinated, yielding their different modes of predication. Concrete substantial terms are subordinated to *absolute concepts*, whence they signify their *significata* absolutely, without relating them to anything else. Concrete accidental terms, on the other hand, are subordinated to *connotative concepts*,¹² whence they signify their *significata* in relation to their *connotata*, which are also called their *appellata* when they obliquely refer to these *connotata* in the context of a proposition. It is a consequence of this difference that substantial terms are predicated of their *significata* essentially or quidditatively, whereas the accidental terms are predicated of their *significata* non-essentially, or denominatively.¹³ Accordingly, absolute terms, in particular substantial terms, function in Buridan's semantics as what we nowadays would call "rigid designators". For these terms are true of their *significata* in a proposition as long as they supposit for them. But since the *supposita* of an absolute term are nothing but its *significata* that exist at the time connoted by the copula of the proposition in which the term is predicated, absolute terms always and necessarily supposit for their *significata* as long as these *significata*

12. John Buridan: *Summulae de Dialectica* (hereafter: *Summulae*), pp. 147, 173, 639, 642, 644-46, 729, 735.

13. *Summulae*, pp. 106, 123, 126-28, 131, 135, 138, 147-49, 147n9, 155, 155n20, 156-58, 163, 169, 169n38, 175, 183, 202, 629, 640, 653, 668, 732, 787, 885, 886.

exist at the time connoted by the copula of the proposition in which they are predicated of these *significata*. So, these terms may never become false of these *significata* as long as these *significata* exist. Therefore, absolute terms are always predicated of their *significata* essentially, or quidditatively, and thus designate them “rigidly”. On the other hand, concrete accidental terms supposit for their *significata* only when their *appellata* belong to their *significata* in the way they are signified to belong to their *significata*. So, if the *appellata* cease to exist or cease to belong to the *significata* in the way demanded by the signification of the term, then these terms cease to supposit for their *significata*, whence they become false of their *significata*, even though these *significata* continue to exist. Therefore, the essential vs. non-essential predication of concrete substantial vs. accidental terms is a direct consequence of their mode of signification, which in turn, is determined by the sorts of concepts to which they are subordinated.

What Buridan’s argument shows is that the assumption that substantial concepts are collections of connotative concepts, which is precisely the implication of the British empiricist conception, would lead to the absurd conclusion that a substantial term would not be a substantial term, for then it would be subordinated to a non-substantial concept. As he writes further on:

Again, if the substantial concept of man were complex, then let us posit that it consists of three simple ones, namely, *a*, *b*, and *c*. Then, if no concept of substance is simple, *a* can only be a concept of accident, and the same goes for *b* and *c*; therefore, the whole combined from them would also be only a concept of accidents, and not one of substance, for a whole is nothing over and above its parts. But this is absurd, namely, that the substantial concept of man should be nothing but a concept of accidents; therefore, etc.¹⁴

To be sure, the British empiricists, who provided precisely this sort of analysis for substantial terms, happily embraced this conclusion, and did not regard it as absurd at all. But Buridan’s previous argument, combined with his semantic considerations, also shows that this conclu-

14. QiP, lib. I, q. 4, f. 5rb: “Item si conceptus substantialis hominis sit complexus, ponamus quod hoc sit ex tribus conceptibus simplicibus, scilicet *a*, *b*, et *c*. Tunc si nullus conceptus substantiae est simplex, *a* non esset nisi conceptus accidentis, et similiter nec *b*, nec *c*. Igitur totum complexum ex eis non esset conceptus, nisi accidentium et non substantiae, cum totum nihil sit praeter partes. Sed hoc est absurdum, scilicet quod conceptus substantialis hominis non sit nisi conceptus accidentium; igitur, etc.”

sion directly entails the impossibility of the essential predication of these “phony” substantial terms. This, however, entails further that they cannot serve as the basis for valid scientific generalizations: an implication that was to be worked out in the fullest detail by David Hume. But then, unless Humean skepticism is the inevitable consequence of empiricism in general, an empiricist who wants to save the possibility of scientific knowledge in the traditional sense has to be able to find an alternative way to account for the derivation of our substantial concepts from experience, without turning the terms associated with these concepts into non-essential predicates of their *significata*.

This is precisely what Buridan offers in his subsequent considerations, moderating his “empiricist nominalism” with “Aristotelian naturalism”, abandoned by his contemporary opponents, especially Nicholas of Autrecourt.

3. Buridan’s Balancing Act: Empiricist Nominalism Combined with Aristotelian Naturalism

In response to the arguments supporting the opinion he rejects, Buridan offers four different ways in which one may account for obtaining some simple cognition from another without any inference. As he writes:

Then, [I respond] to the arguments supporting this opinion. To the first, we have to reply that some cognition is obtained from another without inferring one proposition from another or others in four ways. First, objectively. For if there is some cognition in an external sense, then it is related to the cognition of the common sense as its object, and also any sensory cognition is related to intellectual cognition as its object.¹⁵

In this way, the higher cognitive faculty forms some act of cognition distinct from the act of cognition of a lower cognitive faculty simply because it takes the act of the lower faculty as its object. To be sure, one

15. QiP, lib. I, q. 4, f. 5rb: “Tunc ad rationes illius opinionis. Ad primam dicendum est quod fit una notitia ex alia sine consequentia alicuius propositionis ad aliam propositionem vel alias propositiones quadrupliciter. Primo quidem obiective. Quia si sit aliqua notitia in sensu exteriori, se habet per modum obiecti respectu notitiae sensus communis et etiam notitia sensitiva se habet per modum obiecti ad notitiam intellectivam.”

has to make here the common distinction between an immediate and ultimate object: in the cognition of external objects (as opposed to the soul's reflecting on its own acts) the act of the lower faculty is only the immediate object of the act of the higher faculty, insofar as the higher faculty cognizes the object of the lower faculty *by means of* cognizing the act of the lower faculty, in the same way as when I see my face in the mirror *by means of* its reflection. In any case, this certainly is the most general way in which one simple act of cognition can give rise to another, or indeed, in general, one stage of information processing can give rise to another, as when a picture taken by a digital camera is electromagnetically stored on a computer's hard drive possibly for further processing. The important point here is that information received by one sort of encoder of that information can be actively used and further processed by another encoder, by reason of its own receptive and processing ability. In fact, in this way, the second encoder may even add information not contained in the first, as when a computer tags the picture files on its hard drive with time and date stamps. This is precisely the point Buridan makes concerning the second way in which a simple act of cognition may give rise to another:

Second, [a simple act of cognition may give rise to another] elicitive, as Avicenna says that the estimative power from a sensed intention, namely of color or shape or motion, elicits an intention not sensed, namely that of attraction or repulsion (*amicitiae vel inimicitiae*). This is why sheep fear and flee the wolf, and follow the shepherd. And this is not a miracle. Since the soul is much nobler than fire, yet fire in generating heat is able by that heat also to generate lightness and rarity, so it is reasonable that the soul, by means of one act of cognition is able to generate another one, naturally following upon the former.¹⁶

This is indeed plausible; however, when he specifically addresses the issue of how simple substantial concepts may be derived from sensory cognition, Buridan warns us that this way of accounting for this specific process of concept acquisition may contain a false assumption. In his

16. *Ibid.*, f. 5rb: "Secundo etiam elicitive, sicut dicit Avicenna quod virtus aestimativa ex intentione sensata, scilicet coloris, aut figurae, aut motus, elicit intentionem non sensatam, puta amicitiae vel inimicitiae. Ideo ovis timet et fugit a lupo, et sequitur pastorem. Et hoc non est mirum; cum enim anima sit multo nobilior virtus quam ignis, et tamen ignis generando calorem potest consequenter mediante illo calore generare levitatem et raritatem, rationabile est quod anima mediante una notitia potest consequenter generare aliam naturaliter consequentem ad priorem."

questions on Aristotle's *On the Soul*, he analyzes the issue in the following way:

... there is one way, in the first place, in which the cognition of accidents leads us to the cognition of substance. And this assumes *first* that the intellect is moved by phantasms, the imagination by the senses, and the senses by external objects. It assumes in the *second* place that the senses and the imagination are only of accidents. It assumes in the *third* place that the estimative power is superior to and more excellent than the external sensitive power; and so it is able to elicit from the sensed intentions some intentions not sensed. Thus also the intellect is superior to any sensitive power, whether external or internal; therefore, it is able from the intentions of accidents, which fell into (*cadebant*) the imagination, to elicit intentions of substances, which did not fall into (*cadebant*) the imagination. And so, by means of the cognition of accidents, we can arrive at the cognition of substances.

Briefly, this way [of addressing the issue] is defective in its second assumption, which was that the senses are only of accidents. For this goes against Aristotle, who in bk. 2 of this work [namely, *On the Soul*] asserts that the son of Diarus is sensed; although it is true that this is not *per se*, but *per accidens*. Indeed, we do not perceive substances by means of the senses under substantial concepts, but we do perceive them under accidental and connotative ones, and not under purely absolute ones.¹⁷

17. J. Buridan, *Quaestiones in De Anima* (prima lectura) (hereafter: QDA), lib. I, q. 5 (in idem, *Le traité de l'âme de Jean Buridan (De Prima Lectura)*, pp. 206-207): "Quantum ad tertium sciendum est quod est unus modus primo quo cognitio accidentis ducit nos in cognitionem substantiae. Et supponit primo quod intellectus movetur a phantasmate, phantasia vero a sensu, sensus vero ab objecto exteriori. Secundo supponit quod sensus et phantasia non sunt nisi accidentium. Tertio supponit quod virtus aestimativa est superior et excelsior quam sit virtus sensitiva exterior; et ergo ex intentionibus sensatis potest elicere intentiones non sensatas. Sic etiam intellectus est virtus superior quam quaecumque virtus sensitiva sive interior sive exterior; et ergo potest ex intentionibus accidentium quae cadebant in phantasia elicere intentiones substantiarum quae non cadebant in phantasia. Et sic mediante cognitione accidentium possumus devenire in cognitionem substantiarum. Breviter. Iste modus deficit in secunda suppositione quae erat quod sensus non est nisi accidentium. Hoc enim est contra Aristotelem in *IP huius*, ubi dicit quod Diari filius sentitur; verum est tamen quod hoc non est per se sed per accidens. Unde substantias non percipimus mediante sensu sub conceptibus substantialibus, sed bene sub conceptibus accidentalibus et connotativis, et non mere absolutis." (Emendation mine.) This passage is in perfect agreement with the doctrine found in the corresponding passage of the commentary on the *Physics* (and the other authentic passages referred to in it; see n. 19 below). Because of this doctrinal agreement, I take this passage to be a reliable report of Buridan's ideas (whether by himself or someone else), despite doubts concerning the text's authenticity. Cf. Berkeley, *Treatise*, Part I, n. 148, p. 88: "Hence it is plain we

So, even though the intellect may have the power to elicit intentions not contained in the senses, in the formation of substantial concepts it is simply not true that these would have to be “cooked up” by the intellect alone, for the sensory data provided by the senses about accidents does carry information about the substances to which these accidents belong. This is the idea that Buridan elaborates in the continuation of this passage, listing three further ways in which one can account for the intellect’s ability to form substantial concepts from sensory data, by extracting the information this sensory data carries about substances:

The second way is that the senses first perceive both substance and accident in a confused manner, and afterwards the intellect, which is a superior power, differentiates between substance and accident. Therefore, if I see someone now to be white and later I see him to be black, and at the same time I perceive that he remains the same, I arrive at the cognition by which I notice that he is other than whiteness and likewise other than blackness. And thus, although substance and accident at first are apprehended by means of the senses in a confused manner, nevertheless given such sensitive cognition the intellect, which is a superior power, can arrive at the cognition of substance itself.

The third way is possible because things are cognized by means of their similitudes. For it is stated in bk. 3 of this work that “a stone is not in the soul, but the species of the stone is”. Since, therefore, it is the case that any effect bears the similitude of its cause, and an accident is an effect of a substance, it follows that an accident also bears a similitude of a substance, and consequently the intellect is able to arrive at the cognition of substance by means of the accident.

The fourth way can be this: prime matter, before a substantial form is educed from its potentiality, needs accidental dispositions preparing it for receiving such a form; the same can be imagined of the potential intellect, namely that before there would be the similitude of substance in it, there have to be in it the species and similitudes of accidents. Once these are in the potential intellect, the agent intellect is able to extract from them the natural similitude of that substance to which those accidents belonged whose similitudes and intentions were in the potential intellect.¹⁸

do not see a man – if by man is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do – but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it.”

18. QDA (prima lectura), lib. I, q. 5, pp. 207-208: “Secundus modus est quod sensus primo percipit simul confuse substantiam et accidens, sed postea intellectus, qui est virtus superior, ponit differentiam inter substantiam et accidens. Unde, si video aliquem nunc esse album et postea eundem video esse nigrum, et cum hoc percipio quod ipse

Basically the same point is made in the continuation of the previously discussed passage from the *Physics*-commentary.¹⁹

manet idem, ego venio in cognitionem qua cognosco hoc esse aliud ab albedine et similiter aliud a nigredine. Et sic, quamvis primo apprehendantur mediante sensu substantia et accidens confuse, tamen tali cognitione sensitiva praecedente, intellectus, qui est virtus superior, potest venire in cognitionem determinatam ipsius substantiae. Tertius modus potest esse, nam res aliquae cognoscuntur per suas similitudines. Dicitur enim in *III^o huius*: ‘lapis non est in anima, sed species lapidis’; cum ergo ita sit quod quilibet effectus gerit in se similitudinem suae causae, et cum accidens sit effectus substantiae, sequitur etiam ipsum accidens gerere in se similitudinem substantiae, et per consequens <per> ipsum accidens intellectus potest devenire in cognitionem substantiae. Quartus modus potest esse iste: nam sicut materia prima, antequam de eius potentia educatur forma substantialis, indiget dispositionibus accidentalibus disponentibus materiam ad recipiendum talem formam, sic etiam potest imaginari de intellectu possibili: antequam in eo sit similitudo substantiae, oportet quod primo in eo <sint> species et similitudines accidentium. Quibus existentibus in intellectu possibili, intellectus agens potest extrahere ex illis similitudinem illius substantiae naturalem, cuius substantiae sunt illa accidentia quorum similitudines et intentiones erant in intellectu possibili.” (Emendations mine.)

19. QiP, lib. I, q. 4, f. 5rb-va: “Tertio modo, abstractively; ut quia habeo primo conceptum confuse et simul repraesentantem et substantiam et accidens, ut cum percipio album – non enim solam albedinem video, sed album. Et si postea percipio idem moveri et mutari de albo in nigrum, iudico hoc esse aliud ab albedine, et tunc intellectus naturaliter habet virtutem dividendi illam confusionem, et intelligendi substantiam abstractively ab accidente, et accidens abstractively a substantia, et potest utriusque formare simplicem conceptum, et sic etiam abstrahendo fit conceptus universalis ex conceptu singulari, sicut debet videri in tertio De Anima, et septimo Metaphysicae.” – “In the third way, abstractively; as when I first have a concept that represents substance and accident together in a confused manner, for example, when I perceive something white, for I see not only whiteness, but something that is white, and then if I perceive the same thing to move and change from white to black, then I judge that this is something distinct from whiteness, and then the intellect naturally has the power to analyze that confusion, and to understand substance abstractively from accident, and accident abstractively from substance, and it can form a simple concept of each, and it is in the same way, by abstraction, that a universal concept is formed from a singular one, as one should see in bk. 3 of *On the Soul*, and bk. 7 of the *Metaphysics*.” Cf. QiP, lib. I, q. 7, ff. 7vb-10ra; Buridan, *Questiones in De Anima* (tertia lectura), lib. III, q. 8, pp. 64-89, esp. pp. 74-75, pp. 79-80; idem, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis Metaphysicam*, lib. VII, qq. 15-20, ff. 50rb-54va; idem, *Quaestiones in Porphyrii Isagogen*, esp. pp. 172-73.

Conclusion

In view of these passages, we can summarize the Aristotelian principles allowing Buridan to maintain his empiricist nominalism without slipping into skepticism in the following way.

1. The intellect is not just a passive receiver of sensory information, but a cognitive faculty actively processing this information, extracting from it content that is not so extractible from it by the senses.
2. The sensory information received by the senses, besides its primary, *per se* content concerning the sensible qualities of sensory objects, also carries some further content about the substances bearing these sensible qualities.

Once these two principles, which may be dubbed *the principle of the activity of the intellect*, and *the principle of the substantial content of sensory information*, respectively, are acknowledged, any empiricist should be able to provide a plausible account of our ability to acquire *genuine* substantial concepts from sensory information.²⁰ For in view of the first principle, the intellect is obviously able to extract content from sensory information which the senses could not so extract even though they may carry it, in the way, for instance, light received by a telescope carries not only visible information about the stars, but also information about their material constitution, which, however, is extractible only by means of spectral analysis. But in view of the second principle, the information about sensible accidents also carries such extractible information about the substances to which these accidents belong. Therefore, the intellect should be able to form genuine substantial concepts from this sensory information. But then, these genuine substantial concepts will be denoted by essential predicates of the things conceived by means of these concepts, which will always necessarily apply to these things as long as these things exist. And so, these predicates will be scientifically knowable characteristics of these things.

20. To be sure, one might still raise the question whether Buridan is "entitled" to these Aristotelian principles in his solution, given his *semantic* ideas concerning the natural signification of absolute concepts. But this question is beyond the scope of the present paper. Cf. King 2001.

All in all, even if, perhaps, Nicholas of Autrecourt was “the medieval Hume”, it did not take a “medieval Kant”²¹ to refute his skepticism. For Buridan’s version of an essentialist nominalism was sufficient to show that one can be a nominalist and a thoroughgoing empiricist without having to fall prey to any serious form of skepticism. In this way, Buridan’s essentialist nominalism could, in principle, have shown a way out of the dilemma of empiricism vs. rationalism of early modern philosophy. Indeed, the dilemma might not even have emerged in its original form, if the Aristotelian empiricism of the scholastics, including Buridan’s, had not been abandoned earlier, partly for extrinsic reasons, by the new intelligentsia of a new era.

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21. It may be interesting to note here that from a medieval perspective Kant’s solution to “Hume’s problem” may be characterized as simply shifting the categorical status of some fundamental metaphysical concepts, such as ‘substance’, ‘accident’, ‘cause’, ‘effect’, ‘existence’, etc. Instead of treating them as (whether innate, infused, or empirically acquired) categorematic concepts, he treats them as “logical functions”, i.e., syncategorematic concepts. But then it is no wonder that in the conceptual framework of post-Kantian positivist philosophy a number of traditional metaphysical problems will turn out to be not only radically undecidable, but even meaningless, containing “category mistakes”. At the Copenhagen meeting, Stephen Read also called my attention to Thomas Reid’s very different, “common sense” criticism of Hume’s philosophy, as bearing some remarkable resemblances to Buridan’s approach to the issue. In fact, there may even be some actual historical connection between their ideas, given the lasting influence of Buridan’s thought in Scotland through the circle of John Mair. Cf. Haldane 1989.

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Mental Language and Italian Scholasticism in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

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Summary: Italian universities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries took part in the scholastic debate concerning mental language, which first arose at the universities in Oxford and Paris in the early fourteenth century. Peter of Mantua (d. 1400) and Paul of Venice (d. 1429) were the prominent Italian masters in this respect; their opinions continued to be cited at the European universities of the early modern period. Two main conclusions are reached here: that there is an obvious continuity between medieval and modern ideas concerning mental language; and that further research is needed in order to establish the respective roles of Paris and Oxford in the development of the debate at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

In a recent book on the genesis and development of Benedetto Croce's linguistic theory, Luciano Dondoli¹ has drawn attention to a passage from the *Principi di scienza nuova* (1744 edition) by Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), in which the Neapolitan philosopher affirmed that "[t]here must in the nature of human institutions be a mental language common to all nations, which uniformly grasps the substance of things feasible in human social life." In Vico's opinion, this common mental language was the language of his new science itself, "by whose light linguistic scholars will be enabled to construct a mental vocabulary common to all various articulate languages living and dead."² It is not necessary here to focus on the project for which Vico used the notion of mental language,³ but I wanted to mention his views in order to underline the continuity of an idea that he had taken from a late medieval author, as can be proved by a remark made by Vico himself. In his autobiography, Vico described in detail the studies he had been engaged in during his youth. After reading *De institutione grammatica* by Manuel

* Thanks to Laurent Cesalli and Gino Roncaglia, who read and discussed this paper with me.

1. Cf. Dondoli 2000: 249-50.

2. Giambattista Vico, *Principi di scienza nuova*, I, sez. II, XXII (ed. Nicolini: 80, English transl.: 25).

3. Cf. Apel 1963: 374-80 (Italian transl.: 472-78), and Dondoli 2000: 249-51 and 266-70.

Alvares (the first edition of which is dated Lisbon 1572), Vico went on to the study of logic and committed himself to reading the *Summulae* of Peter of Spain. When his master, the Jesuit Antonio del Balzo, told him that “Paul of Venice was the most subtle of all writers of summas”, Vico began to study Paul’s *Summulae* (the *Logica parva*), but soon had to give it up because his skill was still too weak and he became confused (the result was that he abandoned his studies for a year and a half).⁴ Now, at the beginning of the *Logica parva* by Paul of Venice, several distinctions between types of terms are presented; the second of these distinctions is between terms that signify naturally and terms that signify by convention. The first type, Paul tells us, is the mental term, “which is representative of the same for everyone”; a term of the second type, on the other hand, “is not representative of the same for everyone, e.g. the term ‘man’ in speech or in script which among us signifies men and among certain other nations signifies nothing, for example among those who are Greeks or Hebrews.”⁵

Again, I intend neither to reconstruct Vico’s views on logic, nor to speak about the logical texts circulating in Italy in his day. I wish, rather, to focus on the debates about mental language that took place in Italian universities during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. I have examined the works of two authors above all others, Peter of Mantua (d. 1400)⁶ and Paul of Venice (d. 1429)⁷, as well as some commentaries on some works of the latter by Mengo (Domenico) Bianchelli from Faenza (d. after 1520),⁸ Giacomo Ricci from Arezzo (*fl.* in the second half of the fifteenth century),⁹ and Manfredo Medici, professor at Pavia University (d. ca. 1493).¹⁰ Views of Peter of Mantua and Paul of Venice were quoted and discussed by sixteenth-century authors, as E.J. Ashworth has shown in her studies on mental language in the works of

4. Giambattista Vico, *Autobiografia* (ed. Nicolini: 5).

5. Paulus Venetus, *Logica parva*, I, cap. 1 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 4ra): “Secunda diuisio est ista. Terminorum quidam significant naturaliter et quidam ad placitum. Terminus naturaliter significans est ille qui apud omnes eiusdem est representatiuus, sicut ly ‘homo’, ly ‘animal’ in mente. Terminus vero ad placitum significans est ille qui non apud omnes eiusdem est representatiuus, sicut ille terminus ‘homo’ in voce vel in scripto, qui apud nos significat hominem, sed apud aliquas certas nationes nihil significat, vt sunt Greci et Hebrei” (English transl.: 121-22).

6. Cf. Maierù 1974: 136.

7. Cf. Conti 1996: 9-20.

8. Cf. Vasoli 1968.

9. Cf. Chevalier 1905-1907, II: col. 3945; Cosenza 1962, IV: 3044.

10. Cf. Chevalier 1905-1907, II: col. 3178; Cosenza 1962, III: 2280.

logicians from the beginning of that century.¹¹ In turn, the texts by Peter of Mantua and Paul of Venice clearly have a frame of reference in common with the ideas of William Heytesbury, who in his first sophism put forward a precise conception of the structure of mental propositions. It will be seen that many of the arguments developed by later authors had already been used by these writers.

1. William Heytesbury (Gregory of Rimini and John Buridan)

At Oxford in the 1330s, Heytesbury took up the discussion of the structure of the proposition by comparing the two propositions ‘*homo est omnis homo*’ and ‘*omnis homo est homo*’. It seems likely that the maxim affirming the equivalence between the indefinite and the universal propositions (“*indefinita aequipollet universalis*”) provided the occasion for the development of the third part of his first sophism.¹² Heytesbury’s argument is this: both propositions are made up of the same four terms and all that is in the one is also in the other; nevertheless, the first is particular and the second is universal, and the particular proposition is not identical to the universal one.¹³

What distinguishes the two propositions is the order of the words that

11. Cf. Ashworth 1978, 1981, 1982.

12. Cf. Colli 1990: 242, where the canonist Richardus Anglicus is quoted claiming that this *brocardum* “*regulare est in iure, quamvis distinguatur in artibus*”; warm thanks to Vincenzo Colli for advising me of the origin and the use of that *brocardum* for explaining some passages of the *Digestum*; the *brocardum* was included in the Accursian *Glossa ordinaria*. Cf. also John Gerson: “*ponetur una indefinita quae apud morales aequivalet universalis*”, and Pierre d’Ailly: “*secundum philosophos morales et iuristas, in materia morali indefinita aequipollet universalis*”, both quoted in Kaluza 1994: 231 and note.

13. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I (‘*Omnis homo est omnis homo*’), third part (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78rb): “*Preterea homo est omnis homo, ergo etc. Assumptum arguitur, quia hec est necessaria sic significando ‘omnis homo est homo’; sed eadem est ista ‘homo est omnis homo’; igitur hec est necessaria ‘homo est omnis homo’*. Antecedens arguitur pro secunda parte, quia illa propositio ‘*omnis homo est homo*’ est isti quatuor termini ‘*omnis*’ ‘*homo*’ ‘*est*’ ‘*homo*’; sed isti quatuor termini sunt illa propositio ‘*homo est omnis homo*’; igitur etc. Si negatur ista consequentia sicut communiter negatur a minus bene intelligentibus, contra tunc arguitur: isti termini sunt illa vniuersalis propositio ‘*omnis homo est homo*’, et etiam isti termini sunt hec particularis propositio ‘*homo est omnis homo*’; et tamen hec particularis non est ista vniuersalis.”

constitute them; to obtain two different propositions using the same words, they must have different word orders. Propositions can be differentiated according to word order whether they are spoken (in which case the order is determined by succession in time) or written (so that the various parts are arranged on the page or on the wall according to the place or relation between the parts).¹⁴ This, however, does not apply to mental propositions (*in conceptu*), whose parts have order neither with respect to each other nor with respect to place. To overcome this difficulty, Heytesbury suggests that we think of a categorical mental proposition as the result of at least two intentions or concepts of things in addition to an act by which the thinker composes (for instance, ‘homo est animal’) or divides these concepts (for instance, ‘homo non est asinus’).¹⁵ According to the author, copula plus negation in spoken

14. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78va): “Ideo ad hoc sic respondetur, quando arguitur primo quod hec sit necessaria ‘homo est omnis homo’ sic significando, dicitur negando consequentiam. Et ad argumentum quando arguitur quod hec propositio particularis ‘homo est omnis homo’ est illa vniuersalis ‘omnis homo est homo’, negatur antecedens, quia dico quod quodcumque isti termini ‘omnis’ ‘homo’ ‘est’ ‘homo’ sunt ista propositio vniuersalis ‘omnis homo est homo’, tunc non sunt hec particularis ‘homo est omnis homo’. Et vniuersaliter hoc est verum tam in voce quam in scripto, quia nunquam sunt idem termini simul due tales propositiones, et causa est ista, quia ad hoc quod isti termini ‘omnis’ ‘homo’ ‘est’ ‘homo’ sint hec vniuersalis ‘omnis homo est homo’ requiritur quod habeant ordinem talem ad inuicem iuxta communem modum proferendi vel scribendi talem propositionem; et ad hoc quod ipsi sint hec propositio ‘homo est omnis homo’ requiritur quod habeant ordinem retrogradum. Unde qualitercumque concipiuntur diuersimode simul illi termini, adhuc non habent nisi vnum ordinem; ideo qualitercumque legantur vel concipiuntur, semper simpliciter sunt vna propositio et non simul due tales. Conceditur tamen quod hec vniuersalis in scripto poterit esse illa particularis, et e contra, sed semper negatur quod illa particularis est illa vniuersalis. Conceditur etiam quod in casu est possibile quod illa particularis fuit vel erit illa vniuersalis, et e contra, nunquam tamen est concedendum quod illa est ipsa vniuersalis” (can the two *Conceditur* have to do with juridical discussions?).

15. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78va): “De propositionibus tamen in conceptu aliud apparet dicendum, quod iste nec habent ordinem ad inuicem nec situm sicut propositiones in scripto. Ideo ibi videtur argumentum difficilium. Consimiliter tamen respondetur ibi sicut hic, dicendo quod propositiones in conceptu sunt intentiones rerum extra conceptum vna cum actu concipientis, quo actu concipiens componit vel diuidit ad inuicem vnam intentionem ab alia. Vnde illa propositio ‘homo est animal’ est iste due intentiones ‘homo’ ‘animal’ et ille actus quo concipiens hanc propositionem componit hanc intentionem ‘animal’ cum hac intentione ‘homo’. Et hec propositio ‘homo non est asinus’ est iste due intentiones ‘homo’ ‘asinus’ et actus ille quo diuidens negat[ur] vel remouet hanc intentionem ‘asinus’ ab hac intentione ‘homo’.”

or written language correspond to a single negative or dividing act.¹⁶ Still speaking of categorical propositions – the only type he examines – Heytesbury shows that more complex propositions require several acts: one act that composes or divides, one or more others by which, e.g., the meaning of the privative terms are conceived, the marks of distribution are conceived, and so on.¹⁷ Gaetano of Thiene (professor in Padua between 1422 and 1465) and Paul of Pergula (teacher at the School of Rialto in Venice, 1421-54, d. 1455),¹⁸ commenting on this sophism, both say that Heytesbury

calls verbs, quantifiers, and other syncategoremata, acts, although they have different functions (*diuersa officia*). The copula, in fact, is an act that links intentions to one another; adverbs determine the copula; universal and particular quantifiers determine the intentions, inasmuch as they are conceived in a universal or particular way; conjunctions connect; and so on.¹⁹

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16. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78va): “Unde sicut est vnus actus quo componit componens, ita est vnus actus quo diuidit diuidens. Et non est ponendum quod hec propositio ‘homo non est asinus’ sit quatuor intentiones rerum, quarum due sunt illa copula ‘est’ et illa nota negans, scilicet ‘non’, sed pro istis duabus est ponendus vnus actus istius diuidentis quo remouet predicatum a subiecto.”
17. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78va-b): “Verumtamen aliquando ad vnam propositionem habendam requiruntur plures actus, quando scilicet propositio illa componitur ex pluribus intentionibus priuatiuis vel distributiuis, vt ‘primus motor est prima substantia abstracta ab omni materia, indiuisibilis, impartibilis, nullam habens magnitudinem’, ‘punctus est indiuisibilis situ-/78vb/-atus’; similiter ‘omnis homo est omnis homo’, et sic de talibus propositionibus vniuersaliter. Et in omni tali propositione sunt plures actus: vnde vnus est actus quo componit vel diuidit intus intentiones, et aliquis est alius quo concipit significatum termini priuatiui vel signi distributiui et sic de aliis.”
18. Cf. Silvestro da Valsanzibio 1949 for Gaetano, and Nardi 1957 for Paul of Pergula.
19. Gaetani de Thienis *Super primum sophisma* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 81vb): “Aduertendum quod Hentisber ponit propositionem mentalem componi ex intentionibus et ex actu vel actibus, vnde conceptus representatiuos rerum vocat intentiones, sed verba ac signa et cetera sincategoremata vocat actus. Habent tamen diuersa officia. Nam actus qui est copula intentiones (intentionis *ed.*) inuicem copulat, aduerbia determinant copulam, et signa vniuersalia vel particularia determinant intentiones prout vniuersaliter vel particulariter concipiuntur, et coniunctiones habent coniungere, et sic de ceteris. Dicit tamen quod aggregatum ex aduverbio et verbo in voce vt ly ‘non est’ subordinatur vni simplici actui diuisiuo existenti in mentali propositione correspondenti huic vocali in qua ponitur ly ‘non est’, vt esset illa ‘homo non est asinus’”; Paulus Pergulensis, *Super sophismata*, I, iii, Venice, B.N. Marciana, ms. lat.

Heytesbury refers to the authority of Aristotle in *De interpretatione* 3, 16b24: the propositional copula, e.g. the verb 'est', "signifies some combination, which cannot be thought of without the components."²⁰ Heytesbury adds that every different composition requires a different act of the intellect. Finally, the element that distinguishes spoken or written propositions is the order or the place (i.e. the position) of the terms that compose them, while to distinguish mental propositions from one another it is necessary to consider the act of the thinker's intellect, in addition to the mental terms or concepts.²¹ This is the fundamental position of the English author. Heytesbury then discusses an objection to the effect that it is impossible for someone to conceive two propositions at the same time (*simul*) or to conceive a single proposition for a certain amount of time (*per tempus*); given that the mental act of composing or dividing is instantaneous, it is possible only to conceive a single proposition for an instant (*per instans*). For the same reason, nobody can have two acts of composing or dividing nor know two propositions at the same time. Heytesbury rejects this view, insisting that someone can have different compositions at the same instant and can also produce different compositions simultaneously for a certain

Cl. VI, 160 (2816), f. 182rb: "Aduertendum quod ponit Hentisber propositionem mentalem componi ex intentionibus et ex actu vel actibus, vnde tam aduerbia quam verba ac signa et omnia sincategoremata vocat actus, sed diuersa habent officia. Actus enim qui est copula copulat intentiones vnam cum alia (vnde tam aduerbia quam verba *add. et exp. ms.*), sed aduerbia habent determinare copulam; signa, intentiones prout vniuersaliter vel particulariter. Debent enim omnia sincategoremata preter copulam subordinari <***> ita omnis concipitur." For Heytesbury's *Sophismata* and commentaries upon them cf. Wilson 1960: 153-63, and see Braakhuis 1982: 345 and 355.

20. Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, 3, 16b24 (English transl.: 45).

21. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78vb): "Vnde non est possibile quod alique intentiones sint vna propositio in conceptu. Semper enim requiritur actus aliquis componendi vel diuidendi qui non est intentio alicuius, et illud satis apparet per Philosophum primo Perhiermenias, vbi dicit quod copula propositionis, puta hoc verbum 'est', significat quandam compositionem quam sine extremis non est intelligere. Et semper ad diuersam compositionem intellectus requiritur diuersus actus. Ideo non conceditur quod propositio necessaria in conceptu erit propositio impossibilis, nec e contra, sicut conceditur de propositione necessaria in voce vel in scripto quod erit impossibilis, quia illi termini possunt habere alium ordinem, et nihil aliud requiritur ad hoc quod illi termini sint alia propositio nisi quod ipsi habeant alium ordinem iuxta quem aliter significant quam prius. Sed sic de propositionibus in conceptu non est, quoniam preter illas intentiones requiritur aliquid aliud."

amount of time.²² As a corollary of his position, it follows that for Heytesbury every spoken or written proposition *de secundo adiacente* ('homo est') corresponds to a mental proposition *de tertio adiacente* ('homo est ens'), since both intentions must be presupposed in order for them to be composed.²³

Heytesbury's text must have been known in Parisian circles at least before 1343, when the theologian Gregory of Rimini, in his commentary on the *Sentences*, took a stand against the theory of the composition of mental propositions, probably with Heytesbury in mind. A marginal note, which the editors of the recent critical edition attribute to Gregory

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22. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 78va): "Sed si arguitur ex illo quod nullus homo potest habere duas propositiones simul in conceptu, nec aliquam propositionem per tempus, sed solum per instans, quia actus ille non manet nisi quando componit vel diuidit, sed solum componit vel diuidit subito seu in instanti; igitur etc.: similiter, <quod> nunquam aliquis habet duos actus tales simul, quia non simul componit diuersas compositiones, igitur nunquam scit aliquis duas propositiones, quod est inconueniens. Ad hoc respondetur coniunctim sic dicendo, quod simul habet aliquis diuersas compositiones et simul componit diuersas compositiones per tempus. Per tempus enim componere non est aliud quam affirmare vnam intentionem de alia; diuidere, negare vnam ab alia. Et ideo, quia aliquis sciens per tempus affirmat diuersas intentiones de diuersis, ideo per tempus simul componit diuersas compositiones."
23. Gulielmi Hentisberi *Sophismata*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: ff. 78vb-79ra): "Sed adhuc arguitur contra hoc: videtur enim quod aliqua sit propositio in conceptu que non sint multe intentiones et actus anime componendi vel diuidendi, quia capiantur he propositiones in conceptu 'aliquid est', 'ens est' et sic de talibus: nulla illarum habet plures intentiones, sed solum vnam et vnum actum. Igitur ibi breuiter non aliter affirmatur aliquid de aliquo, quia ibi non <est> actus nec intentio alia, [quia ibi non est intentio alia] nec eadem de se ipsa affirmatur, quia tunc sequitur quod ille propositiones essent omnino eodem in conceptu 'homo est' et 'homo est homo', et eadem ratione iste 'quodlibet est' et 'quodlibet est quodlibet', quod non est verum. Ideo ad hoc respondetur consimiliter sicut ponitur de terminis priuatiuis, quod ipsi simul consignant actum et intentionem rei vel conceptum, sic[ut] etiam dicitur quod tales propositiones in conceptu 'aliquid est' et 'homo est' et sic de aliis sunt multe intentiones et iste actus componendi. Et ad argumentum quando arguitur: ibi non est alia intentio quam illa intentio 'homo', dicitur quod sic: est enim vna intentio generalis quam dat intelligere hec nota compositionis 'est', et est illa intentio generalis 'ens'; et ibi componitur et affirmatur illa vniuersalis intentio 'ens' de hac intentione 'homo' vel 'aliquid', et sic de aliis. Vnde sicut terminus priuatiuis, vt prius dicebatur, simul dat intelligere actum et intentionem habitus, ita hoc verbum 'est' cum predicet secundum adiacens dat intelligere actum componendi et hanc intentionem vniuersalem 'ens'."

himself, refers to the first sophism “in tertio principali”,²⁴ and the name of Heytesbury is included in the analytical index among the “Auctoritates a Gregorio allegatae”. The four occurrences mentioned are all in the first book and all refer to Heytesbury’s first sophism.²⁵

Gregory affirms the unity of the mental proposition, in the sense that, in his opinion, it is an act not composed of parts but produced *simul* by the intellect. In his argumentation aimed at refuting the theory of the composition of the mental proposition, Gregory refers to the fact that, of the two mental propositions ‘omnis albedo est entitas’ and ‘omnis entitas est albedo’, one is possible and the other is impossible; and yet they are composed out of the very same terms.²⁶ Moreover, since both propositions are found in the same indivisible subject, i.e. the soul, there can be no situational relations internal to them that might be capable of introducing factors of differentiation between them.²⁷ In Gregory’s view, the composition of a proposition cannot be explained by simple *notitiae* supplemented by some new concept, whether it be categorematic or syncategorematic.²⁸ Nor is it possible to explain why one part of a proposition is the subject and another the predicate, since both parts inhere in the same indivisible subject and can both naturally act as either subject or predicate. In the indivisible soul, either both parts can equally well be the subject or the predicate, or neither can.²⁹ Gregory proposes a possible answer to this difficulty: that the function of the parts, and consequently the difference between propositions, depends on the different order in which the parts are produced (*propter ordinem diversum productionis*). Nevertheless he considers this answer irrational, because in his opinion the intellect can produce simultaneously several different acts, and therefore it can produce simultaneously (*simul*) a whole proposition;³⁰ moreover, God can produce in the mind

24. Cf. Gregorii Ariminensis OESA *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum* (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, XII for the lecture on the *Sentences*, 33 n. 4 for the marginal note). See also Meier-Oeser’s contribution to this volume, esp. §§ 5-6.

25. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura* (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. VII, 348).

26. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, proL., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 33, 9-20).

27. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, proL., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 33, 20-27).

28. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, proL., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 33, 28-34,4).

29. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, proL., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 34, 5-13).

30. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, proL., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 34, 14-23).

the parts of a proposition simultaneously, and the same difficulty arises.³¹ Finally, Gregory denies that affirmation and negation can be called “actus compositi vel complexi in vero sensu” since they are composed of distinct partial notions; he instead maintains that they are composite or complex acts only in the sense that they are equivalent *in significando* to a plurality of words composing a spoken or written proposition.³² (The phrase “actus complexus”³³ and the idea that, in this case, one act of understanding is equivalent to the whole proposition made up of distinct elements ordered as they are in the corresponding spoken proposition, could already be found in Ockham).³⁴

In the same Parisian milieu in which Gregory worked, John Buridan was teaching in the Arts Faculty. One of the texts in the first treatise of his *Summulae* suggests an interpretation of the mental proposition very similar to that of Heytesbury. Buridan maintains that the mental proposition is the result of simple concepts with the addition of a “complexive” concept (*conceptus complexivus*) by which the intellect asserts or denies the predicate of the subject. The simple concepts constitute the “matter of the proposition”, while the copula constitutes the form: the word *est* is an affirmative complexive concept, while *non est* is a negative one. Ultimately, the intellect cannot form a complexive concept without a subject and predicate being at its disposal: according to Aristotle’s teachings, the copula is part of a composition that cannot be understood without the other elements.³⁵ In Buridan’s view, categor-

31. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, prol., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 35, 1-5).

32. Gregorii Ariminensis *Lectura*, prol., q. 1, art. 3 (ed. Trapp-Marcolino: vol. I, 35, 12-20).

33. Guillelmi de Ockham *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. XII-XIII: “Sed actus terminatus ad copulam est complexus quatenus terminatur immediate ad totum complexum. Et iste dicitur compositio et divisio” (ed. Gál-Wood: 280, 9-11).

34. Guillelmi de Ockham *Expositio in Librum Perihermenias Aristotelis*, I, prooemium (ed. Gambatese-Brown: 356, 129-133): “Ad istud potest dici quod propositio potest esse actus intelligendi aequivalens toti uni propositioni compositae ex realiter distinctis, si talem ordinem haberent qualem habent in voce. Et tunc erunt propositiones distinctae secundum quod distinguerentur propositiones correspondentes si termini earum seu partes aliter et aliter ordinarentur.” Cf. Normore 1990: 63-64, and Maierù 2002: 7-9.

35. Johannes Buridanus, *Summulae*, I.3 (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Palat. lat. 994, f. 4rb-va): “Sed tunc occurrunt dubitationes. Prima est quid significat talis copula. Secunda, utrum sit pars principalis propositionis categorice. [...] Ad primam dubitationem dicendum est quod propositio vocalis debet significare mentalem propositionem, sicut ante dictum est, propositio autem mentalis consistit

matic terms signify concepts of things and, by means of these, the things themselves; syncategorematic terms are complexive concepts (also called *modi complectendi*) that relate to the second act of the intellect, and they signify nothing outside the mind.³⁶ Unlike Peter of Spain,³⁷ Buridan maintains that a proposition is made up not of two principal parts, but of three, i.e. subject, predicate, and copula.³⁸

This theory had already been formulated at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it was stated in the *Summe Metenses* that “tria sunt in propositione, scilicet subiectum et predicatum et compositio”.³⁹ It seems, however, that Buridan’s position on mental language emerged in his various works through a confrontation with specific problems. In

in complexione conceptuum; ideo presupponit (pre- *s.l.*) conceptus simplices in mente et super hos addit conceptum complexivum, quo intellectus affirmat uel negat unum istorum conceptuum de reliquo. Illi ergo conceptus presuppositi sunt subiectum et predicatum in propositione (mentali *add. in intercol.*), et vocantur materia propositionis mentalis, quia presupponuntur formationi propositionis, sicut materia in generatione substantiali (?) presupponitur formae; ille autem conceptus complexivus dicitur copula et tanquam formale in propositione mentali. Et tunc apparet quod subiectum et predicatum propositionis vocalis significant in mente predicatum et subiectum mentalis; hec autem copula ‘est’ significat conceptum complexivum affirmativum, et hec copula ‘non est’ significat conceptum complexivum negativum. Et intellectus non potest formare illum conceptum complexivum nisi formatis illis que sunt subiectum et predicatum, quia non est possibilis complexio predicati ad subiectum sine predicato et subiecto. Et hoc signabat Aristoteles dicens quod ‘est’ significat quamdam compositionem, quam sine compositis non est intelligere.”

36. Johannes Buridanus, *Summulae. De suppositionibus*, 4.2.3 (ed. van der Lecq; 20, 4-10): “Et etiam illae copulae ‘est’ et ‘non est’ significant diversos modos complectendi terminos mentales in formando propositiones mentales, et illi modi complectendi sunt conceptus complexivi pertinentes ad secundam operationem intellectus, prout ipsa addit supra primam operationem. Et ita etiam istae dictiones ‘et’, ‘vel’, ‘si’, ‘ergo’ et huiusmodi designant conceptus complexivos plurium propositionum simul vel terminorum in mente et nihil ulterius ad extra.” Cf. Roncaglia 2000: 238.
37. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus*, I, 7 (ed. De Rijk: 3, 25-26): “Categorica est illa que habet subiectum et predicatum principales partes sui, ut *homo currit*.” Cf. Pérez-Illarbe’s contribution to this volume, at and around nn. 8-13.
38. Johannes Buridanus, *Summulae*, I.3 (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Palat. lat. 994, f. 4va): “Ad secundam dubitationem [*sc. utrum copula sit pars principalis propositionis cathegorice*] dicendum est quod illa (copula vere *add. in mg.*) est pars principalis cathegorice, quia sine illa non potest esse cathegorica propositio, et habet se per modum forme ad subiectum et predicatum, et forma est principalis pars compositi. Ideo bene suppleunt secundam clausulam uel tertiam dicentes quod propositio cathegorica est illa que habet subiectum et predicatum et copulam principales partes sui.”
39. Quoted in Roncaglia 1996: 111.

what is described in the manuscripts as his “last lecture” on Aristotle’s *Physics* (from the late 1350s), for instance, Buridan confronts a view according to which the four terms of the mental proposition ‘omnis homo est animal’ do not have a spatial order because they are in the intellect which is indivisible, and that therefore they can just as well constitute a proposition that is (universal and) true as a proposition that is (indefinite, in the form: ‘animal est omnis homo’, and) false.⁴⁰ In his reply, Buridan does not appeal to complexive concepts in order to distinguish mental propositions from each other, but to a plurality of acts that are modes of understanding (*modi intelligendi*). As a matter of fact he maintains that the term *animal* has a different kind of supposition in the first proposition, where it constitutes the predicate, than it does in the second one, where it constitutes the subject, and he explains that different modes of understanding added to the mental term (*animal*) cause it to have the different kinds of supposition that its corresponding term has in the two spoken propositions. These *modi intelligendi* are integral parts of propositions according to Buridan, and make them different.⁴¹

40. Johannes Buridanus, *Subtilissime questiones super octo Physicorum libros*, I, q. 9 (ed. Johannes Dullaert: f. xiira): “Vltimo hec propositio mentalis ‘omnis homo est animal’ esset simul vera et falsa, quod est impossibile. Consequentia patet, quia in mente est vnum totum congregatum ex quattuor partibus correspondentibus istis quattuor vocabulis ‘omnis’ ‘homo’ ‘est’ ‘animal’, et iste quattuor partes in intellectu non habent ad inuicem ordinem situs propter indiuisibilitatem (indiuiduitatem *ed.*) intellectus; ideo qua ratione illud totum in mente esset hec propositio ‘omnis homo est animal’, eadem ratione esset ista propositio ‘animal est omnis homo’, et tamen hec est vera et ista falsa; ergo etc.” For the argument, cf. Gregory of Rimini referred to above, n. 29; for Buridan’s text cf. Michael 1985: 578-93, 253 n. 44, and 261.

41. Johannes Buridanus, *Subtilissime questiones super octo Physicorum libros*, I, q. 9 (ed. Johannes Dullaert: f. xiirb-va): “Ad vltimam ego dico quod suppositioni confuse vel distributiue et determinate in propositionibus vocalibus correspondent in mente quidam diuersi modi intelligendi additi conceptibus categor<emat>icis secundum quos modos intelligendi illi termini mentales aliter supponunt, et illi modi intelligendi sunt de integritate propositionum [...]. Ideo non ex omnibus eisdem partibus iste due mentales componuntur, propter quod hec non est illa, sed hec est vera et illa falsa.” See also Heytesbury’s text quoted above, n. 17. This Buridanian position is mentioned by Johannes Dullaert in his commentary on *Perihermeneias* and discussed by other authors quoted in Ashworth 1981: 82, n. 73.

2. Peter of Mantua

In his commentary on Heytesbury's first sophism, Paul of Pergula mentions by name Peter of Mantua as a supporter of the opinion according to which, given two propositions made up of the same four terms, one proposition universal and the other indefinite, the universal proposition is granted and the particular one is denied.⁴² For his part, Gaetano of Thiene gives a number of criticisms of Heytesbury's theory according to which the proposition results from an act of the intellect, either affirmative or negative, added to the intentions, i.e. the subject and the predicate. Gaetano criticises Heytesbury because his theory does not take account of the need to keep parts of speech – specifically the adverb and the verb – distinct even at a mental level.⁴³ According to Heytesbury, as we have seen, a negative proposition is held together by a single act uniting in itself the copula, which is a verb, with the negation, which is an adverb. Moreover, Gaetano notes that from Heytesbury's position it follows that a mental proposition *de secundo adiacente* would not be intelligible, and also that in the mind there would be no

42. Cf. Paulus Pergulensis, *Super sophismata*, I, iii, Venice, B.N. Marciana, ms. lat. Cl. VI, 160 (2816), f. 182rb: "Secunda opinio statim diceret quod illi termini in casuposito non essent propositio, sed propositiones plures, quia plura significant inconiuncte, quare ad illam propositionem non responderet universali<ter> negando, ad illam tamen responderet pluribus responsionibus, cum per Aristotelem [*Soph. El.*, 17, 176a10-12] ad propositiones plures non sit danda vna responsio. Vnde ad illam propositam respondetur concedendo quod omnis homo est homo et negando quod homo est omnis homo, et hec opinio est Petri de Mantua." Perhaps Paul is referring to Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De veritate et falsitate propositionis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5rb): "Et sic dicendum est de ista 'omnis homo est homo' et sic de aliis, posito quod significet ordine recto et non ordine retrogrado" (the discussion begins at f. D4ra).

43. Cf. Gaetani de Thienis *Super primum sophisma* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 81vb): "Sed contra hanc positionem instatur multipliciter. Et primo, quia ex ea sequitur quod aduerbium non sit pars orationis distincta a verbo, ex quo sibi non correspondet in mente distincta pars orationis. Consequens est falsum, et tenet consequentia, quia distinctio partium orationis sumitur a modis significandi, qui sumuntur a modis intelligendi, qui ortum habent a modis essendi etc. Item ex illa sequitur quod contradictoria non sunt consimilis copule: consequens inconueniens, et tenet consequentia, ex quo in negatiua aduerbium negan[ti]s et verbum est copula, cum illud totum subordinetur actui diuidendi qui est copula, et in affirmatiua solum verbum est copula. Item sequitur quod in hac propositione vocali 'homo est', ly 'est' non est verbum, quod est falsum, et patet consequentia, quia subordinatur illi orationi mentali 'est ens', et omne quod subordinatur orationi est oratio, et non verbum. Et sequitur per idem quod verbum adiectiuum non debet dici verbum sed oratio, cum subordinetur orationi."

verbum adiectiuum at all, because such a spoken or written verb should be subordinate to an *oratio mentalis*.⁴⁴ Therefore (*propterea*), as Gaetano relates, Peter of Mantua maintained in contrast to Heytesbury that all syncategorematic words are subordinate to *modi concipiendi*.⁴⁵ Another commentator, Simon of Lendinara (in Padua between 1418 and 1434),⁴⁶ offers similar remarks, concluding that for these reasons Peter of Mantua followed another way.⁴⁷

As far as I can see, the expression *modus concipiendi* does not appear in Peter of Mantua's *Logica*. As we shall see, he speaks of *modi significandi* derived from different *modi intelligendi*. The term *modi concipiendi* can be found in other texts and authors such as Mesino de Codronchi⁴⁸ and in questions dealing with the discipline of music that John E. Murdoch attributed to Biagio Pelacani (in both cases *modi significandi* and *modi concipiendi* are mentioned).⁴⁹ Again, in a text by Thomas of Cleves we find *modi concipiendi vel modi intelligendi*, and

44. Gaetani de Thienis *Super primum sophisma* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 81vb): "Ex quibus [Heytesbury's position] sequitur quod in mente non datur propositio de secundo adiacente, cum ex vnica intentione et vno actu non possit fieri propositio. Actus enim verbalis habet copulare vnum extremum cum reliquo iuxta illud Aristotelis primo Perierminias: hoc verbum 'est' significat quandam compositionem etc. Vnde hoc mentale per se sumptum 'hoc est' non est intelligibile. Sequitur etiam quod dum hoc verbum 'est' vocale vel scriptum coniungit extrema, tunc subordinatur solo actui, dum autem non coniungit et ponitur in propositione subordinatur aggregato ex actu et intentione, quia illud vocale vel scriptum 'homo est' non esset intelligibile vbi ly 'est' solo actui subordinaretur. Ex quibus vterius sequitur non dari verbum adiectiuum in mente cum quodlibet verbum vocale vel scriptum adiectiuum orationi mentali subordinetur." Cf. Paulus Pergulensis, *Super sophismata*, I, iii, Venice, B.N. Marciana, ms. lat. Cl. VI, 160 (2816), f. 182va-b, and Braakhuis 1982: 356.

45. Gaetani de Thienis *Super primum sophisma* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 81vb): "Propterea Petrus de Mantua posuit aliam opinionem, volendo omnia syncategoremata pura excepto verbo subordinari modis concipiendi."

46. Cf. Wilson 1960: 175 n. 82.

47. Cf. Simon de Lendenaria, *Recollecta supra sophismatibus Hentisberi*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 172rb): "Secundo arguitur contra idem sic, et primo presuppono quod partes orationis sunt distincte, vt satis patet per grammaticos. Secundo presuppono quod verbum subordinetur verbo, et non verbum non verbo, non autem e contra: illud presuppositum patet etiam. Tertio suppono quod cuiilibet parti orationis correspondeat aliquid in intellectu realiter distinctum a quacumque alia parte orationis. Quibus suppositis stantibus, arguitur contra Hentisberum [...]. Et hec fuerant motiua propter que Petrus de Mantua insecutus est aliam viam."

48. Cf. Roncaglia 1993 and 2000, and Maierù 2002: 18-19.

49. Cf. Panti 1992: 311-312, and Maierù 2002: 15-17; also Murdoch 1976. For Biagio, see also below at and around n. 74.

we should remember Buridan's use of *modi intelligendi* in his last commentary on the *Physics*, and even before in Peter Auriol.⁵⁰ In Peter of Mantua's work, *modi intelligendi* could probably denote mental acts that perform the function of syncategoremes, but this doctrinal aspect is not explicitly clarified in the printed text available. Peter, however, criticises Heytesbury's theory as a whole. Master Peter raises these objections in the tract *de equipollentiis*.⁵¹ Moreover, in his commentary on the *Logica parva* by Paul of Venice, Manfredo Medici refers to another tract (*de conuersionibus*) in which Peter criticises Heytesbury for his view that every mental proposition has at least three elementary constituents.⁵²

Before examining the two places indicated, it would be helpful to reconstruct the essential points of doctrine on mental language that can be deduced from Peter of Mantua's *Logica*. I will follow the exposition in the tract *de terminis priuatiuis*, adding elements that derive from other parts of the work.

According to Peter, the mental term naturally signifies whatever it signifies regardless of when it is thought or who thinks it:

50. Thomas de Clivis, *Speculum logicale*, XXII (ed. Bos-Read: 96); for Buridan see above, nn. 40-41; for Buridan's influence in Italy, cf. Federici Vescovini 1976; for Peter Auriol, cf. Friedman 1997 and 1999.

51. For the order of tracts in Peter of Mantua's *Logica* (with reference to the *editio princeps* and the ms. Vat. lat. 2135), cf. Maier 1961: 31-33.

52. Manfredi de Medicis *Additiones super Summulis Pauli Veneti*, I, 3 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 14rb): "Nota quod propositio categorica debet habere predicatum implicite aut explicite, vt etiam notat Paulus. Sed contra: ergo ista propositio 'Adam est' haberet predicatum similiter, et tale maxime esset ly 'ens', ergo ista significaret quod Adam est ens, quod videtur falsum. [...] Ad quod responde quod ille terminus 'ens' pro nunc sumitur duobus modis. Primo modo vt est transcendens et non participium. Alio modo vt est participium correspondens illi verbo 'sum, es, est' predicanti secundum adiacens, et tunc tantum significat quantum ly 'existens'. [...] Aduerte vterius quod Petrus Mantuanus in capitulo conuersionum dicit quod ad propositionem categoricam non requiritur quod habeat predicatum implicitum aut explicitum, quia vult quod dicendo 'homo currit', ista non correspondeat proprie isti mentali 'homo est currens', quia vult quod sicut dantur verba adiectiua in voce aut in scripto, ita etiam dantur in mente, quod est contra Tysberum tertio principali primi sophismatis. Et apud ipsum non valet argumentum: iste due propositiones equivalent et vna habet predicatum, ergo et alia; patet de istis: 'homo currit', 'homo est currens'. Et ideo aliter diffinit propositionem categoricam, scilicet quod est oratio simplex vna indicatiua, finite significans et determinate, perfecti sensus ostensiuua."

The mental term, which by nature signifies something or some things, does not signify more at one time than at another, nor does it signify more in the mind of one individual than in another; thus, Socrates neither does understand nor can understand more through the term 'man' existing in Socrates' intellect than Plato can understand through the term 'man' existing in Plato's intellect; otherwise the two propositions 'homo currit' and 'homo currit', the one existing in the mind of Socrates, the other in the mind of Plato, would not be convertible.⁵³

A second defining feature of mental language according to Peter is that every mental concept is simple and has the properties of a part of speech; thus, on the mental level there are no composite parts of speech, because if there were, the composite parts would each have a separate meaning. On account of this, we must exclude from mental language the grammatical property of figure, and other properties like conjugation, declension, and deponent verbal forms, that are found only in spoken or written language.⁵⁴ According to our author, even connotatives are simple terms.⁵⁵ A third point is that every part of speech, whether

53. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5rb): "Item accipitur quod terminus mentalis aliquam rem vel aliquas res significans naturaliter, non plura significat vno tempore quam alio nec plura significat in mente vnus quam in mente alterius, sic intelligendo quod per illum terminum 'homo' in intellectu Sortis existentem non plura comprehendit Sortes aut plura comprehendere potest quam Plato per illum terminum 'homo' in suo intellectu existentem; patet, quia aliter non conuenterentur iste due 'homo currit', 'homo currit', quarum vna esset in mente Sortis et alia in mente Platonis." Cf. also *De scire et dubitare* (f. F5rb-va).

54. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De veritate et falsitate propositionis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D2rb): "omnis conceptus est simplex, vt infra probabitur", and *De terminis priuatiuis* (f. D5vb): "Quarto accipitur quod quilibet conceptus mentalis est simplex ita quod nulla est pars orationis in mente que sit composita, quia tunc partes orationis significarent separate. Si enim sit aliquis conceptus compositus ex *a* et *b* conceptibus, tunc *a* et *b* conceptus etiam sunt mentales naturaliter significantes aliquid, cum non possint cadere a suis significationibus ipsis manentibus significatiuis, scilicet quod significant in compositione illud quod ante compositionem significabant; sequitur quod illius compositi partes significant separate: consequens falsum. Et ideo concluditur quod figura composita vel decomposita non continetur in mentalibus, sed solum in vocalibus vel scriptis, sicut sunt alie multe passiones grammaticales, puta coniunctiones et declinationes et genus deponens, et huiusmodi <que> solum conueniunt in vocalibus aut scriptis."

55. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D6rb): "Et sicut iam sumus locuti de infinitis terminis, ita dicendum et de priuatiuis, quia illi termini 'vacuum', 'iniustus', 'tenebra' etc. subordinantur simplicibus termi-

spoken or written, provided it is univocal, is subordinate to a part of mental discourse (according to Aristotle, the voice gives expression to the passions of the soul). Consequently, elements of spoken or written language are only parts of speech in virtue of *modi significandi*, which are derived from *modi intelligendi*, as can be seen from grammatical doctrine.⁵⁶ It is clear from this that every part of speech, whether spoken or written, is subordinate to synonymous parts of mental discourse.⁵⁷ Peter expressly asserts that no mental term is equivocal.⁵⁸ If every concept is simple, all complex knowledge presupposes simple knowledge.⁵⁹ Fourth and finally, a simple categorematic mental term is an

nis eorum sicut eorum opposita, aliter nullius partis orationis sunt si subordi<n>arentur complexis. Sed contra: quia ille terminus 'iniustus' priuatiue suum habitum significat, similiter ille terminus 'vacuum' significat locum non repletum corpore, et iste terminus 'tenebra' rem priuatam luce aut lumine significat, igitur etc. Dicitur negando duas vltimas consequentias: sic enim arguitur quod illi termini 'plenum', 'album', 'longum' terminis complexis subordinantur; nam iste terminus 'plenum' locum plenum corpore significat, et iste terminus 'album' rem habentem albedinem significat eam denominare sufficientem (!). Consequens tamen est falsum, quia *ille terminus 'album' siue 'longum' sunt termini simplices, aliter nullus terminus connotatiuus vocalis aut scriptus subordinaretur mentali simplici*. Antecedens tamen prime consequentie est falsum, quod iste terminus 'iniustus' siue 'iniustitia' priuatiue suum habitum significet, quia iste terminus 'iniustus' positiue significat vitium quod est iniustitia. Tamen pro vere priuatiuis est aduertendum quod, licet hec prepositio 'in' intret compositionem, tamen in compositione nihil significat nec modum significandi addit vocabulo cuius efficitur pars, quia tunc partes significarent in compositione vnaqueque sicut ante." (Italics mine).

56. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5vb): "Item quelibet pars orationis vocalis aut scripta saltem vniuoca subordinatur alicui parti orationis mentalis. Patet hoc, quia voces sunt note earum que sunt in anima passionum [Arist., *De interpr.*, 1, 16a3-4]. Et ex hoc patet quod voces aut scripta non sunt partes orationis nisi ex modis suis significandi, qui modi accipiuntur ex modis suis intelligendi, vt patet ex grammatica; ideo quelibet pars orationis vocalis aut scripte subordinatur alicui parti orationis mentali<s>."
57. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus, f. D6rb): "Ex quibus concluditur vltra quod hoc complexum vocale 'non est' non subordinatur alicui simplici actui, quia quelibet pars orationis vocalis aut scripte subordinatur mentali sibi sinonime: nam si sit in mente hec negatio 'non' et postea ponatur secum verbum substantiuum, puta actus componendi, ex illis duobus non fit vnus actus."
58. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De veritate et falsitate propositionis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5ra): "[...] ly 'canis' capitur equiuoce in premissis, in mentalibus autem terminis non cadit hec diuersitas, quia nullum equiuocum equiuocans est in mente." See also *De insolubilibus*, f. H1rb-va.
59. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De scire et dubitare* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. F5va): "Item accipitur quod omnis notitia complexa incomplexam presupponit."

intentio which is a *similitudo naturalis* of the thing that is known; while this is not true of syncategorematic parts of speech,⁶⁰ like quantifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, and many adverbs, which signify nothing. If it is held that these are signs and therefore have meaning, this inference must be denied, while the following inference is valid: this is a sign, therefore it means something or some things, in some way; according to our author, all this emerges, once again, from the discipline of grammar.⁶¹ Introducing his discourse on the expository syllogism and the distinction of terms into immediate and mediate, the author explains that by 'term' he means a part of speech, such as a noun, a verb, or any other, whether categorematic or syncategorematic.⁶² As can be inferred, the author allots much space to the grammatical characterization of mental language.

In formulating his criticism of Heytesbury's position, Peter starts by asserting that the various parts of speech (spoken or written) are subordinate to the corresponding parts of mental discourse (e.g. an adverb is subordinate to an adverb; a participle to a participle). His reasoning is based on the grammatical doctrine that establishes the relations between *modi significandi* and *modi intelligendi*. Peter draws the conclu-

60. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5vb): "Vltimo adiungitur quod omnis intentio mentalis aliquam vel aliquas res significat, quam vel quas naturaliter significat, et hoc est quod antiqui dixerunt quod omnis intentio simplex est vera, et veram rem vel veras res significat: aliter enim non esset intentio similitudo naturalis, quod dictum debet intelligi de intentione simplicis cathegorematica, eo quod multe sunt partes orationis nihil significantes."

61. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De terminis priuatiuis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D5va): "Sed signorum que sunt sincathegoremata nulla sunt significata, vt illius termini 'omnis', 'nullus' etc. et sicut sunt prepositiones, coniunctiones et multa aduerbia que nihil significant. Et si arguitur quod ipsa sunt signa, igitur habent significata, vel aliquid significant, vel aliquid est significabile per ipsa aut aliquod ipsorum sine noua impositione, negatur consequentia, sed bene sequitur: hoc est signum, igitur aliquid vel aliquid vel per aliquem modum significat, puta per se stantis aut adiacentis vel coniungentis, aut actum casuale imperfectum ad casuale reducendum. Hoc totum patet de intentione grammatice."

62. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, Tractatus syllogismorum* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. D8vb): "terminum hic appello partem propinquam grammatice orationis, puta nomen vel verbum, aut aliquam orationis partem cathegorematicam aut sincathegorematicam. Omnis autem terminus est mediatu s aut immediatu s, quare etiam prepositiones (propositiones *ed.*) et alie partes orationis indeclinabiles sunt mediate vel immediate, quamuis nullum terminum habeant inferiorem aut superiorem quo (quia *ed.*) describi possunt."

sion that in the spoken or written proposition ‘homo non est animal’, the negation and the verb are not subordinate to only one *actus diuidendi*, but are subordinate to the corresponding mental verb and adverb. If that were not the case, and only one mental “act of negation” were posited to correspond to verb and negation together, that act would not be a definite part of speech and would be neither verb nor adverb.⁶³ Going further, the author denies the corollary to Heytesbury’s theory, that the spoken or written proposition ‘homo est’ is subordinate to the mental proposition ‘homo est ens’: if this were the case, since *homo* is subordinate to its mental “synonym”, the verb ‘to be’ would be subordinate to two parts of speech, verb and participle. Moreover, the verb *est* of the spoken or written proposition ‘homo est’ and the *est* of the proposition ‘homo est ens’ would not be synonymous terms, because the former would be subordinate to a verb and the latter to a verb and a participle.⁶⁴ (Master Peter evidently does not think it necessary to subsume the participle under the verb, as Ockham had consid-

63. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De equipollentiis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E4va-b): “Accipiamus primo quod diuerse partes orationis grammaticae vocales vel scripte diuersis partibus orationis mentalis subordinantur, sic quod aduerbium aduerbio et participium participio et sic de aliis; quod patet ex hoc, quia modi signi-/E4vb/-fican-di vocalium aut scriptorum, per quos ipsa vocalia aut scripta distinguuntur ad inuicem generice aut specificae, accepti sunt a modis intelligendi specificae aut generice distinctis. Quo accepto, sequitur quod in ista propositione ‘homo non est animal’ vocali aut scripta, ista negatio ‘non’ et illud verbum ‘est’ non subordinantur vni actui diuidendi, sed illud verbum ‘est’ subordinatur verbo substantiuo et ista negatio ‘non’ subordinatur actui negatiuo aduerbiali. Item, si subordinaretur aggregatum ex illa negatione ‘non’ et verbo substantiuo vni actui diuidendi, iste actus diuidendi nullius partis orationis esset, quia nec esset verbum substantiuum nec adiectiuum nec aduerbium.”

64. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De equipollentiis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E4vb): “Sequitur vltra quod ista de secundo adiacente vocalis aut scripta ‘homo est’ non subordinatur alicui de tertio adiacente, puta tali ‘homo est ens’ quia, cum ly ‘homo’ non subordinetur nisi tali termino ‘homo’ secum sinonimo, tunc ly ‘est’ subordinaretur duabus partibus orationis, scilicet participio et verbo, quod est contra acceptum. Item si ista subordinaretur tali mentali, scilicet ‘homo est ens’, tunc ly ‘est’ in ista vocali ‘homo est’ et in ista alia vocali ‘homo est ens’ non essent termini sinonimi, quia in vna ly ‘est’ subordinatur simplici verbo substantiuo et in alia verbo et participio. Item ly ‘est’ in ista ‘homo est’ non esset verbum, quia haberet omnes modos significandi participii, vel qua ratione foret verbum, foret etiam participium.”

ered doing).⁶⁵ According to Peter of Mantua, a spoken or written term cannot be subordinated to anything but its synonymous mental term.⁶⁶ As far as I can see, this synonymy is not qualified in any other way. Taking the proposition ‘homo non est animal’ as his example, the author asks whether it contains an act of composition (an affirmation) or of division (a negation). In answer to this, he seems to distinguish two senses of the word ‘to compose’, one that makes it a synonym of ‘to affirm’, and another that involves merely the union of two terms. The Mantuan therefore replies that, in the given proposition, there is no act of composition in the sense of an affirmation, but only the act of uniting by means of the copula, which links the predicate to the subject, thus making the affirmation possible, and there is a negation which denies that the predicate inheres in the subject. The copula and the negation are two distinct acts and two distinct parts of speech.⁶⁷

Then, in the tract on conversion, Peter declares that transposition of the terms of a proposition does not take place when the proposition has no explicit predicate; he maintains, therefore, that if conversion is required for syllogistics, not all propositions can be syllogised or used

65. Cf. Guillelmi de Ockham *Summa logicae*, I, 3 (ed. Boehner-Gál-Brown: 11, 13-25).

66. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De equipollentiis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E4vb): “Quibus datis, sequitur quod nullum verbum adiectiuum subordinatur alicui nisi verbo adiectiuo secum sinonimo. [...] Et ita generaliter dicitur quod *nullum vocale aut scriptum subordinatur alicui nisi secum sinonimo, et rectus nisi recto, et obliquus nisi obliquo, et complexum nisi complexo et sic de aliis*; non tamen omnia conuertibilia ad inuicem vocalia vel scripta subordinantur eidem mentali, sed solum sinonima ad inuicem. Vnde propositiones equipollentes ad inuicem non eidem mentali subordinantur.” (Italics mine).

67. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De equipollentiis* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E4vb): “Et si interrogatum fuerit numquid in illa ‘homo non est animal’, ly ‘est’ sit actus componendi aut diuidendi, dicitur quod in illa propositione non est *actus componendi, id est affirmandi*, quo scilicet affirmetur predicatum de subiecto, sed est actus componendi, quia cum isto vel secum conuertibili possumus affirmare aliquod predicatum de suo subiecto. Sed in illa propositione nullus est actus negatiuus nisi illa negatio aduerbialis. *Sed ibi est vnus actus vniuius predicati cum subiecto. Vnde mediante ista negatione negatur predicatum a subiecto cum ista copula verbali vniente predicatum cum subiecto.*” (Italics mine). Cf. also *De terminis priuatiuis* (f. D6rb, above, n. 57); see also Simon de Lendenaria, *Recollecta supra sophismatibus Hentisberi*, I, iii (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. 172ra): “Huic dicitur distinguendo de compositione. Nam compositio capitur dupliciter, quia componere id est de nouo componere, vel componere id est affirmare.”

in a syllogism.⁶⁸ Having posited this, he considers in particular the proposition ‘homo currit’: it is categorical and must therefore, some argue, have a subject, a predicate, and a copula as its principle part or be subordinate to a mental proposition composed of three elements, as required by the definition of the categorical proposition. Peter replies to this argument by denying the definition of the categorical proposition and proposing another definition.⁶⁹ On the whole, the objections he raises in the chapter on conversion recall the position of Buridan: as we have seen,⁷⁰ Buridan approved of scholars who corrected the definition of the categorical proposition given in the work of Peter of Spain. But Buridan is not mentioned in these texts.

3. Paul of Venice

The second author whom I want to consider here contributed at least twice to these discussions. The first time was in the first of his sophisms, which Curtis Wilson considers to depend on the corresponding sophism by Heytesbury;⁷¹ the other was in two chapters of the *Quadratura*. Both works by Paul of Venice, *Sophismata aurea* and

68. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De conuersionibus* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E5va): “Conuersio est ordinatio transpositiua extremorum duarum propositionum consimilis qualitatis vtroque extremo communicantium, sic se habentium quod si a conuersa ad conuertentem formetur argumentum sic significando est formale. Ex qua diffinitione sequitur quod nulla propositio que non habet extremum seu predicatum est conuertibilis, quia nulla talis participat vtroque extremo cum aliqua alia, cum non habeat. Unde hec non est conuertibilis ‘homo est’ quia, si conuerteretur, talis esset sua conuertens ‘homo ens est homo’ vel talis ‘aliquid seu ens est homo’; sed nulla talis est sua conuertens, quia conuertens et conuersa debent participare vtroque extremo, et ista caret; igitur etc.”

69. Petrus Mantuanus, *Logica, De conuersionibus* (ed. Joannes M. Mapellus: f. E5va-b): “Et si arguitur contra, quod ista habet predicatum ‘homo currit’, quia est cathégorica propositio, igitur habet subiectum, predicatum et copulam principales partes sui, aut subordinatur vni tali, tenet consequentia per diffinitionem cathégorice. [...] Ad primum dicitur negando istam consequentiam: ista est propositio cathégorica, igitur habet subiectum, predicatum etc. aut subordinatur vni tali. Et cum dicitur quod illa est diffinitio cathégorice, dicitur illud negando, sed propositio cathégorica est oratio simplex, vna, indicatiua, finite significans et determinate, perfecti sen-/E5vb/-sus ostensiuua. Et ideo illa non est propositio: quis currit?, nec illa oratio: deum esse.”

70. See above, n. 38.

71. Cf. Wilson 1960: 154.

Quadratura, were probably composed at the end of the fourteenth century.⁷²

In the first sophism, Paul returns to the issue in the form we have seen used by Heytesbury – i.e. whether the four terms can constitute both a universal and an indefinite proposition – and Paul examines the argument that at a mental level, where there is neither place nor order, there is no reason why the four terms would constitute a universal proposition without for the same reason constituting an indefinite proposition. In his reply, the author admits that there is no place or position in the mind, but maintains, on the other hand, that there is indeed an order: this is the order of the intellect asserting and denying, constituting the subject and predicate, and making (by means of the act of distributing subject or predicate) the proposition either universal or indefinite.⁷³ We have seen that Heytesbury considered the mental proposition to be different from spoken or written ones, and he did not use the term *ordo* in connection with the former. The idea that some kind of order, compatible with the nature of the intellect, must be admitted at the mental level, had already emerged towards the end of the fourteenth century in anonymous questions concerning music that have been attributed to Biagio Pelacani from Parma,⁷⁴ and again, Biagio himself states this explicitly in his questions on Peter of Spain (1379-80).⁷⁵

72. Cf. Conti 1996: 12-13.

73. Paulus Venetus, *Sophismata*, I, ii (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 3va): “Et si[c] arguitur de illis quatuor terminis in mente, vbi non est situs nec ordo, quod non est ratio quare sint aliqua vniuersalis quin per idem sint vna indefinita et e conuerso, quo concesso habeo intentum quod illa vniuersalis in mente ‘omnis homo est homo’ est illa indefinita ‘homo est omnis homo’, dicitur quod, licet in mente non sit situs, tamen est ordo intellectus affirmandi vel negandi vnum conceptum de altero, aliter (alteri *ed.*) omnis terminus significatiuus in propositione mentali esset indifferenter subiectum vel predicatum, quod est falsum. Ideo illud est subiectum in mente de quo intellectus facit aliquid de altero predicari, illud autem est predicatum quod intellectus facit de altero predicari iuxta sententiam Aristotelis primo Priorum. Et cum signum vniuersale sit actus distribuens, si tali signo intellectus distribuit subiectum, illi quatuor termini sunt propositio vniuersalis; si vero distribuit predicatum, tunc sunt propositio indefinita.”

74. Cf. Panti 1992: 312 (“in propositione mentali subiectum precedit predicatum et copulam non ordine situati, sed ordine modi significandi et modi concipiendi”). For Biagio, see also above at and around n. 49.

75. Cf. Blaise de Parme, *Questiones super Tractatus*, I, 13 (ed. Biard-Federici Vescovini: 86): “Ad probationem, ‘in mente termini non sunt ordinati, cum intellectus sit indivisibilis’, dico quod non sunt ordinati ordine situati, quia non habent situm, sed bene sunt ordinati ordinatione debita.”

In the second part of his *Quadratura*, Paul of Venice devotes two chapters to these problems. In the fourth chapter, which discusses the “mutation” of the mental, spoken, and written proposition, the author presents an argument in which he again takes up Heytesbury’s favourite themes (the four terms that constitute two propositions, so that the universal proposition is indefinite, with the hypothesis that two men see the same written proposition, and one, here called Socrates, perceives it in progressive, linear order – *recte* – while the other, called Plato, perceives or conceives it backwards – *retrograde*).⁷⁶ In his doctrinal discussion with four conclusions, Paul stresses how close his own solution is to Heytesbury’s, and vigorously emphasizes the primary role of an act of the intellect. In the first conclusion, he says that although the subject of a mental proposition can become the predicate and vice-versa, no mental proposition can change its denomination: in order to do so, a new composition or division must take place, and therefore a new act of composing or dividing. It is only on account of a new or different act that the propositions can be different; the same act cannot serve two propositions. The same intention can indeed serve two propositions, but the intellect cannot reconsider things without performing a new act. In the course of his reply, Paul affirms that the universal proposition, which is true, is not indefinite.⁷⁷

76. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 4 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27ra): “Capitulum de mutatione propositionum mentalium, vocalium vel scripturarum. Quarto principaliter ad questionem arguitur sic. Ista propositio scripta ‘omnis homo est homo’ est vera, et hec eadem est falsa, igitur questio vera. Tenet consequentia cum prima parte antecedentis, sed secundam partem probo sic. Omnis talis est falsa ‘homo est omnis homo’, sed hec ‘omnis homo est homo’ est ista ‘homo est omnis homo’; igitur illa est falsa ‘omnis homo est homo’”, etc.

77. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 4 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27rb): “Pro solutione huius argumenti pono quatuor conclusiones, quarum prima est ista. Licet cuiuslibet propositionis mentalis subiectum possit effici predicatum et e conuerso, nulla tamen mentalis propositio potest mutari denominationem. Prima pars patet, eo quod subiectum et predicatum propositionis mentalis sunt due intentiones stabiles et permanentes, quarum quamlibet de altera potest componere intellectus. Verbi gratia, iam intellectus componit in ista ‘homo est animal’ illam intentionem ‘animal’ de illa intentione ‘homo’, et etiam e conuerso potest sic componere ‘animal est homo’ sine fabricatione noue impositionis. Secundam partem probo. Nam in mente non posset propositio variare suam denominationem nisi fieret noua compositio vel diuisio in mente. Sed semper in noua compositione vel diuisione resultat nouus actus componendi vel diuidendi, et ad nouitatem seu alietatem actus sequitur alietas propositionis. Igitur etc. [...] Ex ista conclusione sequitur correlarie quod *ista vniuersalis mentalis ‘omnis homo est animal [!]’ non potest esse illa indefinita ‘homo*

In the chapter that follows, where he deals with the “formation” of a mental, spoken, and written proposition, Paul starts by imagining a circular figure, on the circumference of which the three terms *homo – est – homo* are placed at the same distance from each other while the sign *omnis* is placed in the centre of the circle. On this basis, the author reconsiders the argument intended to show that the universal proposition is indefinite. In the body of the doctrinal discussion, Paul of Venice draws four conclusions. The first reconfirms that the mental proposition has no place or position, but that it does have an order, here defined according to priority and posteriority. To illustrate the first part, the author says that there cannot be order according to place or position where there is no *continuous* quantity (with the property of extension), and that this type of quantity does not exist in the mind. To prove the second part of the conclusion, regarding the order of priority and posteriority in the mental proposition, the author recalls the Aristotelian doctrine that intellectual knowledge originates in the senses; it follows from this that not all items of knowledge are acquired at once but successively.⁷⁸ In a corollary to this conclusion, the author says that what is divisible inheres in what is indivisible as in its own subject: the mental proposition is divisible, being a *discrete* (as opposed to continuous) quantity of at least three units, and the soul, which is its subject, is indivisible.⁷⁹ The second conclusion affirms that not only can a mental

est omne animal [!], quia ad constituendum hanc indefinita<m> ex illa [vel] necessario concurret alius (illius *ed.*) actus componendi, quia *vnus actus componendi non potest seruire duabus propositionibus, sicut posset intentio*. Non enim posset intellectus nouiter considerare quin causaretur nouus actus.” (Italics mine).

78. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 5 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27va): “Capitulum de formatione propositionum mentalium, vocalium vel scriptarum. [...] Pro solutione huius rationis pono quatuor conclusiones, quarum prima est ista. Licet mentalis propositio ordinem non habeat situs vel positionis, tamen habet ordinem prioritatis et posterioritatis. Prima pars est euidens, quia non datur ordo situs vel positionis vbi non est quantitas contigua [!]. Sed in mente non est quantitas contigua [!]. Igitur in mente non est situs vel positio. Secunda pars probatur. Nam omnis cognitio intellectiua habet ortum a sensu, primo Posteriorum [2, 72a1-4] et 3. De anima [4, 429b30-440a2]. Sed in sensu non simul acquiruntur omnes cognitiones, sed successiue, vt docet experientia. Igitur etiam in intellectu successiue formantur intentiones et per consequens secundum prius et posterius.”
79. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 5 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27va): “Ex ista conclusione sequitur correlarie, quod diuisibile fundatur subiectiue in indiuisibili. Probatur. Nam omnis propositio mentalis est diuisibilis, cum sit quantitas discreta saltem trium vnitatum, et anima que est subiectum ipsius est indiuisibilis, cum sit tota in toto et tota in qualibet parte sui corporis. Igitur intentum.”

proposition be formed over successive moments, but it can also be formed at once; a corollary that follows from this conclusion states that the intellect can judge many propositions at once and also keep them for a certain time.⁸⁰ The third conclusion states that spoken and written propositions involve two kinds of order, both order according to priority and posteriority, and order according to position. The fourth conclusion concerns the circle, mentioned above, in which the terms *homo – est – homo* are placed at the same distance from each other, while *omnis* is placed in the center; this conclusion maintains that spoken or written elements make up a vocal or written proposition if these elements are connected in the usual way of speaking or writing (e.g. that no great amount of time elapses between the uttering of the subject term and the uttering of the predicate term). A corollary affirms that the terms

80. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 5 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27va-b): “Secunda conclusio est ista. Sicut propositio mentalis potest successiue formari, sic subito potest fieri aliqua talis. Prima pars illius conclusionis patet: sepe enim contingit quod formatur primo ly ‘homo’, deinde ly ‘animal’ [!], deinde illa copula ‘est’ qua componit intellectus illum terminum ‘animal’ cum illo termino ‘homo’. Secunda pars etiam probatur, quia non minoris (maioris *ed.*) potentie est intellectus quam sensus; sed sensus percipiens hoc album, subito componit iudicialiter hoc esse album, igitur per idem intellectus intelligens album, subito iudicare poterit vel intelligere hoc esse album. Ex ista conclusione sequitur correla-/27vb/-rie quod intellectus potest simul et semel plura iudicare et complexe, et eadem complexa pro tempore seruare. Patet. Nam sensus plura complexe simul apprehendit, videlicet hoc esse album, demonstrando Sortem, et hoc esse nigrum, demonstrando Platonem. Ergo a fortiori et intellectus eadem potest simul intelligere complexa, id est propositiones horum complexe significabilium seruat intellectus pro tempore, quia suum iudicium respectu eiusdem suaque compositio manet per tempus, quia non est credendum quod actus componendi vel diuidendi solum per instans maneat, sed per tempus sicut et actualis consideratio intellectus.”

81. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 5 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27vb): “Tertia conclusio est ista. Quelibet propositio vocalis vel scripta vtrumque ordinem exigit, prioritatis (proprietas *ed.*) scilicet et posterioritatis, situs et positionis [...]. Quarta conclusio est ista. Ad hoc quod aliqua [propositio] scripta vel voces sint propositio vocalis vel scripta, debita requiritur inuicem applicatio. Probatur. Nam si hodie proferrem illum terminum ‘homo’ et cras illud verbum ‘est’, tertia vero die illum terminum ‘animal’ [!], ex his non fieret propositio propter nimiam intercessionem temporis. Igitur intentum. Et si taliter idem termini proferentur quod inter eos (eas *ed.*) nulla penitus foret pausa, ex his iterum non formaretur propositio propter velocem dilapsus terminorum. Ubi autem non nimis longa sit mora nec nimis breuis iuxta comunem modum iam loquentium, ex predictis fieret propositio. Idem assero de terminis scriptis [...]. Ex hac conclusione sequitur correlarie [...]. Secundo sequitur quod, si ponerentur in circulo illi tres termini ‘homo’ ‘est’ ‘homo’ et in centro ly ‘omnis’, quod ex his quatuor non resultaret propositio, nec regeretur ly ‘omnis’ ab illo verbo ‘est’.”

involved in the circle do not constitute a proposition at all.⁸¹ Concluding his doctrinal analysis, Paul maintains that one must neither grant nor deny anything, nor assign a proposition, before it is clear where the syncategorematic word *omnis* belongs. If it precedes the terms, we have a universal proposition, which is granted; on the other hand, if *omnis* follows the copula, the proposition is indefinite and denied.⁸²

The solution adopted by Paul of Venice in this chapter seems in some way to take into account the doctrinal perspective of his religious brother Gregory of Rimini, who had adduced the “indivisible subject” in order to deny the possibility of distinguishing two mental propositions composed of the same terms. Gregory had also put forward the idea of distinguishing the parts of a mental proposition on the basis of a different order of production, an idea he immediately discarded in favour of the production of the proposition all at once. Paul of Venice seems to maintain both “order according to production” and production “all at once”: the intellect can produce all at once, but it can also produce successively. In reality, he does not accept Gregory of Rimini’s view of the unity of the mental proposition, since he considers the mental proposition to be made up of a discrete quantity of at least three units.

The distinction between discrete quantities and continuous quantities overcomes the difficulties posed by the fact that the mind is an indivisible subject. However, it must be recognised that Biagio of Parma had already maintained that a mental proposition has no quantity in the sense of extension (*extensive*) since it inheres in an indivisible subject, but nevertheless it has quantity in the sense of discrete quantity, being made up of terms, syllables, and letters.⁸³ Gregory’s name is mentioned neither by Paul nor by Biagio.

82. Paulus Venetus, *Quadratura*, II, 5 (ed. Secundus Contarenus-Baptista de Modoetia: f. 27vb): “Ideo non conceditur ibi aliquid nec negatur, nec certa propositio assignatur, quousque non fuerit facta certificatio an ly ‘omnis’ teneat se a parte ante vel a parte post: primo modo illi termini sunt illa propositio ‘omnis homo est homo’, quam concedo, et secundo modo sunt illa propositio ‘homo est omnis homo’, quam nego; quare etc.”

83. Cf. Blaise de Parme, *Questiones super Tractatus*, I, 15 (ed. Biard-Federici Vescovini: 98), and cf. Maierù 2002: 23-24 n. 60.

4. Word Order and Proof of Propositions

One question that can be raised⁸⁴ is whether and (if so) how the theme of the propositional mental order interrelates with the doctrine of the proof of propositions, the fundamental rule of which is that one must begin the proof from the first mediate (and therefore provable) term of the proposition itself.⁸⁵ In his commentary on Heytesbury's sophisms, Paul of Pergula claims that this rule was not known when Heytesbury wrote his logical works.⁸⁶

If we consider Peter of Mantua's work, we can say that this does not appear to be a problem for him. In his *Logica*, Peter of Mantua deals first with mental language in the tract *de terminis priuatiuis*, i.e. about halfway through the work, after many tracts devoted to the proof of propositions. In his discussion of mental language, Peter apparently does not think it necessary to add any remark connecting the two topics. The most common example analysed by our authors is that of the modal proposition, the word order of which at the spoken, written, and mental levels gave rise to differences of interpretation. For Peter, a modal proposition is in the compound sense if the modal term precedes the rest of the proposition, whereas the proposition is in the divided sense when the modal term is placed among the other terms or following them.⁸⁷ A theory like this reduced the difficulties that this kind of proposition raised with regard to their proof.

Turning to Paul of Venice: several commentaries on the fourth tract of his *Logica parua* (on proving terms)⁸⁸ give us the very same gloss. In

84. Thanks to Simo Knuuttila and Claude Panaccio who actually raised the question.

85. Paulus Venetus, *Logica parua*, IV, 4 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 76ra): "Notanter dicebatur: nullo termino mediato precedente, quia si precederet aliquis terminus mediatus, ratione illius deberet ista propositio probari, quia a primo termino mediato semper est inchoanda propositionis probatio."

86. Paulus Pergulensis, *Super sophismata*, IV, Venice, B.N. Marciana, ms. lat. Cl. VI, 160 (2816), f. 189ra: "Sed contra hoc arguitur supponendo primam [!] vnam regulam auream, quod probatio propositionis semper debet fieri ratione primi termini probabilis, que regula nondum zepta [i.e. accepta] erat tempore Hentisberi, et propter hoc videtur errasse in aliquibus locis [...]." Cf. Braakhuis 1982: 350, and Maierù 1972: 409 (and 393-483 for the different types of proof).

87. Cf. Maierù 1972: 556 n. 197, and 581 n. 320; instances with epistemic verbs are usually given by Peter.

88. Cf. Paulus Venetus, *Logica parua*, IV (Engl. transl.: 181-213).

fact, the commentators propose an interpretation of the fundamental rule for proving propositions that in its wording is at least in part reminiscent of the discussion of the word order in a given proposition. Glossing the rule, Giacomo Ricci says that the proof must begin from the first mediate term “not in the spatial sense, but from the first term which gives the name to the proposition.”⁸⁹ Another formula is used by Manfredo Medici: “we must begin the proof of a proposition from the first term, whether in the spatial sense or in the virtual one.”⁹⁰ As we can see, the distinction put forward is not between spatial and mental order, but between spatial priority and functional priority of a term in a proposition.

In order to make entirely clear what these glosses mean, it is necessary to read the relevant text from the commentary on Paul’s *Logica* by Mengo Bianchelli, who simply transcribed a long passage from Paul of Pergula’s *Logica*.⁹¹ This text explains how to proceed in proving a given proposition: one must consider first if it is immediate or mediate and, if it is mediate, one must consider if it is affirmative or negative; again, if the proposition is affirmative, one must consider if it is categorical or hypothetical.⁹² If it is categorical, one must *always* begin

89. Jacobi Rittii *Additiones* on Paulus Venetus, *Logica parva*, IV, 1 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 70va): “Ultimo [...] Probatio propositionis semper debet incipere a primo termino mediato, non a primo secundum situm, sed a primo termino denominante propositionem. Exemplum. Probatio istius ‘hominem currere est possibile’, non debet incipere a ly ‘hominem’, sed a ly ‘possibile’, ex quo ista denominatur modalis de sensu composito.”

90. Manfredi de Medicis *Additiones* to Paulus Venetus, *Logica parva*, IV, 1 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 71vb): “Vltorius aduerte quod est vna maxima in illa materia, quod a termino primo aut situatiter aut virtualiter tali probabili, est inchoanda propositionis probatio.”

91. Menghi [Bianchelli] Faventini *Subtilissime expositiones questionesque super Summulis Magistri Pauli Veneti*, IV, 18 (ed. Venetiis 1542: f. 92va): “Aduerte pro maiori examinatione huius tractatus quod cum proponitur tibi aliqua propositio statim debes videre”, etc.; we read in a marginal note: “Notandum secundum: hec sunt verba formalia Pauli Pergulensis in fine sui tractatus de probationibus terminorum.” Cf. also f. 92vb: “Et sic est finis huius tractatus; si quid autem hic diminute diximus, ample dicemus contra probationes terminorum”; the text corresponds to Paul of Pergula, *Logica*, III (ed. Brown: 84,1293-86, 1339).

92. Paul of Pergula, *Logica*, III (ed. Brown: 84, 1295-1300): if the proposition is immediate, it cannot be proved; if it is negative, “debes eam probare per causas veritatis, aut per contradictorium, aut per singulares, ut supra dictum est” (84, 1298-1300).

from the first mediate term, without any jumping (*non per saltum*).⁹³ At this point Paul of Pergula writes:

I mean the first term not in a spatial sense, but in the denominative sense: in modal propositions the mode often comes last in terms of position, while nevertheless it is first in terms of denomination Having given the proof of the first term, you must go on step by step (*gradatim*) to the next term, if there is one, and so on in this way until all mediate terms of the categorical proposition have been sufficiently explained.

The author goes on to illustrate the case of the hypothetical proposition.⁹⁴

One explanation for the particular way that Paul of Pergula phrases himself in the quotation above might be that he feared that the idea of a first term in the “denominative sense” would be perceived as introducing something radically new into the proof theory, and so Paul employs other terms to describe the way to proceed in proving a proposition – *non per saltum, gradatim* – that seem meant to neutralize the supposed novelty and bring the proof back to a more traditional form. Manfredo Medici appears to confirm this explanation.⁹⁵

93. Paul of Pergula, *Logica*, III (ed. Brown: 84, 1301-85,1308): “Si categorica vide primum terminum mediatum et ab eo debes inchoare propositionis probationem quia a primo termino mediato *semper* inchoanda est propositionis probatio, *et non per saltum* debes propositionem probare, quia fiunt multae deceptiones exponendo propositionem non exponibilem sed resolubilem et e converso. Verbi gratia, ista propositio: Aliquod album incipit esse Sortes, est resolvenda ratione de ly aliquod album et non probanda ratione de ly incipit per causas veritatis.” (Italics mine).

94. Paul of Pergula, *Logica*, III (ed. Brown: 85, 1308-1317): “Appello autem primum terminum non secundum situm sed secundum denominationem, ut in modalibus, saepe modus secundum situm est ultimus, et tamen secundum denominationem est primus. [...] Facta autem probatione primi termini debes *gradatim* procedere ad alium si quis est, et sic donec omnes termini mediati propositionis categorice fuerint secundum exigentiam declarati. Si vero propositio fuerit hypothetica [...]”, etc. (Italics mine).

95. Manfredi de Medicis *Additiones* to Paulus Venetus, *Logica parva*, IV, 3 (ed. Venetis 1542: f. 75va): “Circa capitulum officiabilium aduerte primo quod illa [*sc.* regula] est supplenda: nullo termino mediato precedente, quod dico quia illa ‘Sor scit hominem currere’ est resoluenda, cum a primo termino sit inchoanda propositionis probatio. Verumtamen facta resolutione prima, habet officari, et ideo quelibet talis in qua terminus modalis vel concernens actum mentis determinat etc. est officiabilis mediate vel immediate, aut saltem includit aliquam propositionem sic probabilem, quod dico quia illa propositio ‘tantum Sortes scit hominem currere’ neque mediate neque immediate habet officari, includit tamen vnam que habet sic probari etc.”

But a more convincing explanation is put forward by John Wyclif and Paul of Venice, both of whom place more emphasis on the intellectual order of a proposition.⁹⁶ In particular, Paul of Venice states that the mode of a proposition in the compound sense, although it does not precede at the spoken or written level, in fact does precede in three ways, namely in terms of signification, in the corresponding mental proposition, and in the order of proving. Thus, in the case of a modal proposition in the compound sense, the mode is actually the first provable term.⁹⁷

96. Cf. Johannis Wyclif *Logice continuacio*, I, 3 (ed. Dziewicki: 84): “Ex istis elicitor talis regula, quod in probando propositiones est ordo terminorum specialiter attendendus, cum utrobique termini mediati, secundum intellectum debitum prioris, significatio debeat explicari, antequam posterioris termini mediati officium explicetur. Verbi gratia: capta illa propositione, *album incipit esse Sor*, cuius primus terminus est ille terminus resolubilis *album*, probanda est propositio resolutorie ratione illius termini *album*, sic arguendo: *hoc incipit esse Sor; et hoc est (vel incipit esse) album*. Unde aliqui, per defectum illius considerationis, intricarunt seipsos et expresserunt suam sententiam nimis diffuse. Et hoc est quod monet quidam subtilis loycus, quod non fiat saltus ultra terminos mediatos in qualibet propositione exponenda; nam, exponendo primo hoc verbum *incipit*, foret nimis longum opus et intricabilis expositio, quamvis contingant frequenter multas propositiones sic inferri. Et additur in regula dicta ‘secundum intellectum debitum prioris’, quoniam quandoque terminus precedit vocaliter ubi, ad congruum intellectum habendum, oportet equipollentem terminum posterius intelligi” (I have modified the punctuation). For Wyclif’s text and the context of the second half of the XIV century, cf. Maierù 1972: 402-403 with note 32. A similar passage, concerning the “regula principalis et nobilissima totius logicae”, is in Paul of Venice, *Logica magna*, 3.13 (ed. Perreiah: 104): “quando sunt plures termini mediati in aliqua propositione, semper a primo termino debet incipi istius propositionis probatio, ita quod prioris termini mediati significatio debet explicari, antequam posterioris termini mediati officium explicetur. Verbi gratia capta propositione ‘Album incipit esse Sortes’, cuius primus terminus est ille terminus resolubilis ‘album’, probanda est propositio resolutorie respectu istius termini ‘album’ sic arguendo: ‘Hoc incipit esse Sortes et hoc est vel incipit esse album’. Ideo aliqui propter defectum illius considerationis seipsos intricarunt et suam sententiam expresserunt nimis (minus *ed.*) diffuse [...]”

97. Paulus Venetus, *Logica magna*, I, 20 (ed. Franciscus de Macerata-Jacopus de Fosano: f. 73va): “Respondetur [...] qui modus, licet non precedat in voce vel in scripto, tamen precedit (procedit *ed.*) in significatione et in sua mentali cui correspondet et in ordine probandi illam propositionem ‘hominem currere est impossibile’. Sumendo enim li ‘impossibile’ in sensu composito, est primus terminus probabilis, sed in sensu diuiso est secundus [...]”; quoted in Maierù 1972: 463 n. 279.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to emphasize two points. The first is that the historiography of the last decades has examined the theme of mental language with reference to authors of the first part of the fourteenth century⁹⁸ and of the first part of the sixteenth century.⁹⁹ The study of authors of the later fourteenth century and of the fifteenth century clearly supports the conclusion that throughout the entire period there was a great deal of continuity in the discussion.

The second point is that the hero of my story is not Buridan, but Heytesbury. Is there a connection between Heytesbury and Buridan? Can we say that there is a Buridian version of the doctrine given by Heytesbury? I cannot answer with certainty, but I would like to know something more on this point, and in general about the reciprocal influences between Oxford and Parisian logicians during the first half of the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁰

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98. Cf. Panaccio 1999.

99. Cf. esp. the articles referred to above, n. 11.

100. Russell L. Friedman generously informs me that in a question of his reworked Parisian commentary on the *Sentences* (composed after 1319-20) Francis of Marchia "claims that a proposition is composed of two simple acts, which are the terms, plus an act of 'compositio', all three of these acts existing at once, but with an 'order of nature' between them, since the terms act 'materialiter et dispositive' with respect to the act of 'compositio'" (cf. Francisci de Marchia *Quodlibet cum quaestionibus selectis ex Commentario in librum Sententiarum* (ed. Mariani): 531-32). Friedman suggests that Francis' position could be a testimony of a "native Parisian tradition influencing" Gregory of Rimini. Friedman's suggestion is welcome. I add just a little remark: we cannot exclude an influence on the Parisian milieu of Ockham's commentary on the second book of the *Sentences* (cf. above n. 33), which Ockham read in Oxford in 1318 or even before (cf. Introduction to the text of Ockham, OTh V, p. 26*), although the text of Ockham's work that we possess (a *reportatio*) does not explain the terminology and the arguments Marchia puts forward.

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Some Notes on the Revival of Modistic Linguistics in the Fifteenth Century: Ps.-Johannes Versor and William Zenders of Weert

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Summary: Fifteenth-century modistic, and broadly speaking speculative, grammar receives bad press in the history of linguistics. It is commonly held that by that period modistic grammar no longer contributed to the doctrinal development of linguistics, and that it was being slowly but surely superseded by the humanists' approach to grammar and language. A closer inspection of the texts shows, however, that up to the beginning of the sixteenth century speculative grammar was still in vogue and played an important role in the training of the future intellectual elite. The interest in it is not only noticeable in highly theoretical works, but also in textbooks that were used extensively in the schools, like Ps.-Versor's *Commentary on the Donatus minor* and William Zenders of Weert's *Opus minus* on the *Doctrinale*. Moreover, the reflections on grammar and the explanatory analyses of language were part of the famous *Wegestreit*, since it turns out that the *antiqui* or *reales*, on the one hand, and the *moderni* or *nominales*, on the other, each had their own distinctive approach to grammar.

1. Introduction

In this essay, I will discuss a few elements of late fifteenth-century linguistic thought. Jan Pinborg claimed that a revival of modistic grammar occurred at that time, and he associated this revived modism with the *via antiqua*, but he immediately added the harsh criticism that “no theoretical innovations [were] recorded” in this period.¹ This remark

1. Pinborg 1982: 256: “After 1300 no original contribution to modistic theory was made, although modistic terminology continued to govern grammatical description.” See also Ashworth 1988: 153: “By 1350 the doctrines of speculative grammar had already lost their importance for philosophers of language. No original contributions had been made after 1300, and the theoretical framework had been subjected to strong attacks.”

together with his previous characterisation of late medieval modistic thought in his famous *Die Entwicklung*² enticed me, notwithstanding the bad press that late modistic grammar has generally received in modern scholarship, to investigate this branch of fifteenth-century linguistic thought. Moreover, the reason for giving serious attention to late medieval linguistics is obvious. It is not only justified by the need to record the development of linguistic thought, but also by the fact that linguistics played a central role in late medieval thinking. A serious examination of what really was going on in linguistic theory at the end of the Middle Ages is, therefore, of paramount importance for our understanding of not just the linguistic thought of the period but also of the intellectual climate in general.

In the late Middle Ages and the first decades of the sixteenth century, modistic grammar still enjoyed widespread popularity and influenced the teaching of grammar at all but the elementary level.³ The large number of texts written in the period – many of which remain all but unexplored in manuscripts and early printings – testify to this fact. On the other hand, the verdict that it is a theory with little new to offer has obviously deterred modern research into this area. Consequently, a number of important questions have not been asked. We must bear in mind that, in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, “modism” was not a uniform line of linguistic thought that developed towards a single culminating point. Several branches were to be found in various parts of Europe. Of course, all forms of modism shared a few basic tenets by which they are and were recognised to be modistic; but the modistic grammarians were quite prepared to disagree amongst themselves on several important topics, as Rosier-Catach has emphasised in her contribution to the *History of Language Science*.⁴ Consequently, when we talk of a “revival”, several questions arise: what was revived? Which issues were considered important, and why? How were they handed down? And what was the philosophical and educational framework within which this revival took place? It is necessary to answer these questions in order to obtain a clear understanding of modism’s contribution to the creation of the late medieval intellectual. These

2. Pinborg 1967: 195-212.

3. For more general studies I refer the reader to, *inter alia*, Heath 1971; Overfield 1984; Kaluza 1988; Tewes 1993.

4. Rosier-Catach 2000: 548b.

answers will also enable us to understand and evaluate the attacks by the humanists who, starting from a completely different view of language, showed their disagreement with the linguistic traditions that they themselves or their teachers had learned.

In this essay, I will not deal with any theoretical treatises containing full-blown modistic doctrine; rather I propose to examine two low-level grammatical texts, in which modistic theory played an indisputable but not always an equally prominent role. These grammatical texts are the commentary on the *Donatus minor* attributed in the early printings to John Versor (but which was, in all probability, not authored by him), and the commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* by the Cologne master William Zenders of Weert.⁵ Although these commentaries are vastly different from each other in character, nevertheless they have in common the fact that they were used extensively in schools; their widespread popularity can be deduced from frequent reprints throughout the last decades of the fifteenth century and even in the early sixteenth century. An interesting characteristic of these texts is that they present us with applied versions of modistic theory. A further advantage is that neither text has yet been subjected to the fillet knife of modern research.

We must bear in mind that, beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, three main currents developed in linguistic thought: modistic grammar, nominalist or ultra-mentalist grammar, and humanist grammar. The three currents were in strong competition with each other and, taken together, they dominated the linguistic scene. I shall

5. For the problematic attribution of the *Donatus* commentary to Versor, and the late fifteenth-century manuscript in which this text is ascribed to a master Gaufredus or Ganfredus, see below, at and around nn. 59-63. I shall refer to the author as Ps.-Versor. For a survey of the printings of Ps.-Versor's commentary, see Hain 1838: 492, where seven printings are listed [nrs 16057-16063]. I have used the Heidelberg 1489 edition (Hain 16058; copy: Cambridge, UL, Inc. 5. A 32.2). See also below, at n. 62.

William Zenders (or Senders) of Weert's commentary on the *Doctrinale* has been transmitted in 11 printed texts, two of which contain the commentary on the first part only; the other nine print the commentary on the second part only. See GW I, col. 640-46 [nrs 1167-1177]. For my research on Zenders, I have used the Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek copy of the Heinrich Quentell Köln 1500 edition of this text; for this edition, see GW 1176, where the Den Haag copy is not mentioned. There are no known manuscripts containing William's commentary, only the fifteenth-century printed editions. In all of the manuscripts the text has been attributed to William Zenders / Senders of We(e)rt or William Wert.

start, therefore, with some general remarks about modistic, nominalist or ultra-mentalist, and humanist grammar. An analysis of Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* will then follow, and specific reference will be made to his use of modistic theory. I shall then discuss some features of Zenders' commentary, and conclude the paper with a few final remarks.

2. Linguistics in the Late Middle Ages: A Survey

For a good understanding of modistic linguistics, it must be kept in mind that this branch of grammar was not concerned with the imposition of words on the *significata specialia*, for the consideration of the *significata specialia*, the modists held, belongs to specialists in the various fields of the sciences. Furthermore, the grammar that regulated the daily use of spoken or written language was the domain of the ordinary grammar master. The medieval grammarians typically called these two domains of grammar *grammatica positiva* and *grammatica usualis* respectively, and they assigned to them different methods. No one can possibly know the *grammatica positiva* without having knowledge of the essence of the *res* on which the words are imposed. The *grammatica usualis*, on the other hand, does not consider the *res*; its method is based on parallel cases and induction. In contrast to both of these methods, the modistic grammarian paid attention exclusively to the causes and principles of *spoken* language,⁶ i.e. the *modi significandi*, in order to establish the general rules about the properties of the parts of speech, congruity, and perfection of speech, the *conclusiones grammaticales*.⁷ The *modi significandi* were considered to be independent of the particular languages, and were thought to be ultimately rooted in the properties of

6. See e.g. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 14, *Ad solutionem*, 137; cf. Rosier-Catach 2000: 544a.

7. Cf. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 3, *Ad quaestionem* 4^o, 99: "ille qui invenit grammaticam a priori pertractando principia ad conclusiones grammaticales, cum sic pertractavit fuit grammaticus, quia grammatica est cognitio effectus grammaticalis per eius causas. Unde causatur grammatica ex pertractione principiorum grammaticalium ad conclusiones grammaticales. Ergo simul cum quis pertractavit illa principia grammaticalia ad conclusiones grammaticales fuit grammaticus. Quia posita causa simul ponitur et effectus."

the things (“every *active* mode of signifying comes from some property of the thing”),⁸ or materially the same as the modes of being (“the modes of being, the passive modes of understanding, and the passive modes of signifying are the same materially and in reality, but they differ formally”).⁹ We must bear in mind, however, that the modistic grammarian’s interest in the *res* is secondary. He considers the *modi essendi* only because knowledge of them is necessary in order for him to gain knowledge of the *modi significandi*. Moreover, the modistic grammarian accepted a full and equal distinction between the domains of the logician and of the grammarian: both of them were speculative sciences *sui iuris*; consequently, they did not accept a dependence of grammar on logic.¹⁰

The second line of linguistic thought is the nominalist – or rather ultra-mentalistic – grammar: the grammar of mental language, which was the ultimate result of the grammaticalisation of thought.¹¹ The adherents of this current considered spoken language to be completely conventional. They denied any real existence to the modes of signifying, using them only as metaphors; the term ‘*modus significandi*’ was taken to indicate only the ‘*modus agendi intellectus*’, which has the intellect as its subject.¹² In the domain of syntax, they removed as independent entities in their linguistic ontology the modistic *passiones* of the parts

8. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, c. II, 136-37: “Omnis modus significandi activus est ab aliqua rei proprietate.”

9. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, c. II, 142-43: “modi essendi, et modi intelligendi passivi, et modi significandi passivi, sunt idem materialiter et realiter, sed differunt formaliter.”

10. Cf. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio 4, Ad quaestionem 2^o*, 104: “sicut logicus non considerat res nisi per accidens, ut scilicet super eas fundantur intentiones secundae, sic etiam grammaticus non considerat per se et primo significatum nec etiam vocem, licet totum aggregatum ex istis consideret; sed considerat illa ut ibi fundantur quaedam rationes significandi vel quaedam proportionales modorum significandi.”

11. For “grammaticalisation de la pensée”, see the important work by Panaccio 1999: 265.

12. Aurifaber in Pinborg 1967: 227: “Tertio distinguo hoc membrum ‘modus significandi’, qui potest accipi dupliciter: Uno modo pro modo agendi intellectus, qui modus est in intellectu subiective Alio modo accipitur ‘modus significandi’ pro quodam derelicto in constructione per intellectum, mediante quo vox significat et habet modum sue actionis significandi et consignificandi. Et sic negatur modus significandi, quia vox ex solo usu et exercitio significat et non ex aliquo, quod sibi formaliter vel subiective acquiratur.”

of speech, i.e. *constructio*, *congruitas*, and *perfectio*.¹³ Because the nominalists did not consider the grammar of spoken language universal, that grammar could not be a speculative science. The grammarians occupied themselves with the grammars of the various languages, which all had a thoroughly conventional character. The grammar of mental language, on the other hand, was universal; its consideration belonged to the logician and the metaphysician.¹⁴ This is the grammar in which the masters of the *via moderna* were interested. They considered the grammar of spoken language completely dependent on the grammar of mental language.¹⁵

The third line of linguistic thought, prominent from the second half of the fourteenth century onwards, is humanist grammar. This was rooted in the secondary-level normative grammar of the late twelfth century, and it continued to make an, albeit selective, use of the terms and concepts that were developed in this secondary-level grammar. As early as the first decades of the thirteenth century, the grammarians of the important city-states in southern Europe developed an interest in grammar that differentiated them from their northern European colleagues. They mainly prepared their pupils for the civil service and for the notarial, legal, and medical schools, and not exclusively for a clerical career or for further studies in philosophy or theology.¹⁶ For this

13. See master Marcilius in Kneepkens 1992: 166: "Ex isto concluditur quod unio constructibilium non est quid distinctum a constructibilibus unitis. ... Confirmatur: Sicut est in natura, sic erit in arte. Sed sic est in natura quod stat aliqua corpora uniri sine generatione alicuius accidentis in aliquo illorum, ut patet de duobus asseribus. Igitur sic etiam erit in arte constructibilia adinuicem uniri sine generatione alicuius accidentis in aliquo illorum."

14. Aurifaber in Pinborg 1967: 231, sub 25: "considerant [sc. logicus et grammaticus] easdem partes [sc. orationis] diversimode: loycus quidem ut illa consideratio videtur esse communis omni lingue; gramaticus autem non sic universaliter, quia non considerat, ut sint communia omni lingue, cum aliqua considerat gramaticus <***> lingua latina tantum invenitur, et iste gramaticus grecus congruentia lingue grece."

15. See Kaczmarek's edition (1994) of the *Destructiones modorum significandi*, 58: "congruitas, regimen et constructio nulli competunt nisi orationi mentali et orationi vocali et orationi scriptae. Sed orationi vocali et orationi scriptae non competunt, nisi quia competunt orationi mentali. Ergo praedicta tria [sc. congruitas, regimen, constructio] competunt orationi mentali primo et per se secundo modo [*i.e.* naturaliter] ... si oratio vocalis vel scripta numquam esset subordinata orationi mentali, nec esset congrua nec incongrua, nec in ea esset regimen nec constructio.", and master Marcilius in Kneepkens 1990: 54: "Dato quod nulle essent uoces uel scripta, sed solum conceptus, adhuc in mente esset regimen gramaticale et esset sciencia de regimine grammaticali. Et illa sciencia finaliter sciscetur in speculari."

16. Black 2001: 90.

reason, normative grammar, as opposed to philosophical reflection on language, was their predominant interest. They paid more attention to Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* than to Martin of Dacia's *Summa de modis significandi*.¹⁷ As early as the fourteenth century, these Renaissance grammarians were quoting abundantly from the works of the ancient Roman authors in order to illustrate the syntactic phenomena of the Latin language.¹⁸ In the fifteenth century, the humanist grammarians insisted on the *imitatio veterum* as the most important means of acquiring a refined style and the correct use of the Latin language. In Italy, Valla's *De linguae Latinae elegantia* and Perotti's *Rudimenta grammatices* occupied a key position in this development, and the influence of their writings was felt all over Europe.¹⁹ One example of this is Thomas Linacre, who composed his *De emendata structura Latini sermonis* in the 1520s. This work is generally considered one of the first humanist textbooks on syntax for advanced students. The pivotal role assigned by Linacre to the imitation of the ancient authors becomes clear in his discussion of grammatical construction: the correct composition of the parts of speech according to the requirements of proper grammatical principles: *recta grammatices ratio*. The *recta grammatices ratio* turns out to be those grammatical principles that were typically used by the most excellent of the ancient authors when they were speaking or composing texts.²⁰ Given these three lines of linguistic thought, it must be emphasised that a fundamental difference existed between, on the one hand, modistic grammar and the grammar of mental language, and, on the other hand, humanist grammar, a difference already noted by Apel and by Pinborg.²¹ It is true that modistic grammar and the grammar of

17. It is not my intention to argue that modistic / intentionist grammar was completely absent in South-Europe or even in Italy. On the contrary, there are some modistic texts composed by Italian grammarians, but their number is quite limited. I mention Gentilis of Cingulo's questions (1992) on Martin of Dacia's *Summa* and Matthew of Bologna's questions concerning the modes of signifying (1992); for the situation on the Iberian Peninsula, see Percival 2001: 5-8.

18. See Black 2001: 120.

19. See Padley 1976: 16-17; Percival 1981; Percival 1982: 810-11; Percival 1986: 57.

20. Thomas Linacre, *De emendata structura Latini sermonis libri sex*, 1527, 35a: "Est igitur constructio, debita partium orationis inter se compositio, sicuti recta grammatices ratio exigit. Porro recta grammatices ratio ea est, qua veterum probatissimi plurimum, cum loquendo tum scribendo sunt vsi." For a survey of his life and writings, see Jensen 1996: 578, and Colombat 1998b. For the *imitatio* as the criterion for considering an author a humanist, see Witt 2000: 22 and 199-200.

21. Cf. Apel 1963: 17-18, 172-174; Pinborg 1967: 210-11.

mental language were rooted in fundamentally different philosophical frameworks, but they agreed in their ultimate aim: the acquisition of knowledge. *Scire* was the goal of every speculative science, and modistic grammar and the grammar of mental language are *scientia*, i.e. they are concerned with the causes and principles underlying language. This concern is the driving force behind both of these grammatical approaches, and they were, therefore, both considered to be forms of speculative, i.e. theoretical, grammar. Because their practitioners considered them to be an indispensable step in the process of acquiring knowledge, these same practitioners placed both modistic and ultramentalist grammar among the speculative sciences.²² In contrast, according to the humanist grammarian, language is primarily a means to be used in the creation of human “*Lebensraum*”, i.e. the conditions for a truly human life, for which grammar, taken in a broad sense, is an absolute “must”. To illustrate this attitude, I refer to the first book of Leonardo Bruni’s *Dialogues* with Paulus Hister. Bruni clearly showed his enthusiasm for an *éducation permanente* “*in grammaticis*”, but he did not mean “an education in speculative grammar or in learning the Latin language,” but “in the *ars* that instructs us to read and *enjoy* the *auctores*”, i.e. literature in a broad sense.²³

22. For modistic grammarians, see e.g. Boethius Dacus, *Quaestio* 3, 18: “grammatica est scientia speculativa, non tamen ipsa est naturalis nec mathematica nec divina. Et hoc quia ipsa non est essentialis pars philosophiae, sed est scientia introductoria et valet ad cognitionem scientiarum speculatarum, quae essentialia partes philosophiae sunt.” and Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 1, *Ad quaestionem*, 91: “Etiam grammatica est scientia speculativa quia est propter scire.” For ultramentalist grammar, see e.g. master Marcilius quoted in Kneepkens 1990: 53: “Ex parte finis sciencia dicitur speculatiua, que finaliter acquiritur propter speculari solum. ... Ex parte obiecti sciencia dicitur speculatiua, que considerat aliqua non sub ratione sub qua circa ipsa aliquid libere operamur per uoluntatem et intellectum.”

23. Leonardo Bruni, *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, 239, § 10: “Equidem memini, cum puer adhuc Bononiae essem ibique grammaticis operam darem, me solitum quotidianie, vel aequales lacescendo vel magistros rogando, nullum tempus vacuum disputationis transisse. Neque id <quod [cf. *app. crit. ed. Baldassarri*]> in pueritia feci, postea vero, annis crescentibus, dereliqui; sed in omni aetate atque vita nihil mihi gratius fuit, nihil quod aeque expeterem quam doctos homines, si modo potestas data sit, convenire, et quae legerim et quae agitaverim et de quibus ambigerem illis exponere, eorumque in his rebus percontari iudicium.”

3. Ps.-John Versor's *Resolutio*

It is commonly accepted that modistic grammar disappeared completely from the University of Paris in the 1320s, although there are indications that this view needs to be qualified to a certain extent. In central Europe, however, a strong modistic tradition continued "in grammaticis". It is likely that its revival in the western part of Europe, especially in Paris, started with the commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* by Johannes de Nova Domo or Nieuwenhuysen, the founder of the Albertist school in Paris at the end of the fourteenth century. Johannes' commentary has yet to be closely examined, but it is clear that he argued that knowledge of the modes of signifying is essential for congruous sentence construction. The authoritative text that he relies on is the modistic *Grammatica speculativa* by Thomas of Erfurt, who is mentioned by name as "Thomas".²⁴

The Dominican John Versor (d. c. 1485) was reputed to be a Thomist;²⁵ he composed several commentaries on Aristotelian works, Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, and Thomas Aquinas' *De ente et essentia*. We encounter in the commentary on the *Donatus minor* that was printed under Versor's name frequent use of an elementary version of modism. Before I provide a more systematic discussion of this text, a few preliminary remarks must be made that might possibly explain this situation.

First, I have to warn my readers that I refer to the author of this work as "Ps.-Versor", since, as mentioned above, in all probability John Versor was not the actual author. I shall return to this question at the end of this section.

Second, it should be noted that the *Donatus minor* is an elementary textbook. Even if Ps.-Versor's treatment is of a more advanced level, it

24. Cf. Kaluza 1988: 95 and ms. Erlangen 650, f. 16rb: "modi significandi gramaticales sunt principia sermonis congrui, ergo contra negantes modos significandi non fieret disputatio. Minor patet per omnes autores modorum significandi et precipue per Thomam in suo libro modorum significandi, ubi in principio probat quod constructio congrua nulla possit haberi sine cognitione modorum significandi; ergo concluditur quod sciencia de modis significandi in gramatica summe est necessaria."

25. Several of Versor's commentaries on Aristotle's works were printed at Cologne with the remark "secundum processum Burse Montis", i.e. the Cologne *Bursa Montana*, which favoured later Thomism; for Versor's Thomism, see, *inter alios*, Lohr 1971: 290; Lohr 1988: 597-600; Meuthen 1988: 185; Tewes 1993: 389-90; recently Bos 2002 stressed, however, Versor's inclination to Albertism in logic.

does not reach the highest theoretical level. In all probability, it was intended for teachers. In his commentary, Ps.-Versor follows a strict pattern. He divides his work into ten parts: his comments on (1) the title, (2) on the definition of the part of speech (*pars orationis*), and on (3-10) the eight specific parts of speech. Each discussion of a specific part of speech, with the exception of the interjection, is divided into two parts, one on the definition of the part of speech in question and another on its accidents. In each part, Ps.-Versor first notes the wording of the *littera* on which he is commenting, and presents a short introduction to the *littera*. Next he adduces four topics that are central to the introductory section; they are labelled as follows: “sciendum primo / secundo / tertio / quarto”. A set of five counter-arguments to some elements of these four positions follows, and finally these five counter-arguments receive comprehensive responses.

Third and last, we must bear in mind that Ps.-Versor compiled a commentary and not a textbook or a *summa*, and further that he was well aware that the *Donatus minor* was a Latin primer for *minus proveci*.²⁶ His main objective was to present and explain the linguistics that, in his opinion, underlay Donatus’ primer, and he tried to perform this task with the help of contemporary methods, in combination with the theory to which he adhered.

In his text, we encounter an interesting section on the place of grammar among the disciplines, which are divided into civil and non-civil categories. The civil disciplines are, in turn, subdivided into low-level or mechanic disciplines; middle-level disciplines, which include the moral ones; and, finally, high-level disciplines, involving the contemplation of things. Among the latter we find the rational disciplines, i.e.

26. In his treatment of nominal accidents, Ps.-Versor has to account for the differences between the list of accidents given by Priscian and that given by Donatus. He “explains this away” by pointing to the difference in level of their intended audience: Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, A6v: “Sciendum tertio quod licet Priscianus assignet aliqua accidentia nominis que Donatus non assignat, et Donatus assignat aliqua que tamen non assignat Priscianus, non tamen est controversia inter ipsos, quia diversimode assignaverunt accidentia nominis, et etiam diversimode locuti sunt. Nam Priscianus loquebatur perfectis et sapientibus, Donatus vero pueris et iuvenibus locutus est. Unde scire derivationem vocabulorum pertinet ad perfectos et sapientes et non ad pueros. Ideo Priscianus assignat speciem pro accidente nominis, non tamen assignat Donatus. Quia Donatus est informator iuvenum et instructor puerorum, ideo ad maiorem informationem eorum assignat Donatus comparisonem, ut instruat ipsos qualiter debeant comparare.”

grammar, logic, and rhetoric, as well as the real disciplines, i.e. physics, metaphysics, and mathematics. On the basis of this division and, especially, the position he allotted to grammar, we may conclude that the grammar that Ps.-Vorsor deals with in this commentary can be equated with speculative grammar.

An overall examination of the commentary indicates that Ps.-Vorsor's main goals were:

- the analysis with the help of logic of the definitions at issue
- determining the grammatical use of those terms that have a wider application than in the field of grammar only
- the presentation and comparison of Priscian's and Donatus' definitions
- the explanation of the differences between these grammarians.

It is evident that his intention is not to teach correct daily use of the Latin language. In order to obtain his goal, he refers, whenever he deems necessary, to the *modi significandi* and, implicitly, modistic grammar. Such references, however, always have the appearance of a means to an end: it is obviously not his intention either to compose a treatise on modistic grammar or a full-blown modistic commentary. Consequently, one looks in vain for a systematic treatment of the modes of signifying; they are only occasionally adduced. Moreover, and even more remarkably, the modes of being and the modes of understanding are not mentioned at all, though a few casual remarks reveal some familiarity with the fact that the modes of signifying refer to properties of the *res* and not to the *res* as such. For instance, Ps.-Vorsor deals with this topic in the section on nominal gender, where he points to the traditional correspondence of the modes of signifying to properties of a thing in reality,²⁷ e.g. a stone. A masculine noun was assigned to the *res*

27. Ps.-Vorsor, *Resolutio*, B3v-B4a: "Contra predicta arguitur primo sic:

Quecunque respectu unius et eiusdem sunt eadem, illa inter se sunt eadem. Sed masculinum et femininum et neutrum sunt eadem respectu unius et eiusdem rei, ut lapis est masculini generis, petra feminini generis, saxum neutri generis, et tamen ista nomina eandem rem significant; ergo masculinum, femininum et neutrum non sunt genera distincta.

Quinto sic: Sicut est in natura, sic debet esse in arte, quia ars imitatur naturam. 2^o *Phisicorum*. Sed in natura non sunt nisi duo genera, scilicet masculinum et femininum. Ergo erunt etiam in arte nisi duo genera.

“stone” to signify its active property: ‘lapis’;²⁸ on the other hand, a feminine noun was assigned to stone to signify its passive property: ‘petra’.²⁹ In fact, this traditional lore is to be found in the writings of such early modistic grammarians as Martin of Dacia.³⁰ It was repeated, however, time and again in modistic treatises.

The level of the modistic theory that we meet in Ps.-Vorsor’s commentary is rather basic. One looks in vain for the widely used distinction between the active and passive modes of signifying and, as mentioned above, for the theoretical framework involving the modes of being and the modes of understanding, both of which were integral parts of modistic theory. On the other hand, he does distinguish between the essential and the accidental modes of signifying. The essential modes of signifying are subdivided into the general essential mode and the specific essential mode. Both these latter modes are constitutive of the part of speech in question, but the general essential mode can be shared by another part, while the specific or special mode is unique to that part of speech and places a word in the category of the specified part of speech. It is through the specific or special mode, then, that a particular part of speech cannot be any other particular part of speech. The general mode and special mode are comparable to matter and form, and the general mode is said to be the mode of matter, while the specific mode the mode of form. For instance, the noun and the pronoun both share in signifying the mode of substance, while signifying the mode of

Ad argumenta in oppositum: Ad primum: Illa que sunt eadem uni tertio secundum rem et rationem simul sunt eadem inter se. Modo licet illa nomina idem significant secundum rem, non tamen secundum rationem, quia imponuntur a diuersis rationibus siue proprietatibus in illa re repertis. Nam in illa re reperitur una proprietas actiua que est ledere pedem, et sub hac imponitur in masculino genere; reperitur etiam in illa re alia proprietas passiuua, scilicet pede trita, et sub hac imponitur in feminino genere. Ideo cum oriatur genus a proprietate rei, et ille proprietates sunt diuersae, ob hoc illa genera erunt diuersa.

Ad argumenta in oppositum: Ad quintum: Licet accipiendo genus ut dicitur a genero .as. are. Vel a genero .aris., scilicet quia uel generatur uel generat secundum quem modum non sumitur genus a grammatico, nec est accidens nominis: sunt tantum duo genera, tamen accipiendo genus ut est modus significandi consignificans proprietatem rei possunt esse plura genera quam duo secundum quod illa proprietas potest multipliciter reperiri in rebus. Et sic patet quod licet in natura sint tantum duo genera, tamen secundum artem sunt plura.”

28. Sc. lapis quasi laedens pedem.

29. The etymological result of ‘pede trita’.

30. Martinus de Dacia, *Modi significandi*, 35-37.

quality is unique to the noun. Again, this is traditional material, and Ps.-Versor uses it to counter the objection that, since no accident can have accidents, a verb cannot have accidents, because it is itself an accident. According to Ps.-Versor, the objection holds only if it is made about reality. We have to bear in mind, however, that although a verb is not a substance in reality, in the linguistic universe it is indeed a composite, namely the result of its essential modes: the mode of matter and the mode of form. Just as a substance in the extra-linguistic world is composed of matter and form, the verb is understood to be composed of these two modes of signifying. This enables a verb or another substance in the linguistic universe to be the bearer of linguistic accidents; in other words, it enables these particular accidents to be in the verb. Ps.-Versor concludes that a verb is indeed an accident when considered as a real substance, but it has the mode of substance when considered in terms of its accidental modes of signifying. In fact, he claims that an isomorphy exists between the structure of an extra-mental entity and the structure of a linguistic entity of spoken language: their ontologies are analogous.³¹

The matter/form analogy is also part of the modistic tradition; we encounter it already in Martin of Dacia's *Summa*.³² But notwithstanding Ps.-Versor's lack of originality in this respect, his use of the distinction between the general essential mode and the specific essential mode is interesting. Jan Pinborg has shown that there were two main ways of dealing with the essential modes in modistic thought.³³ One view adopted a sort of Porphyrian tree model. At the top of the "tree", it was assumed that the single most general essential mode (*modus generalissimus/generalis*) embraces every word falling under that part of speech. This most general mode is proper to that part of speech only, although

31. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, E6v: "Licet uerbum non significet substantiam, habet tamen modum substantie, eo quod constituitur in esse per suos modos significandi essentialis, qui sunt significare per modum fluxus et fieri et per modum dicibilis de alio, quorum primus est generalis habens modum materie et secundus specialis habens modum forme. Nam separat et distinguit uerbum ab aliis partibus orationis et reponit ipsum uerbum sub esse partis. Et ideo sicut substantia materialis componitur ex materia et forma, ita uerbum intelligitur componi ex istis duobus modis significandi. Ex quo patet quod uerbum habet modum substantie, ideo sibi possunt inesse aliqua accidentia, ita quod licet uerbum comparatum ad substantiam sit accidens, tamen comparatum ad suos modos significandi accidentales habet modum substantie."

32. See Pinborg 1967: 125.

33. See Pinborg 1967: 125-26.

this mode of signifying sometimes can be divided up into two components. One of these two components is shared with another part of speech, and it functions, therefore, as matter; the other component is not shared and functions as form. For instance, Martin of Dacia states that the *modus significandi essentialis generalis* of the noun is the mode of signifying by means of the mode of state and rest and of the mode of determinate understanding. This implies that being a noun is based, for every noun, on this mode of signifying, which is a *compositum* consisting, as every *compositum* does, of matter and form: the mode of state and rest acts as the matter and the mode of determinate understanding as the form. The mode of state and rest is shared with the pronoun, which also has a *modus significandi essentialis generalis*, but a simple (i.e. non-composed) one, i.e. the mode of state and rest alone.³⁴ It must be stressed that the mode itself is considered as a whole and, as a whole, it is shared by no other part of speech. Under this most general mode, we find subaltern modes (*modi subalterni*) that are constitutive of special sets, for instance proper nouns or common nouns. Finally, at the bottom of the “tree” is the most specific mode of signifying, corresponding in the Porphyrian model to the *species specialissima*. Martin of Dacia, Radulphus Brito, and Thomas of Erfurt are representatives of

34. Martinus de Dacia, *Modi significandi*, 9-12: “nam omnis pars orationis est pars per suum modum significandi essentialem generalem. Dicitur autem essentialis pro tanto, quia est de essentia cuiuslibet sub se contenti ... Dicitur autem generalis pro tanto, quia generaliter cuiuslibet sub se contento convenit, vel dicitur generalis respectu modorum specialium ... [c. vi, paragr. 16] modus significandi essentialis generalis nominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis et per modum determinatae apprehensionis, et hic modus significandi est qui facit omne nomen esse nomen. Ad cuius intelligentiam est notandum quod iste modus significandi est compositus sive confectus ex duobus, scilicet ex modo habitus et quietis et ex modo determinatae apprehensionis. Et quia omne compositum ex necessitate vult componi ex materia et forma, ... ideo sciendum quid illorum sit materiale et quid formale ... Nota ergo quod modus habitus et quietis materialis est in modo essentiali generali nominis, modus autem determinatae apprehensionis est formalis. ... Modus significandi pronominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis”; according to Martin, the pronoun has only one essential general mode of signifying, *ibid.*, c. vii: “Modus significandi pronominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis. Per hunc enim modum pronomem est pronomem. Unde quod materiale est in modo significandi nominis, hoc est formale et completivum pronominis. Hic enim est modus significandi pronominis. Pronomen enim non significat per modum determinatae apprehensionis sicut nomen significat Ideo significat per modum habitus et quietis solum quod est sibi formale et est totus modus significandi essentialis generalis pronominis.”

this tradition. The other way of explaining essential modes in modistic thought starts with a distinction between the general and the specific essential mode. Both of these modes are essential, but the general mode can be shared by more than one part of speech, while the specific essential mode applies only to one, so that there are only eight specific modes. For parts of speech like the preposition, the general and the specific modes coincide. The general mode and the specific mode are related to each other like matter and form. Boethius of Dacia, Simon (Dacus ?), Siger of Courtrai, Michael of Marbais, and the Pseudo-Albert adhered to this latter line of thought.³⁵ It is evident that Ps.-Versor also adhered to it, although this view contradicts his remark in the general section, where he indicates that no part of speech can share an essential mode of signifying with another part.³⁶

The way in which Ps.-Versor sometimes deals with these two essential modes of signifying is astonishing. In his discussion of the nominal accidents, for example, he raises the objection, stemming from the *Praedicabilia* treatises, that an accident can be present or absent without the corruption of its subject. A problem consequently results from the fact that the accident of *figura* cannot be absent from the noun, since every noun, being either a simple or a compound noun, is of some figure. One must conclude that figure is not an accident of the noun. It is obvious that we are here confronted with an equivocal use of the term 'accidens', sc. between the logical accident and the grammatical accident, an equivocal use that had been causing problems in the two domains of grammar and logic for a long time. It is, however, more interesting for us to note that, even if some noun could have no figure, Ps.-Versor would still place it in the category of the noun because of its specific essential mode of signifying, which is signifying by the mode of state and rest.³⁷ The difficulty is that every other modistic grammarian who distinguished between two essential modes considered this essential mode or its equivalent the *general*, and not the *specific* essen-

35. See Pinborg 1967: 124-26.

36. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, A 4-v: "ideo licet una dictio possit habere plura significata, tamen una pars orationis non potest habere plures modos significandi essentialis, sic quod unus modus significandi essentialis unius partis importaretur per aliam partem orationis."

37. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, C1r: "Ad argumentum secundum in oppositum: Licet omne nomen sit alicuius figure, tamen figura potest sibi abesse, quia si nomen non haberet aliquam figuram, adhuc reponeretur in specie partis per suum modum significandi essentialis specificum, qui est significare per modum habitus et quietis."

tial mode. On first consideration, one might, of course, think that this is simply an error on Ps.-Versor's part. But we meet the same mode of signifying again as the specific essential mode of the noun in the discussion of the different modes of the verb and adverb.³⁸ Is this the result of Ps.-Versor's sloppiness or ignorance of the matter, or is there a line in modistic grammar that supports this view? I do not have an adequate answer to that question, but it brings us to the discussion of Ps.-Versor's sources, and we must determine if it is possible to say anything about them.

Ps.-Versor sometimes refers to medieval grammarians like Alexander de Villa Dei (c. 1200) and John of Garland (c. 1230), but they were commonly used sources. Of greater importance for us is the *auctor modorum significandi*, who is mentioned several times. The search for this author brings us, in the first place, to Michael of Marbais (fl. c. 1260/70), for the definitions of the several accidental modes of signifying given by Marbais show a striking similarity to those supplied by Ps.-Versor, whereas the definitions by other well-known modists are not that close. There are, however, strong indications that Ps.-Versor did *not* have Marbais on his desk when he composed his commentary. In his discussion of the essential modes of the pronoun, Ps.-Versor insists that, according to the "*auctor modorum significandi*", the pronoun's essential mode of signifying is "signifying its *res* by the mode of indeterminate substance."³⁹ Marbais explicitly rejected this view. For him

38. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, H5r: "Sciendum primo licet adiectivum nominis (scilicet albus et niger) ponatur in eadem parte orationis sicut suum substantivum, cum etiam sit nomen, tamen adiectivum verbi, quod est adverbium, non ponitur sub eadem parte orationis cum suo substantivo. Cuius ratio est quia modus significandi specificus, qui reponit nomen in specie partis scilicet significare per modum habitus et quietis, bene convenit adiectivo nominis, nec sibi repugnat modus significandi nominis." It is noteworthy that, in the same discussion, Ps.-Versor gives a correct description of the specific essential mode of signifying of the verb: "Modus significandi autem specificus verbi, scilicet modus dicibilis de altero, non convenit adverbio, sed sibi repugnat."

39. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, C5v: "Quod pronomen quiddam sic diffinitur ab auctore modorum significandi: Pronomen est pars orationis significans per modum substantie indeterminate. Et ista diffinitio est essentialis data per eius principia essentialia, scilicet per genus et differentiam, quia per hoc quod dicitur 'pars orationis', tangitur genus, et per hoc quod dicitur 'significans per modum substantie indeterminate', tangitur differentia ab aliis partibus orationis, quia per hoc quod dicitur 'substantie', differt ipsum a verbo et ab aliis partibus indeclinabilibus. Et per hoc quod dicitur 'indeterminate', differt a nomine."

the pronoun has two essential modes. The noun and the pronoun share the mode of signifying of substance (i.e. the mode of rest and state or permanency). Therefore, this mode is the general essential mode of signifying for both parts of speech. Furthermore, Marbais adduces another essential mode of the pronoun: the mode of being determinable or of being distinguishable. This mode is not shared by any other part of speech and it functions as the specific mode of the pronoun. He emphasises that he cannot accept that the mode of signifying indeterminate substance is the pronoun's specific mode. To his mind, the pronoun does not designate any indetermination concerning its *res*, since then it would seem as if the pronoun signified not a mode of being that is in the *res*, but rather the opposite mode of being. For this reason, he prefers to accept two essential modes for the pronoun: the mode of signifying a substance, the general mode, and the mode of signifying a thing under the condition of being specifiable, the specific mode.⁴⁰ This explicit rejection of a view that was fully accepted by Ps.-Versor does not make Marbais the most obvious candidate for one of Ps.-Versor's sources.

Closer to Ps.-Versor is the work of no less an author than Johannes Josse of Marville (fl. c. 1320), or rather the commentaries on Johannes Josse's work. In the first decades of the fourteenth century, Johannes Josse must have been a big name in grammar, although the modern historians of medieval linguistics have not thought much of him. As early as the 1860s Victor Le Clerc wrote: "Jean de Marville ... ne put que rédiger péniblement, en deux cent cinquante-cinq vers latins sur les *modi*, des idées qui avaient pour lui peu de clarté."⁴¹ Jan Pinborg judged him even more harshly, saying: "und schliesslich die metrischen *Modi significandi* des Johannes Josse de Marvilla, 1322 geschrieben, die vielleicht den Lernprozess erleichtert haben, aber inhaltlich unbedeutend und oft abstrus sind. Dieser Traktat konnte sich einer grossen Popularität erfreuen, ist aber inhaltlich ohne jede Bedeutung."⁴² As these historians testify, Johannes Josse's didactic poem is very obscure and it is extremely difficult to elicit a coherent modistic theory from it. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that this poem is nearly always accompanied by commentaries in which it is possible to detect a more consistent approach. Of course, there are various commentaries on Josse and these differ in content – Jan Pinborg has already identified

40. See Michael de Marbasio, *Summa de modis significandi*, 59-61.

41. Le Clerc 1865: 422.

42. Pinborg 1967: 100-101.

several different commentators⁴³ – and what is more, the contribution of Johannes Josse and the commentary tradition on his work has yet to be fully investigated. But it is evident from an initial comparison of several references in Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* with three Josse commentaries that, when he appealed to the *auctor modorum significandi* and the *liber modorum significandi*, he did use such a commentary, and not Michael of Marbais. To support this hypothesis, I provide a survey of the definitions of the accidental modes of signifying of the noun that occur in Marbais, in the Josse tradition, and in Ps.-Versor. The three commentaries I have used as instances of the Josse commentary tradition are as follows. The first is the marginal commentary in ms. Paris, BnF lat. 16671, ff. 41-48;⁴⁴ this is a highly developed commentary on Josse's text. The second commentary is preserved in the ms. Berlin, SBPK, Theol. Q 26, ff. 107-48 (hereafter: Berlin (1)).⁴⁵ The third is the question-commentary on Josse that is found in the same Berlin ms. on ff. 149^v-86^r (hereafter: Berlin (2)).⁴⁶ In addition, the definitions of the nominal accidental modes of signifying found in two modistic texts unassociated with the Josse tradition are given in order to show that the

43. Pinborg 1967: 310-12; see also Thurot 1869: 47-48.

44. It is important to stress that this marginal commentary is very early. Thus it proves that Josse's text was, in all probability, always read with the help of a commentary from as little as a decade after its appearance onwards. The colophon of this text informs us that it was copied by Jacobus de Bellomonte, who completed the task on July 24, 1334 at Marville: "Expliciunt modi significandi versificati compositi a magistro Iohanne de Maruilla. Anima eius beatificetur. Et eisdem scripsit Jacobus de Bellomonte in Maruilla in anno Domini M^o.CCC^o.XXX^o.IIII^o. Vigilia beatorum Iacobi et Cristofori apostolorum. Versus .CC. et .LV." The name of this scribe is not found in *Colophons*, vol. 3 (1973): I-J. For this text, see also Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 208.263.5.

45. For a description of this ms., see Rose 1905: 1243-45. According to the colophon, this text was copied in 1463 at the college of Tournai in Paris: "Finito libro isto sit laus et gloria Cristo. Anno domini M^oCCCC^o63 scriptum Parisius in collegio Tornacensi." In Pinborg's list it is commentary A 17; cf. Pinborg 1967: 312. Based on the incipit, "Sicut dicit Philosophus in primo Posteriorum ad cognitionem rei necesse est cognoscere causas", he was even able to identify 7 mss. of this commentary with certainty, and held the possibility open that one more existed. Without any doubt, more mss. of this text are still hidden in the libraries. See also, Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 24.62.3.

46. For this text, see Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 24.62.4. This text was copied in Paris in 1464 by the scribe Cristianus Lupi (Christian Wolff), who finished the work on 19 November: "ffinitus est iste liber per me cristianum lupi parisius anno domini m^occcc^olxiiii in die sancte elisabeth siue in profesto almanorum de sero hora quinta." In the same place one year earlier, Christian Wolff also wrote the *praelectiones* in ms. Rose 981 (Berlin, lat. Q.87): "Finitus est iste liber parisius a.d. 1463 ... per me Cristianum lupi." Cf. *Colophons*, vol. 1 (1965), nos. 2606 & 2607.

Josse line of thought – closely related to Marbais – is the one that Ps.-Versor typically adopts. One of the control texts that I have selected is Thomas of Erfurt's *Grammatica speculativa*, for although this work dates from the 1310s, it was widely used in the later Middle Ages.⁴⁷ The other control text is Erhard Knab's commentary on the *Donatus minor*, which was composed in 1458. Knab's text is especially interesting, since its author went from being an adherent of the *via antiqua* to an adherent of the *via moderna*; in this commentary, although it was written during his *via antiqua* period, we often find both modistic and "modern" definitions.⁴⁸

Qualitas accidentalis [i.e. the Donatian quality, which is an accident of the noun, not the Priscianic quality, which is an essential part of the semantics of the noun]:

- Marbais *qualitas nominis est modus significandi datus ipsi nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi multiplicabilis in plura sive inmultiplicabilis in plura*
- Paris 16671 *qualitas est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi multiplicabilis in plura uel inmultiplicabilis in plura*⁴⁹
- Berlin (1) *qualitas capitur pro quodam modo significandi accidentali dato nomini ad significandum rem in plura supposita multiplicabilem uel non multiplicabilem*
- Berlin (2) *qualitas accidentalis est quidam modus significandi datus uoci ad significandum rem suam per modum multiplicabilis uel non multiplicabilis*
- Ps.-Versor *qualitas est quidam modus significandi accidentalis datus nomini ad designandum rem suam in plura supposita multiplicabilem uel non multiplicabilem*
- Thomas Erf. Thomas considers *qualitas* to be an essential mode of signifying creating two subaltern essential modes of signifying
- Erhard Knab *qualitas modus significandi nominis per modum communis uel appropriati*⁵⁰

47. See the introduction to the edition and translation by Bursill-Hall.

48. This text has been preserved in the ms. Città del Vaticano, BAV, Pal. lat. 1589, ff. 211^v-318^v; cf. Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 288.95.2. It must be mentioned that Erhard generally adds a definition "secundum modernos" to the definitions by the *modiste* that he considers incorrect. For Erhard Knab, see also Kaczmarek 2000.

49. In this commentary no definition of *qualitas* is given, but only of *qualitas propria* and *appellatiua*.

50. Erhard casts nominalistic doubt on this definition by adding the remark: "An autem ille modus significandi nominis sit aliquod distinctum a nomine patebit forte in fine huius operis," where he explains, after his conversion to the *via moderna*, how to interpret his commentary.

Gradus comparationis:

- Marbais *gradus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem vel remissibilem ut est in subiecto simpliciter aut in excessu*
- Paris 16671 *gradus positivus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto simpliciter et absolute existentem*
gradus comparativus est quidam modus significandi et <c>. citra terminum existentem
*gradus superlativus est quidam modus significandi etc. in termino subiecto excessus existentem*⁵¹
- Berlin (1) *gradus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad significandum rem suam intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto simpliciter uel in subiecto citra terminum uel in subiecto ut in termino*
- Berlin (2) *gradus ut hic sumitur est modus <significandi> datus dictioni ad significandum rem intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto absolute sine excessu uel cum excessu citra terminum uel cum excessu (!) in termino*
- Ps.-Versor the modistic definition of the degrees of comparison is missing
 Thomas Erf. this mode is called an essential mode by Thomas “secundum aliquam eius speciem”
- Erhard Knab *est autem gradus comparationis modus significandi quo nomen significat adhuc dictionem siue rem simpliciter et sine augmento uel cum excessu siue augmentato*

Genus:

- Marbais *genus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi uirtutis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentis ad utrumque*
- Paris 16671 a modistic definition of genus is missing
- Berlin (1) *genus est modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum uirtutis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentes se habentis ad utrumque*
- Berlin (2) *genus est modus significandi accidentaliter ortus a proprietate rei datus dictioni ad significandum rem suam per modum proprietatis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentes se habentis*
- Ps.-Versor *genus est quidam modus significandi datus parti orationis ad designandum rem suam sub qualitate actiua uel passiva uel indifferentes se habentem ad utrumque*

51. In this text, a definition covering all three degrees is lacking; the text of the definition of the *gradus superlativus* appears to be not completely correct. Michael of Marbais’ definition runs as follows (p. 34): “Superlativus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem vel remissibilem ut est in subiecto termino excessus.”

- Thomas Erf. *genus est modus significandi activus quo mediante nomen proprietatem agentis vel patientis vel utrumque significat*
- Erhard Knab *dixerant Modiste quod genus in se nichil aliud sit quam modus significandi accidentalis respectuus attributus parti orationis ab intellectu secundum quod uere uel similitudinaliter significat sub proprietate agentis uel patientis uel neutri uel utriusque*

Numerus:

- Marbais *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi actualis unitatis uel actualis multiplicationis*
- Paris 16671 *modus significandi qui significat rem sub modo essendi actu multiplicatam, non actu multiplicatam*
- Berlin (1) *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad significandum rem suam per modum unitatis actualis uel per modum pluralitatis actualis*
- Berlin (2) *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum unitatis actualis uel pluralitatis*
- Ps.-Versor *numerus est modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum actualis unitatis uel pluralitatis*
- Thomas Erf. *numerus ergo est modus significandi accidentalis nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem indivisibilitatis, quae est proprietas unius, vel proprietatem divisibilitatis, quae est proprietas multitudinis, significat*
- Erhard Knab *numerus est modus significandi accidentalis respectuus parti orationis attributus secundum quod per se uel attributionem significat rem suam per modum unius uel indiuisi siue per modum plurium et diuisi essentialiter uel accidentaliter*

Figura:

- Marbais *figura est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem suam sub esse simplici vel composito*
- Paris 16671 *figura est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Berlin (1) *figura est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Berlin (2) *figura est quidam modus significandi accidentalis absolutus datus parti orationis ad significandum rem sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Ps.-Versor *figura est modus significandi accidentalis datus parti ad designandum rem sub esse simplici vel sub esse composito*
- Thomas Erf. *figura ergo est modus significandi accidentalis nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem simplicis, compositi vel decompositi significat*
- Erhard Knab *figura est modus significandi accidentalis attributus parti orationis ab intellectu secundum quod imponitur a simplici conceptu uel composito ad significandum rem uel res*

Casus:

- Marbais *casus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi ut quod est alterum, vel ut cuius est alterum, vel ut cui acquiritur alterum, vel ad quod terminatur alterum vel sub ratione termini excitationis vel sub modo essendi ut a quo fit alterum*
- Paris 16671 a modistic definition of casus is missing
- Berlin (1) *casus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum ut quis uel ut cuius uel ut cui uel ut significat rem suam ut a quo alterum terminatur uel ut ad quem uel per modum excitati ad actum uerbi persequendum*
- Berlin (2) *casus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem suam sub modo essendi ut <quod> est alterum uel cuius est alterum uel ut cui est alterum uel ut <ad> quod terminatur alterum uel in ratione [lac. fere 5 litt.] exitationis uel sub modo <a> quod est alterum*
- Ps.-Versor *casus est quidam modus significandi accidentalis datus nomini ad significandum rem suam per modum ut quod, vel cuius, vel per modum ut cui vel per modum ut quem vel per modum excitati ad actum uerbi prosequendum vel per modum ut a quo*
- Thomas Erf. *casus igitur est modus significandi accidentalis nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem principii vel termini consignificat*
- Erhard Knab *casus est modus significandi accidentalis respectiuus attributus parti orationis quo per se uel per attributionem significat sub ratione principii uel termini tantum uel sub ratione utriusque.*

Even upon first inspection, a close affinity between the definitions given by the commentator of Berlin (1) and Ps.-Versor is readily apparent. This is confirmed by the discussion of the mode of signifying of the pronoun referred to above.⁵² It appears that Johannes Josse rejects the opinion that a pronoun signifies mere substance, i.e. the substance that is stripped of all form; instead he argues that it signifies substance merely, i.e. it signifies substance as being stripped of all form. The terminology used to express this opposition is *significare meram substantiam* vs. *significare substantiam mere*. This distinction, as explained by the commentator of Berlin (1), means that the pronoun's general mode of signifying allows it to signify its substance in an indeterminate way.⁵³

52. See above, at and around nn. 39-40.

53. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, fol. 128v-29r: "Sciendum primo quod cum dicit auctor in textu 'non est res uera', destituit quandam [fol. 129r] falsam opinionem dicens quod pronomen non significat substantiam meram ab omni forma denudatam sicut materia prima, significat tamen substantiam mere, idest indeterminate. Et ibi li 'mere' dicit modum significandi substantie denudate et non substantiam meram, quia talis signifi-

On the other hand, both Josse and the commentator stress that the pronoun also has a *modus specificus* that is a more formal mode: the well-known *modus formalis*.⁵⁴ Just as the noun has the mode of determinate understanding as its specific mode, so the pronoun has the mode of indeterminate understanding, which is also called the mode of the distinguishable.⁵⁵ The commentator brings both modes together in his definition of the pronoun: “pars orationis significans per modum substantie indeterminate uel per modum distinguibilis.” In fact, Ps.-Vorsor is here providing the modistic definition of the pronoun.⁵⁶ Another feature that the Josse commentary tradition and Ps.-Vorsor have in common is that they lack the distinction between the active and passive modes of signifying.

In all probability, then, Ps.-Vorsor did not accurately transmit material supplied by his sources. Perhaps this inaccuracy is due to the fact that he was unable to balance a traditional exposition of the *Donatus minor* with an explanation derived from modistic theory. But what indeed was Ps.-Vorsor's intention? The title of Ps.-Vorsor's work handed down to us in the early printed editions – *Octo partium orationis resolutio luculentissima* – is, I suppose, programmatic. A *resolutio* or the *modus resolutorius* is directed to the *priora* according to nature: the *posterius* is resolved into the *prius*, the composite into the simple, etc.⁵⁷ His intention was not to furnish a commentary but a *resolutio*; he

cat rem suam sine qualitate et talis res non potest extra animam, sed solum per intrinsecum. Sic ergo patet quod pronomen significat substantiam habentem qualitatem sicut nomen, sed differunt, quia nomen significat substantiam cum qualitate determinata, sed pronomen significat substantiam non per modum qualitatis determinate, sed significat substantiam mere, ut dictum est, et iste est modus significandi generalis pronominis.”

54. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, f. 129r: “Sciendum secundo quod significat per modum distinguibilis: est modus significandi formalis et specificus pronominis, per quem pronomen habet esse et reponi sub tali specie partis et distinguere ab aliis.”

55. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, f. 129r: “sicut in nomine modus determinate apprehensionis est modus formalis et specificus eius, ita modus indeterminate apprehensionis est modus formalis et specificus, qui alio nomine uocatur modus distinguibilis.” A similar position is found in the commentary on Johannes Josse's text that has been preserved in ms. Paris, BnF lat. 16671.

56. See above, n. 39.

57. Cf. Maierù 1972: 395 n.5.

tried to reveal the causes and principles that underlie the grammatical facts found in Donatus. By claiming that Ps.-Versor composed a *resolutio* of Donatus, the printers implicitly placed this way of dealing with grammar among the speculative sciences, for in the late medieval theory of science, the term-complex consisting of *resolvere*, *resolutio*, *resolutorius* indicated that the discipline in question was a speculative science.⁵⁸

Ps.-Versor's commentary is not a profound text, but it becomes clear that, for a good understanding of it and of late fifteenth-century modistic linguistics in general, we do not have a sufficient number of edited texts available to us. The material at our disposal does not allow us to outline the linguistic framework within which this commentary must be situated. It is, therefore, evident that we are not able to appreciate all the details of this text. On the other hand, we have to admit that even a cursory glance unmistakably reveals that Ps.-Versor's explanation or *resolutio* more than once looks like a piece of bungling.

Now the question arises: was this commentary really composed by John Versor? In each of the printed editions, Versor's name is mentioned twice: the text begins with "Iohannis Versoris octo partium orationis explanatio accomodatissima" and at the end, in the colophon, we find "per magistrum Iohannem Versorem edita" or similar phrases. On the other hand, I have not found any close resemblance between this text and Versor's questions on the *ars vetus* or his commentary on Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales*. Of course, we have to bear in mind that the latter works were intended for a different level of teaching and belonged to a different discipline. A discussion possibly demonstrating both his logical and grammatical thinking occurs in his treatment of the preposition *in-*. He argues that some adjectives signify a thing the opposite of which does not have a corresponding adjective. Such an opposite is signified by the *privation* of the other form, with the result that nouns have been imposed on some forms through the privation of the opposite, e.g.: 'happy' and 'unhappy'. These "privative" adjectives or nouns signify a privation *quo ad nos*; however, considered in terms of the sig-

58. Versor, *Qq. super Artem veterem, De pred. Porph.*, f. vi-a: "Preterea ultima pars logice ad quam omnes finaliter ordinantur, resolutoria est. Resolvere autem ad intellectum speculativum pertinet, quia modus procedendi intellectus speculativi est per modum resolutionis, practici vero per modum compositionis."

nified *res*, such a form is not a privation but a positive form.⁵⁹ In the discussion of the *nomen infinitum* in his questions on the *De interpretatione* of the *Ars vetus*, John Versor also touches on the difference between the *nomen infinitum* and the *nomen privativum*. In his view, investigating the former is the logician's task, whereas it is the grammarian's charge to investigate the latter. Moreover, he stresses that, for the grammarian, the *nomen privativum* is a positive signification of a substance along with its qualities.⁶⁰ Although at first glance this might

59. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, K5r-v: "Quod illa prepositio 'in' additur nominibus adiectiuis uel secundum rem uel secundum modum. Non tamen additur omnibus adiectiuis, sed quibusdam non. Nam istis adiectiuis 'albus', 'niger' non potest addi 'in-'. Non enim dicitur 'inalbus', 'inniger', quia quedam adiectiua sunt entia completa et positua et res alique in natura, habentia contraria positua et completa in natura, et talibus adiectiuis non est addenda hec prepositio 'in', sicut contrarium huius quod est albus, significatur positue secundum rem et uocem per hanc uocem que est 'niger' ratione cuius non dicimus 'inalbus'. Alia sunt adiectiua, quorum opposita siue contraria non habent nomina quo ad nos, sed significantur per priuationem suorum oppositorum, quia nomina imponuntur secundum quod res innotescunt. Et quia una forma innotescit per priuationem alterius forme, ideo aliquibus formis sunt nomina imposita per priuationem, et huiusmodi nomina sunt 'iniustus', 'infelix' etceteris (!), quibus additur illa prepositio 'in'. Et significant priuationem quo ad nos, licet a parte rei illa forma sit positua. Et sic patet quid sit prepositio, et quem ordinem habeat inter partes orationis et quibus preponatur tam per appositionem quam per compositionem."

60. Versor, *Qq. super Artem veterem, De interpr.*, f. lxiii-v: "Dubitatur quomodo differunt nomen priuatiuum apud grammaticum et nomen infinitum apud logicum. Dicitur quod differunt quia nomen priuatiuum apud grammaticum significat substantiam cum qualitate positue, sed nomen infinitum apud logicum significat infinitam substantiam, que non est aliquid in rerum natura, sed est aliquid commune ad ens in rerum natura et ens in apprehensione et pro qualitate habet priuationem qualitatis. Vt tamen magis uideatur differentia inter [f. lxiii-r] terminum priuatiuum et terminum infinitum, aduertendum est quod licet omne nomen significet per modum habitus cuiusdam, et omnis habitus priuari possit. Quia tamen habitus proprie loquendo dicit illud quod est accidens in substantia et priuatio ponit potentiam ad receptionem huiusmodi habitus, ideo non proprie priuatur nisi terminus accidentalis, ut dicimus 'impium', 'iniustum', quia in istis accidentalibus forma realiter distinguitur ab eo cuius est forma, et ideo bene potest remoueri forma et remanere illud cuius est forma cum potentia ad ipsam formam recipiendam. Ideo proprie non priuatur nisi in accidentalibus. Sed in terminis substantialibus forma seu qualitas non differt realiter ab eo cuius est forma. Ideo remota qualitate remouetur etiam illud cuius est, scilicet substantia nominis. Et ideo tales termini substantialis non priuantur, ut non dicimus 'inhomo', 'inanimal'. Ex quo patet quomodo differunt negatio negans et negatio priuans et negatio infinitans, quia negatio negans nihil ponit et nihil relinquit nec secum patitur aliquid re uel ratione; negatio autem infinitans licet nichil ponit, relinquit tamen substantiam infinitam et secum compatitur omnia alia a participantibus formam negatam; negatio uero priuans ponit determinatum subiectum cum potentia respondendi in habitum. Et sic analogice dicitur negatio de istis tribus."

seem to suggest a doctrinal correspondence between Johannes Versor and Ps.-Versor in this respect, it must be borne in mind that, in all probability, we are dealing here with a view that was widely held in the fifteenth century. Accordingly, this minor agreement does not afford serious support for the traditional claim that Johannes Versor was the author of this commentary.⁶¹

When we consider the transmission of Ps.-Versor's commentary, the suspicion that Versor is not the actual author of the text is strengthened. We find seven printings before 1500 (Hain, 16057-16093); these appeared in Heidelberg, Strasbourg, Cologne, and Leipzig between 1489 and 1498. The latest edition is particularly interesting, since it insists that this work is not just important for young students, but also for students preparing for the baccalaureus examination.⁶² Clearly, at that time it must also have served as an undergraduate university textbook.

Until recently, no manuscripts of this text were known, but it now appears that ff. 71^r-120^r of the ms. Wrocław, University Library, IV.Q.77 contains this commentary.⁶³ Its incipit reads:

CIRCA INITIUM DONATI PARISENSIS incipit editio prima. Per hoc quod dicitur editio prima denotatur quod Donatus alium librum composuit qui est maius et uocatur alphabetum....

On f. 120^r the commentary ends:

affectus in anima. Hec de partibus orationis secundum expositionem Donati a magistro Ganfredo (or: Gaufredo) dicta sunt 1473.

Thus, we now have at our disposal a manuscript of this commentary that is earlier than the printed editions. Moreover, the commentary is not attributed to John Versor in the manuscript, but to an otherwise unknown master Gan/ufredus or Geoffrey. Another highly remarkable feature is the fact that this commentary is called "Parisiensis". Was

61. See e.g. Thurot 1869: 488-490; Weiler 1962: 44; Gabriel 1969: 104; Bos 2002: 51; Bos refers to a grammatical tract on the parts of speech as well as to a commentary on Donatus, but these appear to be one and the same text.

62. Hain 1838, no. 16063: "Commentum valde perutile magistri Ioannis Versoris super Donatum minorem cum pulcris notabilibus atque argumentis summe bonis, per quorum cognitionem nedum iuuenes scholares verum etiam baccalauriandi in optimum argumentandi et respondendi modum deuenire possunt facillime [!]." It is the Henricus Quentel edition of 1498.

63. It is no. 312.29.3 in the *Census* of Bursill-Hall 1981.

master Geoffrey only the “reading” master at a local university, who used for his lectures a Parisian text (the “Parisian Donatus”), which was compiled by a real Parisian master, e.g. John Versor? Or was this Geoffrey also a Parisian master? A thorough examination of the manuscripts containing late medieval commentaries on the *Donatus minor* might bring other copies to light.

4. William Zenders of Weert’s Minor Commentary on the *Doctrinale*

The last quarter of the fifteenth century saw a real explosion of commentaries on Alexander de Villa Dei’s *Doctrinale*. Despite the fact that they all appeared in early printed editions, however, the majority of them remain unstudied.⁶⁴ As mentioned above, I will limit myself to discussing the minor commentary on the *Doctrinale* by William Zenders. This master is said to have been a native of Weert, a town belonging to the medieval diocese of Liège, now situated in the south of the Netherlands. We know that a William Zenders or Sengers of Weert obtained the degrees of Bachelor of Arts at Louvain in 1429 and Master of Arts at Cologne in 1432.⁶⁵ It is very difficult, however, to reconcile this biographical information with the time of composition of the minor commentary. I shall return to this question below.⁶⁶ At least six works are attributed to William, four of which have been transmitted in early printed editions, while two others have yet to be found:⁶⁷

64. Unfortunately, the *Census* of medieval Latin grammatical texts compiled by the late Bursill-Hall was limited to grammatical *manuscripts*. This has undoubtedly contributed to the fact that those texts only available in – often numerous – late fifteenth-century printings, such as Gerhard of Zutphen’s famous and voluminous *Glosa notabilis* on the *Doctrinale*, are hardly ever studied nowadays.

65. At the end of his *Lilium grammatice*, William nicely expresses the two poles of his life (for the *Lilium*, I have used a microfilm of the incunabulum found at Staatsbibliothek in München; see *GW*, Bd. X, no. 12072 printed by Michael Greyff in Reutlingen about 1490), as he illustrates the special usages of the locative, accusative, and ablative cases of the proper nouns of towns:

studeo Colonie fui Lovanii
 uado Coloniam pergo Lovanium
 venio Colonia redeo Lovanio.

66. Below, at and around n. 76.

67. For a survey of the works attributed to William Zenders, see Worstbrock 1999. Worstbrock suggests that William’s training took place at Louvain or Paris.

- a commentary on the *Doctrinale*, which he called the *opus minus*⁶⁸
- the *Parvum bonum grammaticae*, which is said to be a collection of excerpts from his minor *Doctrinale* commentary⁶⁹
- the so-called *Lilium grammaticae*,⁷⁰ which is, in all probability, the *Elegantie*, to which he regularly refers in his commentary on the *Doctrinale*
- Worstbrock attributes to him the authorship of the popular *Exercitium puerorum grammaticale*⁷¹
- a large commentary on the *Doctrinale*, called by him the *opus maius*,

68. See below, n. 74.

69. Cf. art. cit., n. 67 above.

70. The *GW*, Bd. X, 542-549, lists 17 editions (nos. 12073-12090). Bursill-Hall 1981 mentions three manuscripts of the *Lilium*:

New York, UL Columbia, Plimpton 137, f. 1-16^v s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 183.8]

Praha, UL, 1951 (X.F.25), f. 1-129^v s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 225.45]

Wien, ÖN, CVP 4783, f. 78^r-158^r s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 299.86].

I have not had the opportunity to inspect the manuscripts. For a reference to the *Elegantie*, see e.g. (Eijj-v): “Et dicitur ‘nadiusquartus’ non ultra secundum aliquos. Sunt tamen plerique docti dicentes ‘nadiusquintus’, ‘-sextus’ etc. De istis ad longum uideatur in elegantiiis dictionum opusculi nostri et in Laurentio Vallensi.” In the *Lilium* we meet, in the section on the construction of the adverbs, a reference to this question, indeed: “Da temporis, ut hodie heri nunc nuper cras aliquando olim tunc cum dum iam semper mane modo. Adduntur nudiustercius nadiusquartus dudum iamdudum pridem iampridem pridie perhendie postridie et similia.” For the *Lilium* and the *Exercitium*, see also Jensen 1997: 74-77.

In the *Lilium* William adduces the same modern authors to whom he refers in his commentary on the *Doctrinale* to prove an atypical construction of the relative. The following deviant constructions are called by him “elegantēs”: “Que si ponantur sic sunt elegantēs:

Quem audistis non est meus

Quem queritis Ihesum non est hic

Quam statuo urbem est vestra.

Et si arguatur sive relativum preponatur sive postponatur, semper antecedens, quod est suppositum, disconvenit cum apposito in rectitudine casus, dico quod illa disconvenientia suppositi et appositi excusatur propter talem positionem relativi ante suum antecedens, et fit multum elegans propter autoritatem et communem usum loquendi omnium poetarum et oratorum non solum antiquorum, sed etiam recentium virorum doctissimorum, scilicet Leonardi Aretini, Gasperini, pape Pii, Poggii, Laurencii Vallensis et aliorum plurimorum.”

71. This text was attributed to William Zenders only in a late printing (Cologne 1505); Worstbrock’s main arguments for the attribution are the formal and the literal correspondences between this work and the minor commentary.

to which the *opus minus* would be an introduction;⁷² unfortunately, I have not yet identified this text in the manuscripts

- a commentary on Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, at least on Bk. VII, which he himself says he commented on according to the *via nominalium*.⁷³

The minor commentary was printed several times: two printings are known of the commentary on the first part of the *Doctrinale*, and nine on the second part.⁷⁴ In the commentary on the first part of the *Doctrinale*, the so-called *etymologia*, William has the concerns of a traditional secondary school teacher and he provides his readership with a work

72. E.g. on p. 1^v: “opus minus secunde partis Alexandri introductorium ad opus maius eiusdem perutile”; p. 54^r: “Arguitur: Accidens non potest esse sine subiecto, ergo nec actus uerbi potest esse sine supposito. Consequentia tenet, quia actus uerbi est accidens et suppositum est subiectum eius. Dico: Licet secundum rem accidens non est sine subiecto et actus sine supposito, tamen accidens bene potest intelligi et significari sine subiecto, sicut patet de abstractis, que intelliguntur et significantur sine subiecto. Etiam dicit Porphirius [cf. *Isag.*, tr. Boeth., ed. Minio-Pauello, 13.1, 2]: ‘Coruus potest intelligi albus, Ethiops nitens candore’. Ergo actus uerbi potest intelligi et significari sine supposito. De ista materia plura alia uideantur in opere maiori”; and in the colophon we read (f. 122 / U vi-r): “Finitur dei gratia opus minus secunde partis Alexandri pro pueris clare breuiterque instruendis per Guilhelum Zenders de Werdt collectum. Et que illic breuitatis gratia, ne pueris fastidium ex prolixitate generetur, emissa sunt, in opere maiori cum plurimis elegantis et questionibus scitu dignis in scholis disputandis argumentis et replicis annexis (!), ut in logica Petri Hispani fecimus, colliguntur et absoluuntur feliciter.”

73. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ur-1 (p. 117^r): “De isto uideatur in regulis suppositionum quas posuimus in fine septimi tractatus petri hispani secundum uiam nominalium.” and Uiiii-r (p. 120^r): “De isto uideatur in *Paruis Logicalibus* puto in vij tractatu Petri Hispani potest textum, ubi nos posuimus regulas secundum uiam nominalium de suppositione materiali, quam Petrus Hispanus non ponit de quo multum admiror, quoniam per ipsam fere innumerabiles saluantur propositiones.”

74. See *GW*, Bd. I, no. 1167 (Gouda, c. 1490) and 1168 (Deventer, Richard Paffraet 1499); pt. 2: 1169 (Gouda, 1488), 1470 (Köln, J. Koelhoff sr. ca 1490), 1171 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, 1494), 1172 (Deventer, Jacob van Breda, c. 1497), 1173 (Deventer, Jacob van Breda, 1497), 1174 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, 3-1-1499), 1175 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, Sept. 1499), 1176 (Köln, H. Quentell, 1500) – I have used the copy of this edition, which is preserved in the Royal Library at The Hague –, and 1177 (Strasbourg, J. Güniger (?), c. 1500 (?)). To my knowledge, no manuscripts of this commentary have survived.

specifically intended to be a reference work for teachers.⁷⁵ The second part, the commentary on Alexander's section concerning syntax, is the more important for our purposes. An internal reference tells us that William completed this part of the minor commentary in 1486,⁷⁶ which is in fact two years before it appeared in print. If William Zenders, the author of the commentary, is the same as William Zenders who incepted as a master of arts in 1432 at Cologne, he must have composed his work on Alexander at the age of seventy-five at the earliest. Such an elderly author, while possible, hardly seems likely; we are in any event left with a puzzle.

4.1 William Zenders' Position in Fifteenth-Century Linguistics

Even a cursory inspection shows that William's commentary stands at the crossroads of several late medieval linguistic approaches. We meet in the work several traditional medieval grammarians, including Peter Helias, John of Garland, Michael of Marbais, Ianus Balbi of Genoa, and, very frequently, the so-called *Florista*, i.e. Ludolphus de Lucho.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the *Modiste*, the *reales* and *antiqui*, and the *nomi-*

75. In the prologue to the first part, William insists on the duty of the magistrates and the dignitaries. They are responsible for the schools, and have to ensure that the leaders of the schools, i.e. the *rectores scholarum*, take care of the instruction of their pupils in the various disciplines and in good spiritual manners as well. The young people, well educated in both of these domains, are indispensable for the governance of the town, and a good instruction in these is necessary for a well founded public and private life [Aij-r]: "Ad omnes scholarum rectores, ut iuvenes uirtutibus et optimis moribus instituantur exhortatio. Quid diuinius et pro re publica beatius quam prima uirtutum fundamenta iacere in ueris sine quibus nulla perfecte gubernatur politia nullaque in priuato aut publico probata ducitur uita. Plurimum igitur rei publice interest iuuentutem in ciuitatibus moratam habere diuinisque uirtutibus decoratam possidere. Non enim parum refert pueros sic aut sic a iuuentute assuesci, immo multum, ut ait Philosophus. Et id quidem ut recte fiat, debet uille magistratus aut scholasticus hoc munus scholarum rectoribus diligenter committere, ut sollicitam in pueros curam gerant, ne minus optimis moribus quam scientiis crescant."

76. Zenders, *Comm. min.*, N ii-v: "Quando hec facta sunt? Respondetur: 'Anno millesimo quadringentesimo octogesimo sexto'". This date is supported by a reference to John of Horn, who was bishop of Liège from 1484 until his death on December 18, 1505.

77. For these grammarians, see: Gibson 1996 and Rosier 1998 (Peter Helias); Rosier 1996 (John of Garland); Percival 1996 and Rosier-Catach 2000 (Ludolphus de Lucho). For Michael of Marbais, see Michael de Marbasio, *Summa de modis significandi*, ed. Kelly 1995.

nales and *moderni* are all mentioned. On the other hand, we encounter several Italian humanists in William's commentary. He mentions, *inter alios*, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, pope Pius (II, i.e. Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini, who was pope from August 19, 1458 until August 15, 1464), Guarino Veronese, Agostino Dati, Giovanni Tortelli (whose *De orthographia* is referred to explicitly), and Lorenzo Valla, whom William admired above all.⁷⁸ He calls them the "Italian teachers" and talks about them with great respect.⁷⁹

William's view on the position of grammar in the system of the sciences is medieval to the core. He uses the well-known distinction between *grammatica positiva*, which is not a true science since it depends on human will, and *grammatica regularis*, i.e. syntax, which meets the requirements of a science, since it is about true and necessary

78. For the humanist grammarians see: Di Cesare 1996a (Leonardo Bruni); Kajanto 1987 (Poggio Bracciolini); Di Cesare 1996b and Colombat 1998a (Guarino Veronese); Gensini 1996 and Colombat 1998c (Lorenzo Valla). For Agostino Dati and the influence of his grammatical writings, see Black 2001: 359-65. For Tortelli, see Regoliosi 1966; Rinaldi 1973; and Onorato 1997 (for T.'s *De orthographia*, esp. p. 1379, n. 67).

It is interesting to note that William presents a strikingly similar list of humanists in his discussion of the discordance between the relative and its antecedent in the *Lilium*, as he does in the *Doctrinale* commentary (see above, n. 70), *Com.min.*, A v-v:

"Regula oratorum de congrua et eleganti discordia suppositi et appositi.

Queritur que est illa oratorum regula de congrua discordia suppositi et appositi a doctissimis pro elegantia usurpata. Dico: Ista: Quandocumque relatiuum cum suo uerbo antecedenti preponitur, tunc illud antecedens perpulcre in casu cum relatiuo concordat, licet in rectitudine cum suo apposito discordet. Exempla sunt:

[p. 6r-Avi-r]

Scriptura	Quem ego decollauit Ioannem surrexit a mortuis
Therentius	Populo ut placerent quas fecisset fabulas
Ouidius	Cecidere manu quas legerat herbas
Tullius	Eos quos protulit Scipiones et Metellos ante fuerunt opiniones magne et glorie

Quintilianus Timeo ne quos porreximus cibos uenena fiant.

Quomodo probas hanc regulam esse congruam et contineri sub grammatica preceptiva? Dico: auctoritate doctissimorum non solum priscorum poetarum et oratorum, verum etiam peritissimorum virorum, qui recenter in evo nostro claruerunt, ut sunt Leonardus Aretinus, Poggius, Laurentius Florentius, Papa Pius, Guarinus, Augustinus Dacus et complures alii, qui nobis hanc regulam pro precepto tradidere."

79. Zenders, *Com.min.*, E ij-r: "Italici preceptores unica regula dicta contenti sunt et per eam tantum faciunt quantum nostri per regulas quadraginta. Ergo unica regula sufficit. Consequens tenet, quia fatuus is censendus esset, qui Romam profecturus quadraginta dierum iter ageret, quando uno dumtaxat die iter suum complere posset."

things that cannot be otherwise.⁸⁰ Although a systematic discussion of the modes of signifying is lacking in William's commentary, it cannot be questioned that, for him, the notion central to explaining the deeper syntactic structure is the mode of signifying. The modes of signifying are the intrinsic efficient causes of construction and government and, therefore, the true and adequate principles of the subject of syntax (the *constructibile*), and the basic causes of grammatical government.⁸¹ The importance of the mode of signifying in grammar is restated in the discussion of the agreement in government between the present participle and its verb. Some people, William says, argue that this agreement is due to the fact that the participle and its verb have the same meaning. However, this reasoning appears to be nonsensical, for, if correct, it would mean that *nudus* and *nuditas*, *albus* and *albedo*, the concrete and its corresponding abstract noun, would also have the same government, since they have the same meaning, i.e. the same *significatum*. But it is common knowledge that concrete nouns often govern different cases than the corresponding abstract nouns. The real reason is that the participle and its verb have the same accidental mode of signifying: the mode of transition. The abstract noun, on the other hand, does not have the same accidental mode of signifying as its concrete counterpart; the abstract noun signifies by means of the mode of abstracting from the subject, the concrete noun by means of the mode of inhering in the subject.⁸² This, William emphasises, is an argument against those who

80. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Q i-v: "Licet grammatica positua, que est de impositione uocabulorum dependeat a uoluntate primorum grammaticorum, non tamen grammatica regularis, que consistit in regimine et constructione partium ad inuicem. ...

Omnis scientia est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium, ut dicit Philosophus *Primo Posteriorum*. Grammatica regularis est scientia; ergo grammatica est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium."

81. Zenders, *Com.min.*, A iii-r: "<Regimen> grammaticale est quo una dictio regit aliam dictionem per modum significandi."

82. Zenders, *Com.min.*, R i-v: "Quero secundo que est ratio quod participium habet idem regimen et eandem constructionem sui uerbi. Dicunt ad hoc quidam quia participium habet idem significatum cum suo uerbo, ergo habet idem regimen.

Contra. Si illa ratio est bona, ergo concreta, ut *albus*, *nudus* habent idem regimen cum suis abstractis, et econtrario abstracta cum suis concretis, quod est falsum. Consequentia tenet quia concretum et abstractum idem significant, licet concreta bene aliud connotent. Sed falsitas probatur, quia concretorum multa regunt datiuum, multa accusatiuum, multa ablatiuum: 'Petrus est albus pedem' uel 'pede', et tamen *albedo* non regit accusatiuum uel ablatiuum. Dicitur ergo quod est alia ratio, scilicet quia participium habet eundem modum significandi accidentalem cum suo uerbo, ut sicut

refuse to accept the modes of signifying.⁸³ We learn two important things from this discussion. First, it appears that, for William, the modes of abstracting from the subject and of inhering in the subject, along with the mode of transition, are accidental modes, which are in fact responsible for syntactical phenomena. In traditional modistic theory, this is the task of the *modi respectivi*, which are also called accidental modes and which include such elements as case, comparison, gender, etc. In fact, signifying by means of the mode of transition is the mode of signifying of the accusative case. It is interesting to note that, for William, the nominal modes of abstracting and of inhering exert a direct influence on the cases of the words governed and are, therefore, accidental modes, notwithstanding the fact that these modes are essential modes according to traditional modistic theory.⁸⁴ Moreover, it appears from this discussion that William is in favour of the modes of signifying, and defends them against those scholars who deny their existence. These are clearly not the humanist grammarians, but rather those grammarians who reduce the mutual relations of the parts of speech in a phrase or sentence to the level of the significates, in fact to the domain of the logicians.

Another place in which William shows himself to be no dyed-in-the-wool theoretical opponent of modistic doctrine – that is, of what we nowadays would call “general linguistics” – is his discussion of grammatical construction. He starts by supplying us with two definitions. The first one reads as follows: grammatical construction is the mutual composition of several words. This definition is theoretically neutral

uerba actiua significant actum per modum transeuntis in alterum qui requirit accusatiuum terminantem actum transeuntem, ita et participium actiue significationis habet eundem modum significandi per modum transeuntis in alterum. Item. Abstracta non regunt eundem casum cum suis concretis, quia licet habeant idem significatum, non tamen eundem modum significandi eoquod concreta ut *albus*, *nudus* significant albedinem et nuditatem per modum inherens subiecto, et abstracta ut *albedo*, *nuditas* significant easdem qualitates per modum abstractionis a subiecto.”

83. Zenders, *Com.min.*, R i-v: “Istud est contra illos qui negant modos significandi.”

84. Cf. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, pp. 156-58. Thomas accepts the *modus per se stantis* (nomen ergo substantivum significat per modum determinati secundum essentiam, ut: *albedo*, *lapis*, etc) and the *modus adiacentis* (nomen ergo adiectivum significat per modum inhaerentis alteri secundum esse, ut: *albus*, *lapi-deus*, etc.) as *modi significandi essentiales subalterni minus generales*.

and resembles that given by master Marcilius: grammatical construction is the mutual union of constructibles.⁸⁵ The other definition is called “the definition of construction according to Thomas”: the construction is a combination of constructibles, made up of the modes of signifying, created by the intellect and devised for the purpose of expressing a concept of the mind.⁸⁶ William believes that this “Thomas” is none other than Saint Thomas Aquinas and, therefore, considers him to be an important authority. In reality, however, this is the definition of grammatical construction found in Thomas of Erfurt’s *Grammatica speculativa*. William comprehensively analyses the definition, and on the whole agrees with Thomas’ own explanation, but he makes one slight addition, which is of paramount importance. He insists that the modes of signifying are the causes of both government and construction. Next, he raises an interesting objection against the modes and their causal function. Many grammarians, William says, argue that the modes of signifying are not the causes of government and construction. These scholars deny that modes of signifying exist at all, insisting that the only cause of government and construction is the will of the teachers and of the writers whose consensus it is that a given word governs a certain case, and that such a word is construed transitively or intransitively. There can be no doubt that this is the way a realist of the *via antiqua* would present the nominalist view. This nominalist view is rejected by William with the argument that it lacks the support of both authority and reason. The objection may be valid insofar as positive grammar is concerned, because positive grammar only involves the imposition of the words themselves; but the objection does not hold when considering syntax, which is concerned with the government and the mutual construction of the parts of speech. Saint Thomas Aquinas and Michael of Marbais are cited here as authorities for this view, but the rational argument is of greater importance to us. Syntax is a true science: it is about necessary things that cannot be otherwise, as we have seen. The wills of authors and scholars, on the other hand, as well as their consensus are not necessary, for they are contingent and changeable.

William adds another proof of the existence of the modes of signifying. He points out that government and construction are *passiones* of

85. Cf. Kneepkens 1992: 164: “Constructio naturalis [= grammaticalis] est constructibilium unio adinuicem.”

86. Cf. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, p. 278.

the parts of speech when united in a phrase. This is an authentic modistic point of view.⁸⁷ Moreover, that government and construction are necessarily a part of the subject of grammar, can be demonstratively proved by means of the true adequate principle of that subject, which is the mode of signifying. Since this type of demonstration is necessary and not contingent, government and construction are dependent on the modes of signifying and not on the will of the teachers or poets. This argumentation is, of course, only valid in a modistic context.⁸⁸

87. See Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, p. 272: "et hoc nihil aliud est quam applicare eos [sc. modos significandi] ad constructionem, congruitatem, et perfectionem, ostendendo qui modi significandi, quarum constructionum, congruitatum, perfectionum, sunt principia. De his ergo tribus passionibus determinemus."

88. Zenders, *Com. min.*, p. 91v / Q i-v: "Queritur quid est constructio grammaticalis secundum Thomam. Dico: est constructibilium unio ex modis significandi per intellectum causata ad exprimendum mentis conceptum finaliter inuenta. Ista definitio est causalis, quia datur per quattuor genera causarum. Per hoc enim quod dicitur 'constructibilium', tangitur causa materialis, quia ex constructibilibus tanquam ex materia fit constructio. Per hoc quod dicitur 'unio', tangitur causa formalis, quia in rebus unibilibus unio capitur pro forma. Per hoc quod dicitur 'ex modis significandi', tangitur causa efficiens intrinseca et 'per intellectum' causa efficiens extrinseca. Nam modi significandi partium orationis sunt cause regiminis et constructionis. Per hoc quod dicitur 'ad exprimendum mentis conceptum', tangitur causa finalis. Nam sicut finis logice est discernere uerum a falso, ita finis grammaticae est exprimere mentis nostre conceptum congrue aut figurate cum lepore.

Arguitur. Dicunt plerique grammatici quod modi significandi non sint cause regiminis et constructionis, immo sola uoluntas doctorum et autorum consentientium talem dictionem regere talem casum et talem dictionem transituue uel intransituue construi est causa regiminis et constructionis, ut ipsi dicunt.

Ad hoc respondetur negando dicta illorum, que nec autoritate nec ratione sunt fundata. Et dico: Licet grammatica posituua, que est de impositione uocabulorum dependeat a uoluntate primorum grammaticorum, non tamen grammatica regularis, que consistit in regimine et constructione partium ad inuicem.

Contra illos arguitur sic. Sanctus Thomas et Michael de Marbosio et alii peritissimi grammatici dicunt modos significandi esse causas regiminis et constructionis; ergo modi significandi sunt eorum causa. Consequentia tenet ab autoritate affirmatiua. Ratione sic. Omnis scientia est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium, ut dicit Philosophus *Primo Posteriorum*. Grammatica regularis est scientia; ergo grammatica est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium. Sed consensus aut uoluntas primorum grammaticorum non fuit nec est necessaria, sed contingens et mutabilis et possibiliter aliter se habere; ergo grammatica in qua passionibus sunt regimen et constructio, non dependet a consensu et uoluntate doctorum et autorum.

Alia ratio. Regimen et constructio, que sunt passionibus partium orationis adinuicem unitarum uel unibilium demonstrantur inesse necessario subiecto grammaticae per

Does this imply that William was a proponent of modism? It is not easy to give an unambiguous, definitive answer. It seems as if William, as a grammarian, suffers from schizophrenia. On the one hand, as we have seen, he admires the Italian grammarians and urges his readers to imitate them: *imitari* is the very term that he uses. On the other hand, he is extremely critical of the modists and their theory. He argues that modistic doctrine is far too difficult for young pupils learning Latin: it confuses the young and dampens their enthusiasm rather than teaching them anything. This is especially the case, since, if we are to believe the modists, relationships of grammatical government are based on the modes of signifying of the parts of speech, which in turn are based on the modes of being of things, and they are the *chasse gardée* of the metaphysician.⁸⁹ Thus, modistic theory clearly exposes beginning students to ideas for which they are quite unprepared. The remark William makes immediately after the discussion of the role played by the modes of signifying in government and construction is even more striking. After stressing the importance of the modes, he rather coolly states that he would advise anyone actually wanting to learn grammar to ignore

uerum et adequatum principium subiecti, quod est modus significandi. Sed omnis talis demonstratio est necessaria et non contingens; ergo regimen et constructio depende<n>t a modis significandi et non a uoluntate."

89. Zenders, *Com.min.*, B ii-v: "Querunt aliqui que sit illa uis et causa per quam uerbum personale regit casum ante se. Et respondent fere omnes quod sit modus significandi dicibilis de altero tanquam de principio actus, ut uolunt Modiste. Sed ista res est multum difficilis et curiositas damnabilis, immo inutilis penitus. Ideo placet aliis dicere quod omnis uis regiminis et causa originem sumit ab autoritate priscorum grammaticorum, quibus placuit uerbum personale debere regere nominatiuum ante se sub conuenientia trium. Ideo sufficit pueris sic dicere in generali: Omnis nominatiuus a parte ante regitur ex ui persone prout per personam intelligimus conuenientiam trium, et omnis nominatiuus a parte post regitur ex ui nature, et omnis genitiuus ex ui possessionis, omnis datiuus ex ui acquisitionis, omnis accusatiuus a parte post ex ui transitionis, et omnis ablatiuus regitur ex ui nature dictionis regentis ablatiuum."

Id., E ii-r: "Si arguatur unica regula dicta nimis est generalis et confusa, dico quod nihil distinctius, nihil clarius dici potest quam quod omnia substantiua mundi regant genitiuum nihil excipiendo. Sed hoc factum argumentum est magis contra Alexandrum ponentem magnam regularum magnitudinem. Sed ubicumque est multitudo, ibi est confusio.

Si dicatur regula generalis non exprimit speciales uires regiminis genitiui, dico quod uires speciales obliquorum perturbant magis et obtundunt ingenia puerorum quam edoceant. Etiam uires regiminum speciales nimium pueris sunt difficiles, quoniam si Modistis credimus, fundantur in modis significandi partium orationis, et modi significandi in modis essendi rerum, qui sunt metaphisice considerationis."

them. Again, William explicitly tells his readers that the modes of signifying are difficult and obscure; from this he concludes that knowledge of them is unnecessary.⁹⁰ We may conclude that William had what the Germans call a *Zwienatur*: a strange, but in that period not unusual, combination of scholastic philosophical thought and humanistic love for elegant Latin style.⁹¹

4.2 William Zenders, *the via antiqua and the via moderna*

As I noted in the introduction to this essay, the linguistic universe was rather complex at the end of the fifteenth century. It is possible to identify three lines of linguistic thought: modistic grammar, nominalist or ultra-mentalist grammar, and humanist grammar. Furthermore, we have seen that the position that William Zenders holds is not clear in every detail. He is very enthusiastic about the Italian humanist grammarians and appears to have felt seriously dissatisfied with the modistic approach. On the other hand, he accepts the mode of signifying as a basic notion that is necessary for the explanation of grammar. This brings us to the question of his position in the so-called *Wegestreit*. If he does not completely reject the modes of signifying, is it possible to discover traces of a positive attitude towards the *via antiqua*? On two occasions in the minor commentary William sets the *reales* or *antiqui* in opposition to the *nominales* or *moderni*. The first occasion comes in the discussion of the vocative and its potential to supply the subject of the verb in an imperative sentence; the second instance occurs in William's treatment of the doctrine of the impersonal verb.

4.2.1 *The conceptio personarum and the Vocative Case*

We have already seen that William rejects the modistic theory of grammatical government or, at least, considers it superfluous for teaching Latin to schoolboys. In addition, however, it appears that he found it impossible to accept the modists' argument that every subject term must

90. Zenders, *Com.min.*, E ii-r: "Verum tamen licet modi significandi sint cause regiminis et constructionis, non tamen consulo grammaticam scire cupientibus illis modis significandi operam dare, ut eos sciant, quoniam difficiles sunt et obscuri et scitu minus necessarii. Sed, ut ait Tullius, cavendum est hoc vicium ne nimis magnum studium in res obscuras, difficiles et non necessarias conferamus, quales sunt modi significandi."

91. Cf. Haller 1927: vol. 1, 21, who talks about Johann Heynlin *alias* Johannes de Lapide (von Stein).

signify by means of the mode of the principle: *per modum principii*, which is exclusively applicable to the nominative case. A result of this piece of modistic doctrine was that, for the modists, a noun in the vocative case could not be the subject term of an imperative sentence.⁹² It appears that the *reales* and the *nominales* also disagreed on this point; the main battlefield was the doctrine of the *syllipsis* or *conceptio*.

Conceptio is one of the figures of construction; it explains the deviant character of a set of constructions that do not quite agree with general grammatical rules. About 1200, Petrus Hispanus (non-papa) defines *conceptio* as the combination of several phrases by means of one verb. He distinguishes between conception in person, gender, and number.⁹³ Although they are often used in ordinary language, sylleptic constructions are subject to strict rules. One of these rules is that a word in the second person may be construed with a word in the third person in order to supply the subject term to a verb in the second person plural: 'You and Peter run' ('Tu et Petrus curritis'). In this sentence, a verb in the second person plural is construed with a compound subject consisting of a pronoun of the second person singular and a proper noun of the third person singular. Both components of the subject are in the nominative case, but the pronoun is "responsible" for the second person of the verb, and the pronoun and the proper noun taken together represent a plural subject term in the sentence and are responsible for the verb being in the plural. Although this construction is not formed according

92. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Ciii-v: "Queritur terciò utrum uocatiuus posset reddere suppositum uerbo. Dico non. Probatum quod secundum Modistas omne suppositum debet significare per modum principii ut quod est alterum. Sed uocatiuus non significat per modum principii ut quod est alterum, quia hoc soli nominatiuo conuenit. Secunda ratio, quia si uocatiuus redderet suppositum, tunc regeretur a uerbo. Sed hoc est falsum, quoniam uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute; quod probo autoritate Greciste 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum' [*Graecism.* XXVII, 36]. Secundo autoritate Floriste 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solutum / Et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur'.

Contra. Vocatiuus regitur ab aduerbio uocandi 'o', ut 'o Petre, salue'. Dico quod bene construitur cum aduerbio uocandi 'o', sed non regitur ab eo. Ita bene construitur cum uerbo secunde persone, sed non regitur ab illo. Ista materia magis est curiosa quam necessaria. Quibus tamen opere precium est scire ad longum, uideant in opere maiori."

93. Cf. Petrus Hispanus (non-papa), '*Absoluta cuiuslibet*', 51-53: "Silempsis est diuersarum clausularum per unum uerbum conglutinata conceptio. ... Conceptio alia est in personis, alia in generibus, alia in numeris consideratur. ... 'ego et tu legimus' ... 'iste homo et hec mulier sunt albi' ... 'hic illius arma, hic currus fuit'."

to the strict rules of grammar, it was accepted as congruous, albeit figurative, and its grammaticality was derived from the rule mentioned above. Problems, however, arise as soon as it is asked whether a word in the vocative case, which is always a word in the second person, might make a *conceptio* with a word in the third person. The sentence used to illustrate the problem was the invocation: ‘*O Sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis, orate pro nobis*’. Alexander de Villa Dei tried to solve this difficulty by saying that the *conceptio* of persons is not brought about by a word in the vocative case “si vocativus desit”.⁹⁴ This, in fact, created a new problem, for what does “si vocativus desit” mean here? William Zenders’ text shows that the *moderni*, on the one hand, and the *antiqui* or *reales*, on the other, fundamentally disagreed over how to interpret Alexander’s words, the disagreement hinging on the interpretation of the word ‘si’. The *moderni* interpret ‘si’ to mean the conditional conjunction ‘if’, and the phrase would be rendered as “if the vocative is absent”. In contrast, the *antiqui* attributed a causal meaning to the ‘si’, resulting in “because the vocative fails [sc. to supply the *suppositum*]”.⁹⁵ This had the following results. According to the *moderni*, it is not possible to have *conceptio* in a sentence if the *concipiens*, being a word in the vocative case, is missing. The *antiqui* or *reales*, on the other hand, will accept no *conceptio* whatsoever by means of a word in the vocative case.

In contrast to the *antiqui*, then, the *moderni* do accept that a word in the vocative case can be the subject term of a sentence. Consequently, they have only to solve the problem of the word conceived in the oblique case. Since the *moderni* viewed any expressed vocative as a *concipiens*, the *conceptio* in the example sentence given above is a *conceptio explicita*. Furthermore, the *conceptio* takes place by means of the

94. Alexander de Villa Dei, *Doctrinale*, 1107-1108: “si quintus desit: tu, Petre, tuique rogate; / cumque tuis sociis, orate, sacer Dionysi.”

95. Zenders, *Com. minus*, Ciii-r: “Hic remouet autor dubium. Supra dictum est quod secunda persona concipit terciam. Et quia omnis uocatiuus est secunde persone, dubitaret quis an per uocatiuum possit fieri conceptio personarum. Hoc dubium soluit multum obscure dicens: Conceptio personarum non fit per uocatiuum, si uocatiuus desit. Hoc potest exponi dupliciter. Vno modo ‘si’ exponitur condicionaliter. Tunc sensus est: Conceptio personarum non fit per uocatiuum, si uocatiuus desit, idest non ponatur in oratione. Ita exponunt moderni. Alio modo exponitur ‘si’ causaliter. Et tunc sensus est: Conceptio non fit per uocatiuum, si, idest quia, uocatiuus desit a reditione suppositi. Et ita exponunt antiqui reales.”

preposition ‘cum’ and an ablative phrase: this causes a *conceptio indirecta*.⁹⁶ Although William does not mention it, the reason for the solution that the *moderni* adduce must be sought in the predominance of mental language in their view. They convert the preposition and the noun phrase in the oblique case into a conjunction and a nominative case in mental language. The representation of it in spoken language is completely “ad placitum” and according to the “ad placitum” rules of the individual languages. The master Marcilius of the Erfurt *Doctrinale* commentary employs the term ‘usus’ to describe this process.⁹⁷ To the *moderni*, this phenomenon of spoken language is, therefore, entirely “ad placitum”. Master Marcilius reminds us: “in mental language a *figura constructionis* does not exist.” The *figurae constructionis* belong to spoken and written language.⁹⁸ How the *Nominales* actually explained the difference between the nominative case and the vocative case at the level of mental language is not clear in every detail. Further research has to be done on this matter, but we can at least observe that the nominative case and the vocative case were rather similar for them,

96. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Ciii-r: “Queritur an ista sit congrua: ‘O, sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis, orate’. Ad hoc dico primo secundum uiam modernorum, qui tenent uocatiuum posse reddere suppositum, quod non est simpliciter congrua, sed figuratiue per conceptionem explicitam indirectam. Et hoc declarant sic: Nam ibi est illa secunda persona ‘sacer Dionisi’ et concipit terciam personam, scilicet ‘sociis tuis’ ad uerbum pluralis numeri secunde persone, scilicet ‘orate’, quod conformat se cum persona concipiente et non concepta.”

97. Magister Marcilius, Q. IX, art. 2, Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 115^{rb}: “ut hic ‘ego cum Petro gaudemus’ usu ‘cum’ pro ‘et’, ‘Petro’ pro ‘Petrus’ positum dicis.” Master Marcilius, who does not use the terms *conceptio directa / indirecta*, speaks of *conceptio explicita* and *implicita* in those case where William uses the terms ‘directa’ and ‘indirecta’; cf. id., Q. IX, f. 115^{rb}: “Tercium dubium. Quotuplex est concepcio personarum? Ad quod respondetur secundum communem modum quod duplex est, puta explicita, implicita. Explicita, ubi persona concipiens et concepta explicite sub eodem casu exprimuntur, ut ‘ego et tu damus’; implicate, ubi sub diuersis casibus exprimuntur, licet sub eodem casu exprimantur implicate, ut hic ‘ego cum Petro gaudemus’, ubi ‘cum’ pro ‘et’ et ‘Petro’ pro ‘Petrus’ positum dicis.”

98. Magister Marcilius, Q. VI, art. 2, Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 108^{va}: “Secunda suppositio: nulla oratio mentalis est figura constructionis. Probat: omnis oratio mentalis est conceptus naturaliter representantes. Patet satis tercio *De anima*. Vel ergo illi conceptus representant intelligibilem sensum uel non. Si sic, oratio est tota congrua. Si non, tunc representant inintelligibilem sensum, et per consequens ipsa est incongrua. Ex isto sequitur corollarie quod omnis figura constructionis est oratio uocalis uel scripta. Patet corollarium de se.”

both being “casus recti”. Moreover, in nominalist or rather ultra-mentalistic writings, the vocative is accepted as the proper case of the *suppositum* of a verb in the imperative mood.⁹⁹

A more serious difficulty arose for the *reales*. On their theory they could not accept a noun in the vocative case as a subject term. For them, a noun in the vocative does not have the mode of signifying the principle, which nevertheless is required for a word to signify the *suppositum*.¹⁰⁰ Some of them¹⁰¹ proposed the acceptance of a *conceptio implicita* and *indirecta*,¹⁰² but this solution was rejected by Zenders as well as by other grammarians, since it would result in incongruous sen-

99. Magister Marcilius, Q. XXVIII, art. 2, dub., Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 152^{vb}: “Alio modo ut significat rem prout illi aliquid imperatur, et ita uidetur michi quod capitur, quando reddit suppositum uerbo imperatiui modi, ut dicendo ‘Petre lege’.

... Et pro isto dubio incidentaliter solet dubitari utrum ista est congrua ‘Petre esto bonus’. Et communis gramatica dicit quod sic. Sed quidam dicunt quod ista non est congrua, nisi subintelligatur ille nominatiuus ‘tu’, quia alias esset hic Latinitas contra illam regulam ‘horum consimiles debet coniungere casus / copula personam dum pertineant ad eandem’ [*Doctr.* 1079-80]. Alii dicunt quod ipsa [sc. ‘Petre esto bonus’] est congrua sicut iacet [*i.e. sine subintellectione huius uocativi ‘tu’*], et quod uocatiuus casus et nominatiuus casus sunt similes casus, quia ambo uocantur recti et ualde uicinum modum significandi habent, et propter hoc gramatica in pluribus nominatiuo et uocatiuo tradidit similem terminacionem.”

See also the definition of the case upheld by the *Moderni* according to Erhard Knab in his commentary on Donatus, BAV, ms. Pal. lat. 1589, f. 231^{vb}-32^{ra}: “Moderni autem diffinientes casum similiter dicunt: [232ra] est dictio significans recte uel oblique. Nominatiuus et uocatiuus secundum eos significant recte, obliqui autem oblique.

Recte autem significare est significare non per modum cuius, cui, quem uel a quo. Vel sic: est significare aliquid, aliqua uel aliquo modo eo modo quo recte res nominatur aut uocatur non superaddito modo ut cuius, cui, quem uel a quo.” For this Heidelberg master, cf. Kaczmarek 2000.

100. We find this view also attributed to the *Modistae* by Erhard Knab, ms. Pal. lat. 1589, f. 231^{vb}: “propter quod uocatiuus dicitur proprius casus excitationis, et quia sic significat, dicunt Modiste quod non reddit suppositum uerbo.”
101. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-r: “Sed secundum antiquos et reales, qui tenent quod uocatiuus non possit reddere suppositum, dicunt aliqui quod ibi est conceptio personarum implicita et indirecta. Qua re implicita? Quia persona concipiens, scilicet ‘tu’ intelligitur. Quare indirecta? Quia persona concepta ponitur in obliquo.”
102. In a *conceptio explicita* the *dictio concipiens* is expressed, in a *conceptio implicita* the *concupiens* is not expressed. In a *conceptio directa* the two parts, i.e. the *concupiens* and the *conceptum* are connected with the conjunction ‘et’; the *conceptio indirecta* consists of a noun in the nominative or vocative case (the *dictio concipiens*) and a noun or pronoun in the ablative case (the *dictio concepta*) with the preposition ‘cum’.

tences like ‘O Petre cum Paulo disputamus’, or ‘O Petre et Paulus currite’. A special difficulty resulted from the fact that, in the latter sentence, the conjunction connects words of different cases. The result is that the *reales* did not accept the *conceptio* of persons by means of a word in the vocative.¹⁰³ We must be aware, however, that William does not accept the latter sentence either, since he holds that not every second-person noun is capable of causing a *conceptio*.¹⁰⁴

The decisive question is, however, whether a noun in the vocative case can act as subject term of a personal verb. William adduces the opinion of the *modistae* who, as we have already seen, answered negatively: the vocative case does not signify by means of the mode of principle, necessary for the *suppositum* (see above at n. 92). Moreover, if a word in the vocative case did supply the *suppositum*, then it would be governed by the verb; but according to the *Graecismus* the vocative case must always be used in an “absolute way”: “Tu semper quantum debes absolvere casum” (*Graecismus*, ed. Wrobel, XXVII, 36). A view similar to that of the *Graecismus* was held by the *Florista* (i.e., Ludolphus de Lucho): “Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solutum / Et non

103. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-r: “Contra. In uerbo secunde persone pluralis numeri non potest intelligi nominatiuus secunde persone singularis numeri, quia hec est incongrua: ‘tu orate’. Ad hoc respondent: Licet in uerbo pluralis numeri secunde persone non potest intelligi nominatiuus secunde persone singularis numeri per se et sine addito, tamen bene cum alio nominatiuo uel ablatiuo siue (?) coniuncto, quia duo singularia copulata per ‘et’ uel per ‘cum’ equipollent uni plurali. Et ideo licet inepte dicatur ‘tu orate’, tamen apte dicitur ‘tu et socii tui orate’ uel ‘tu cum sociis tuis orate’.”

“Replicatur. Si per conceptionem implicitam et indirectam hec esset congrua ‘O sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis orate’, ergo eadem ratione liceret dicere per conceptionem implicitam ‘O Petre cum Paulo disputamus’, ita et hic ‘Cum Paulo disputamus uel disputatis’. Ideo quidam dicunt quod non est ibi conceptio implicita.

Queritur secundo an conceptio personarum possit fieri per uocatiuum. Dicunt reales non. Probatur duabus rationibus. Prima ratio est: Si per uocatiuum fieret conceptio personarum, tunc aut esset persona concipiens uel concepta. Sed neutrum est dicendum. Probatur: quia omnis persona concipiens et persona concepta debent reddere *suppositum* uerbo, sed uocatiuus non potest reddere *sup/p.* 15v=Cii-v]/positum, quia semper ponitur absolute, ut patebit; ergo per uocatiuum non potest fieri conceptio. Secunda ratio quare per uocatiuum non fiet conceptio, quia si sic, coniunctio copularet inter diuersos casus, ut ‘O Petre et Paulus currite’.”

104. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: “Contra. Omnis secunda persona potest concipere terciam, sed uocatiuus est secunde persone. Igitur dico quod maior solum est uera de secunda persona potente reddere *suppositum* et non de omni secunda persona.”

dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur".¹⁰⁵ Another explanation proposed was that the vocative is governed by the vocative adverb 'o'. Both answers, however, leave the question of the subject term and the position of the vocative case unresolved. William tries to escape from this aporia; he agrees with the *modistae* that the verb does not govern the vocative case, and he also rejects the claim that the vocative adverb governs the vocative case. The solution he adheres to involves the introduction of a novelty in this discussion, viz. the distinction between *regere* and *construere*: neither the vocative adverb nor the personal verb *governs* the noun in the vocative case, but it is *construed* with the adverb and the verb. There is, consequently, no government but only construction. For a detailed discussion of this knotty problem, he refers us to his *opus maius*.¹⁰⁶ A similar discussion is found in his *Lilium grammaticae*, although William does not mention the *moderni* and the *antiqui* by name in this latter text.¹⁰⁷

105. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: "Queritur tercio utrum uocatiuus posset reddere suppositum uerbo. Dico non. Probatur quod secundum Modistas omne suppositum debet significare per modum principii ut quod est alterum. Sed uocatiuus non significat per modum principii ut quod est alterum, quia hoc soli nominatio conuenit.

Secunda ratio, quia si uocatiuus redderet suppositum, tunc regeretur a uerbo. Sed hoc est falsum, quoniam uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute; quod probo autoritate Greciste 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum'. Secundo autoritate Floriste 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solum / Et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur.'"

106. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: "Contra. Vocatiuus regitur ab aduerbio uocandi 'o', ut 'o Petre, salue'. Dico quod bene construitur cum aduerbio uocandi 'o', sed non regitur ab eo. Ita bene construitur cum uerbo secunde persone, sed non regitur ab illo. Ista materia magis est curiosa quam necessaria. Quibus tamen opere precium est scire ad longum, uideant in opere maiori."

107. Zenders, *Lilium*, B 1-r: "Regula de uocatiuo casu. 'O Petre, lege, stude, ora', 'Pamphile, salue, uale', 'Salue, sancta parens', 'Auete, uos fideles anime', 'O charissimi, uigilate', 'O amici, iuate'.

Sunt congrue? Dico quod sic, quoniam omnis uocatiuus uult construi explicite uel implicite cum aduerbio uocandi 'o' ante se et cum uerbo imperatiui modi post se sub conuenientia numeri et persone. Et est hic; ergo etc. et ergo incongrue dicitur 'Petre, studete', 'Iohannes, orate', quia disconueniunt in numero. Et si queratur an uocatiuus regatur ab 'o' uel a uerbo secunde persone, dico quod de hac questione grammatici litigant et adhuc lis pendet sub iudice; non mea refert si regatur uel non, quia hoc curiosus est. Sufficit mihi quod uocatiuus cum illis construatur.

Quibus tamen placet, dicant quod uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute et pro illo habent duos autores, primo Grecismum dicentem 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum'. Secundo habent pro autore Floristam, qui ait 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solum / et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur'."

4.2.2 *The antiqui and the moderni and the Impersonal Verb*

William Zenders tells us that the *moderni* and the *antiqui* also hold different views on the doctrine of the impersonal verb.¹⁰⁸ The *moderni* interpreted the term ‘impersonal’ to mean “very personal”, whereas the *antiqui* stuck to the traditional view and took *in-* to be privative. To them ‘impersonal’ meant “personless”.¹⁰⁹

Here again two completely different underlying conceptions of language are in play. The *moderni* argue that an impersonal verb contains all three persons, but in a confused way. The person or *personalitas* (the term used by William) is determined by the added word; for instance, the impersonal verb ‘placet’ is determined by the dative cases ‘mihi, tibi, sibi or Petro’. This approach is an obvious one for the *moderni*, since, as we have seen, they entirely subordinated spoken to mental language. In their view, the strange and deviant “mihi placet” construction of spoken language is a particular and “ad placitum” rendering of a “normal” personal construction at the level of mental language. Against this view, William objects that everything grasped by our mind can be expressed in a grammatically correct way: if that were not so, grammar would be imperfect. It is possible to conceive of the act of a verb without an acting subject; therefore, a verb can be expressed without a subject term.¹¹⁰

108. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: “Queritur et hoc pro curiosis utrum uerbum impersonale posset regere casum uel suppositum ante se. Dico non. Probatur primo quia suppositum et appositum uolunt conuenire in numero persona et rectitudine. Sed uerbum impersonale non habet numerum neque personam, ut patet ex definitione, quia impersonale est cui non inest personalis proprietates ex comparatione actus uerbalis ad substantiam extra a parte ante. Etiam impersonale dicitur ab ‘in’ quod est ‘non’ quasi non habens personam.”

109. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: “Ad hoc moderni respondent dicentes quod impersonale dicitur ab ‘in’ quod est ‘ualde’ et ‘personale’ quasi ualde personale, quia impersonale est omnium personarum confuse, et determinatur eius personalitas per adiunctum, ut ‘mihi placet’, ‘tibi placet’, ‘Petro placet’. In primo ‘placet’ est prime persone, in secundo secunde, in tercio tercie persone.”

110. This an old modistic position. We meet it, e.g., in Radulphus Brito’s *Quaestiones s. Priscianum minorem*, Q. 66: “Utrum uerba impersonalia activae vocis sint possibilia ... Dico duo ad quaestionem: Primo quod possibile est habere uerba impersonalia activae vocis. Secundo quod ex suppositione ista uerba sunt necessaria ... Secundum declaratur quia si supponamus quod quidquid est possibile mente concipi habet per uocem exprimi et significari, necesse est nos habere ista uerba impersonalia activae vocis, quia contingit mente concipere aliqua quae significant in ratione fieri disposi-

Here we see the direct correspondence between the level of concepts and the level of spoken language's grammar – not, however, the grammar of any particular spoken language, but rather of the principles common to all spoken language. Therefore, impersonal verbs were, according to William, invented to express the act of the verb without the subject.¹¹¹ That the grammar of speech must be perfect was not a claim held by the ultra-mentalist or nominalist grammarians of the late fourteenth and fifteenth century. They argued that mental language could exist even without spoken and written language.

Before we leave William, I have to stress that in his commentary we see the influence of the modists, the *reales* or *antiqui*, the *nominales* or *moderni*, and the Italian humanist grammarians. Nevertheless, William presents his text as a quite traditional, medieval commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale*, one intended for the instruction of the *minus proveci*. It is extremely interesting, therefore, to read this text, which is at its core based on the principles of speculative grammar, i.e. the modes of signifying, but which is also heavily laden with references to humanist grammar. William sharply criticises the large number of kinds or forces of government; he claims that the forty or so associated with the genitive should not be taught to schoolboys. It is obvious that they are superfluous for instruction in the Latin language, since the

tionem vel habilitatem alicuius ad actum sine dependentia ad aliud ex parte ante sub modo loquendi indeterminato. Adhuc ergo si illud contingit intelligi, contingit per vocem exprimi et significari."

111. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: "Ideo datur alia ratio et magis fortis. Verbum impersonale est finaliter ad hoc inuentum ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito sicut personale est inuentum ut actus uerbi exprimatur cum supposito. Si ergo uerbum impersonale regeret suppositum ante se, hoc est contra finem uerborum impersonalium, et iam impersonale fieret personale. Siquis neget uerbum impersonale esse inuentum ad hoc, ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito, hoc sic probatur. Nam quicquid contingit in mente nostra concipi, hoc contingit grammaticaliter exprimi. Alias grammatica esset imperfecta. Sed contingit actum uerbi intelligi sine supposito, ergo et exprimi sine supposito; sed hoc fit per uerbum impersonale: ergo impersonalia sunt inuenta finaliter, ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito."

See also A iiiii-r: "Dico: Omne uerbum personale finiti modi tam actiuum quam neutrale regit explicite uel implicite rectum, idest nominatiuum ante se sub conuenientia numeri, persone et rectitudinis uel regit aliquid positum loco nominatiui, ut 'ego scribo', 'tu scribis', 'ille scribit', 'nos scribimus', 'uos scribitis'. Quare dicis primo 'uerbum personale'? Dico propter excludere uerbum impersonale. Nam hoc nullum casum regit ante se, ut 'placet mihi studere'."

Italian teachers employ only one rule. Given this, why should anyone introduce more? Quite often, no less a figure and a work than Lorenzo Valla and his *Elegantiae* are quoted with great approval, and the same holds true for Joannes Tortellius' *De orthographia*.

5. Final Remarks

First, I hope to have shown that research on fifteenth-century grammar is important, perhaps not so much for our knowledge of the linguistic theory itself as for our insight into the main aims, concerns, and sources of the linguistics of this period of transition. Perhaps the late medieval grammarians did not make startling theoretical innovations in the field of speculative grammar, but they did consider linguistics to be important for the education of the intellectual elite, and focused on issues deemed indispensable for creating their own theoretical approach.

Ps.-Versor gives us a specimen of a late fifteenth-century use of the *Donatus minor* to teach the principles of grammar at a basic but not entirely elementary level. Unlike William Zenders' commentary, his *Resolutio* does not show any acquaintance or affinity with the humanist approach to grammar. Does this suggest that humanist grammar arrived later at the University of Paris than it did at German universities?

The discovery of this commentary in the Wrocław manuscript invites further research. It is indeed interesting that this text, attributed in the manuscript to a certain master Ga(u)nfredus, is called there "the Parisian Donatus". Could this be the reason why it was printed under the name of John Versor?

Ps.-Versor's text draws our attention to the widespread late medieval tradition of commentaries on Johannes Josse of Marville's didactic poem about modistic grammar. Despite the text's failings when seen from the modern linguist's point of view, the linguistic training of young students in arts faculties was entrusted to a tradition based on it. Why Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* was named "Parisian" needs further investigation.

William Zenders clearly demonstrates his familiarity with the three main currents of linguistic thought in his time, and he appears to be able to combine them in his teaching program. Unfortunately, we do not, at present, have his *opus maius* or his commentary on Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, but discoveries – like that of the Ps.-Versor manuscript – leave us hope for the future. Moreover, William's explanation, "secun-

dum viam nominalium”, of Peter of Spain’s chapter seven on supposition deserves our attention,¹¹² for he did not always adhere to the views stated in his sources.

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112. Zenders, *Com.min.*, J vi-r: “De isto uideatur in paruis logicalibus, puto in vii tractatu Petri Hyspani post textum ubi nos posuimus regulas secundum uiam nominalium de suppositione materiali quam Petrus Hispanus non ponit, de qua multum admiror, quoniam per ipsam fere innumerabiles saluantur propositiones.”

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Singular Terms and Singular Concepts: From Buridan to the Early Sixteenth Century

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Summary: This article considers medieval treatments of proper names and demonstrative phrases in relation to the question of when and how we are able to form singular concepts. The logical and grammatical background provided by the authoritative texts of Porphyry and Priscian is examined, but the main focus is on John Buridan and his successors at Paris, from John Dorp to Domingo de Soto. Buridan is linked to contemporary philosophers of language through his suggestion that, although the name 'Aristotle' is a genuine proper name only for those who have the appropriate singular concept caused by acquaintance with Aristotle, it can be properly treated as a singular term by subsequent users because of their beliefs about the original imposition of the name.

A singular term is a word or phrase that signifies exactly one individual thing, and a singular concept is the supposed mental correlate of such a term. For medieval authors, the two main types of singular term were proper names and demonstrative phrases, such as 'this man'.¹ In this paper I shall attempt to clarify these notions by taking up four related issues. First, I shall look briefly at the medieval doctrine of signification, the central semantic notion. In particular, I intend to explain why it was that concepts were agreed to be central to language use. Second, I shall look at two authoritative texts in grammar and logic that provided both the background and the starting point for all medieval discussions of singular terms. These texts are Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae*. Third, I shall consider the special contribution of John Buridan, who, partly because of his doctrine of singular

1. Cf. e.g. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. ix vb, "Voco autem singulare vagum ut 'hic homo', 'hoc veniens', et voco singulare determinatum sicut 'Sortes' vel 'Plato'." Cf. Buridan, *Summulae de Praedicabilibus*, pp. 31-33. Soto, *Summule*, f. viii va: "duplex est singulare singulare determinatum, quod grammatici dicunt nomen proprium et singulare vagum, quod est nomen commune cum signo demonstrativo, ut 'hic homo', 'hoc ens', etcetera."

concepts, was the first medieval thinker to have anything novel to say about singular terms. I draw some parallels between his views and those of some contemporaries working in philosophy of language. Finally, I shall discuss the transmission of his views to early sixteenth-century Paris and Spain. In this context, I shall pay particular attention to two authors. The earlier of the two is John Dorp, who got his BA and MA at Paris in 1393, and who may have written his influential commentary on Buridan's *Summule* at that time, though he did not leave Paris until 1405.² His commentary was printed a number of times in Paris, Lyon, and Venice at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century.³ The later author is Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), who taught in Paris from 1517-1519 before returning to Spain. I shall focus on the second edition of his *Summule*, printed in 1539/40, because this was the version that was reprinted several times, and that most successfully introduced Spaniards to earlier Parisian teachings.⁴ I shall also refer to his later commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* (1543).⁵

One issue I shall not discuss is that of fictional names. Medieval logicians were concerned with problems of reference to dead persons, or to fictional entities such as chimeras, but I have yet to come across any discussion of fictional singular terms such as Frodo Baggins.

1. Signification

I remarked above that for medieval authors the central semantic notion was that of signification. However, as Paul Spade has pointed out, we must not confuse signification when presented as what Spade calls "a psychologico-causal property of terms" with meaning.⁶ The meaning of a term is not an entity to which the term is related in some way, but one

2. See Bos 2000.

3. The commentary was printed in 1487, 1489, 1490, 1493, 1495, 1499, 1504; see Bos 2000.

4. I would like to thank Angel D'Ors for providing me with photographs of the second edition. The readily-available facsimile edition says that it is the second edition on the title page, but on f. 16 r, it announces itself as the third edition: see Soto, *Summulae*, Salamanca, 1554-1555. This third edition omits some phrases found in the second edition.

5. I use the facsimile edition of the 1587 edition: see bibliography.

6. Spade 1982: 188.

can say that an utterance signifies or makes known an entity, whether conceptual or real, universal or particular. Moreover, meaning is not transitive, but signification is. Lambert of Lagny (or Auxerre) wrote: “An utterance that is a sign of a sign – i.e., of a concept – will be a sign of the thing signified – i.e., of the thing; it is, however, a sign of the concept directly but a sign of the thing indirectly”.⁷ This is not to deny that medieval thinkers had a general notion of meaning. They did talk about sense (*sensus*), about the thought or content (*sententia*) of a phrase, and about the force of a word (*vis verbi*), and they often used the word ‘significatio’ itself along with its cognates quite widely. When they were discussing indexicals, especially personal pronouns and demonstratives, they drew a distinction between a term’s general signification or what Kaplan has called ‘character’ and its particular signification, that is, its ‘content’ or contribution to what is actually said on a particular occasion of use.⁸

If we take signification in a narrow sense, as a technical notion, we find that there were two not entirely compatible approaches, each based on a sentence from Aristotle, and each emphasizing the role of concepts, whether the hearer’s or the speaker’s. According to the first approach, based on *De interpretatione* 16b19-21, to signify is to generate or establish an understanding (*significare est intellectum constituere*).⁹ This definition places emphasis not on the speaker, but on the hearer. Given this emphasis, it is possible to regard groans and perhaps also animal sounds as significant. So long as the hearer can acquire some understanding through hearing, the utterance is significant even if the speaker is incapable of rational, abstract thought, and even if the speaker has no intention of conveying a message. The second approach tied the significative power of an utterance to its making known a concept. The crucial text here is *De interpretatione* 16a3-4, read as saying “Spoken words are signs of concepts”.¹⁰ This supports the view that it is the speaker’s intellectual capacity and intentions that are crucial to sig-

7. Kretzmann and Stump 1988: 105. Lambert, *Logica*, p. 206: “Vox que est signum signi, scilicet intellectus, erit signum significati, scilicet rei, sed immediate est signum intellectus, mediate autem signum rei.”

8. Kaplan 1989: 500-507.

9. Arist. *Int.* 2.16b19-21 *Translatio Boethii, Aristoteles Latinus* 2.1: 7.14-16: “Ipsa quidem secundum se dicta verba nomina sunt et significant aliquid – constituit enim qui dicit intellectum, et qui audit quiescit.”

10. Arist. *Int.* 1.16a-3-4 *Translatio Boethii, Aristoteles Latinus* 2.1: 5.4-6: “Sunt ergo ea quae sunt in voce earum quae sunt in anima passionum notae.”

nificant utterance. Animal noises and groans reveal specific passions and sensory states such as fear and pain, but they are not linked to concepts, and are not properly part of language.

Aristotle, as interpreted by medieval commentators, had gone on to say that concepts were similitudes or signs of things,¹¹ and this raised the question of what is meant by ‘thing’. In other words, what is it that we understand when an utterance such as ‘man’ or ‘animal’ establishes an understanding? The usual assumption from Boethius at least until the end of the thirteenth century was that the understanding is of some kind of universal, an essence or common nature, and when logicians asked whether spoken words primarily signified concepts or things, the issue was whether concepts or common natures should be taken as the primary significates of an utterance. For those who believed that there are both universal things or common natures, and individual things or particulars, the primary significate of a word was not a concept but the common nature represented by the concept, and the secondary significate was the thing having that nature. For Aquinas, who did not want to give common natures any kind of intermediary existence independent of both concepts and actual things, the significate (*significatum*) of a term was the intellect’s conception of the thing signified, and the thing signified (*res significata*) was the property or the nature as it characterized individual external objects.¹² So long as common natures played a role in the signification of common nouns, no matter what that role was, there was a strong temptation to speak as if there are individual natures that play a similar role in the signification of singular terms. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there are many references to individual forms, and such terms as Socrateity (*Socrateitas*) and Platonicity (*Platonitas*) were frequently used, even by Aquinas.¹³ On the other hand, the insistence, especially by Aquinas, that the intellect cannot grasp individuals as such made the explanation of how we can understand

11. Arist. *Int.* 1.16a6.8 *Translatio Boethii, Aristoteles Latinus* 2.1: 6.8-9: “caedam omnibus passiones animae sunt, et quorum hae similitudines, res etiam eaedem.”

12. Matters were complicated by Aquinas’s development of a distinction between the intelligible species and the *verbum*: see Pini 2001.

13. For references to Boethius and to logicians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see Gracia 1984: 91, 118 n.53, 119 n. 54, 202, 245 n.18. Aquinas, *De Potentia*, 8.3c: “Distinctivum enim et constitutivum hypostasis potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo quo distinguitur et constituitur formaliter, sicut homo humanitate et Socrates Socrateitate. Alio modo”

Socrates more complicated. There did not seem to be a concept of Socrateity that corresponded to the form spoken of.

The terms of the debate were to change completely in the fourteenth century, first with the insistence of Scotus, like others before him, that individuals can be grasped by the intellect, but more especially with the rise of nominalism, the doctrine that all that exists are individual things, and that only concepts can be common or universal. The question whether words primarily signify concepts or things was now construed as the question: does a word signify an individual thing in the world directly, or does it signify first the concept that is a necessary condition for signification? Buridan and his near contemporary William Ockham differed on this issue. Buridan held that words first signify concepts, because only then can we explain why terms such as 'being' and 'one', which have the same extension, nonetheless differ in signification.¹⁴ Ockham preferred to say that words signify only individual things and are subordinated to concepts without signifying them.¹⁵ Both thinkers are noteworthy for their insistence that the concept itself was a sign that plays a crucial intermediary role in language production and understanding and that concepts are the terms of a fully-fledged mental language.¹⁶ Since for something to be a sign is for it to represent or make known something beyond itself, concepts are necessarily representative. However one construes the notion of representation here (and any crude pictorial theory can be ruled out), it is clear that representation was taken to involve some level of generality, and so there is an obvious problem where singular concepts are concerned. Yet, if we do use genuine singular terms, singular concepts must be admitted, given Buridan's claim that a spoken term cannot be called universal or singular unless it corresponds to a universal or singular concept.¹⁷ As we shall see below, Buridan introduces an extra condition for the singular concept, while allowing it to have a certain kind of generality.

14. Buridan, *Sophismata*, p. 25.

15. Ockham, *Summa Logicae*, pp. 7-8.

16. For full discussion, see Biard 1989 and Panaccio 1999.

17. Buridan, *Quaestiones de Anima* III.8, p. 78: "Sed tu quaeres: Nonne hoc nomen 'Aristoteles' est nomen singulare et individuum? Et ego dico quod nomen vocale non debet dici universale vel singulare nisi ex eo quod sibi correspondet conceptus universalis vel singularis." For a larger excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text III.

2. Logical and Grammatical Background

Let us now turn to the logical and grammatical background and the two authoritative texts I mentioned. In logic, discussions of singular terms were frequently related to a passage from Porphyry's *Isagoge*.¹⁸ In the version used by medieval logicians, Porphyry writes: "Individual is said of one particular alone. Socrates is said to be individual, and this white [thing], and this approaching [person], and son of Sophroniscus, if Socrates be his only son. Such things are said to be individuals, since each of them consists of properties whose collection will never be the same in another."¹⁹ The last sentence of Porphyry's text ties the ontological notion of an individual to a collection of properties,²⁰ and as a corollary, it can be taken to tie the notion of an individual term to a descriptive phrase. However, there was fairly general agreement that a collection of properties could not constitute an individual,²¹ and there seems to have been no attempt to make the description of these properties into a definition of the individual, or to see them as providing the primary signification of singular terms.

The main part of Porphyry's text offered medieval logicians the basis for a classification of three types of singular term.²² First, there is the *individuum determinatum*, represented by the proper name 'Socrates'.

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18. Porphyry, *Isagoge*, 7.19-23, *Aristoteles Latinus* I.6: 13-14: "... individuum autem de uno solo particulari (individuum autem dicitur Socrates et hoc-album et hic-veniens, ut Sophronisci filius, si solus ei sit Socrates filius). Individua ergo dicuntur huiusmodi quoniam ex proprietatibus consistit unumquodque eorum quorum collectio nunquam in alio eadem erit"
19. Burley, *Liber Universalium*, sig. b iii va: "Individuum autem dicitur de uno solo particulari. Individuum autem dicitur Sortes et hoc album et hic veniens et Sophroni<s>ci filius, si solus sit Sortes ei filius. Individua vero dicuntur huiusmodi quoniam ex proprietatibus consistit unumquodque eorum quorum nunquam in alio erit eadem collectio."
20. A standardized list of seven was given: see Burley, *Liber Universalium*, sig. b iii va: "unde versus: forma, figura, locus, tempus, cum nomine, sanguis, Patria sunt septem que non habet unus et alter."
21. Burley, *Liber Universalium*, sig. b iii vb: "nec intendit hic auctor dicere quod huiusmodi proprietates sunt constitutive individui substantie, sed insunt illi subiective non sicut partes sed sicut accidentia. Intelligendum etiam quod unum individuum substantie non distinguitur ab alio solum per huiusmodi proprietates accidentis, sed formaliter per suam formam et materialiter per suam materiam."
22. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. e 1 va: "Et isto modo secundum Porphirium triplex ponitur individuum, scilicet individuum vagum, individuum ex suppositione, et individuum determinatum."

Everyone realized that different people could have the same name, but it is important to note that ‘Socrates’ said of two different people was a standard example of an equivocal term, a word with two unrelated significations. For each individual named ‘Socrates’, there had to be a specific semantic convention associating that individual with that name-type. John Buridan remarked that even if there were a thousand other people called John, all entirely similar to him, the name ‘John’ as bestowed on Buridan would signify only Buridan and no one else.²³

The second type of singular term is the *individuum vagum*, represented by the phrases ‘hoc album’ and ‘hic veniens’. In other contexts, especially commentaries on Aristotle’s *Categories* 2a11-13, the *individuum vagum* was represented by such phrases as ‘aliquis homo’,²⁴ but in all the texts we are concerned with, the presence of the demonstrative pronoun is crucial. The word ‘vagum’ is used partly because the same phrase will have a different reference when uttered in different contexts,²⁵ but mainly because the identification of the individual in question is indeterminate, though to a varying extent.²⁶ ‘This being’ and ‘this body’ are highly indeterminate, ‘this animal’ is less indeterminate, and ‘this man’ is even less indeterminate, but it still lacks the precision of

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23. Buridan, *Summulae de Praedicabilibus*, p. 34: “Sciens autem modum significationis et impositionis huius termini individualis ‘Johannes’ ad significandum me non potest opinari quod secundum illam impositionem significaret alium. Et si de facto essent mille alii omnino similes mihi, nullus tamen secundum illam impositionem diceretur Johannes. Repugnat enim termino singulari ex modo suae significationis quod supponat pro alio, nisi secundum aliam impositionem.”
24. Soto, *In Porphyrii Isagogen*, p. 71b; *In Categorias*, p. 151a-b. He assigned this usage to the “antiqui”: *Summule*, f. xviii vb.
25. Buridan, *Summulae de Praedicabilibus*, pp. 32-33; *Quaestiones de Anima* III.8, pp. 80-81. Soto, *In Porphyrii Isagogen*, p. 66b: “... individuum vagum seu confusum, quod circumscribitur communi nomine cum pronomine demonstrativo, ut ‘hoc album’, ‘hoc veniens’, quod sparsim vagatur per omnia singularia, dum non hoc determinate significat, sed confuse universa, quare nunc accipitur pro uno, nunc pro alio, secundum quod hoc aut illud demonstratur.”
26. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. ix vb: “sensus autem qui non cognoscit nisi singulariter, apprehendit rem dupliciter, uno modo secundum singulare vagum, alio modo secundum singulare determinatum. Voco autem singulare vagum ut ‘hic homo’, ‘hoc veniens’, et voco singulare determinatum sicut ‘Sortes’ vel ‘Plato’. Nam si Sortem video a longe, ego bene sensu iudicabo quod hoc est ille homo, illud animal, vel illud veniens, sed nondum potero iudicare an sit Sortes vel Plato; et in iudicando quod est hic homo, non habeo alium modum cognoscendi et iudicandi si sit Sortes quam si esset Plato vel Robertus. Ideo talis conceptus sensualis et singularis vocatur vagus et confusus.”

'Socrates'. I can recognize someone as a man without being able to distinguish him from other men in any reliable manner. As we shall see below, Buridan took the vague singular to be the most proper type of singular term.

Finally, we have the *individuum ex suppositione* or *circumlocutione*, represented by the phrase 'son of Sophroniscus'. Some people distinguished two cases here. For John Versor, a fifteenth-century Thomist, 'son of Sophroniscus' is determinate by virtue of reference, but 'man with a fat head, a long nose, and so on' is determinate by virtue of description (*circumlocutio*).²⁷ In works which did not comment on Porphyry directly, the third type was often omitted, and there was agreement that although the phrases involved are referring expressions and may in fact refer to just one thing, they are not properly speaking singular terms, or, as Soto put it, *simpliciter singulare*.²⁸ Just as some common terms, 'deus' and 'sol' being the most popular examples, in fact have only one referent, so there are referring phrases which in fact have only one referent, but do not count as singular terms because by the mode of their signification they could supposit for more than one thing.²⁹ We should note that in the context of Porphyry's discussion, we are dealing with indefinite descriptions, given that the stipulation that Sophroniscus has only one son is not part of the phrase but merely background information. This fact is enough to ensure that the phrase in fact refers to only one individual, but it does not alter the linguistic generality of the phrase. Whether or not the phrase 'only son of Sophroniscus' would have been regarded as a singular term was not discussed, but one can infer from other examples that it would not.

Buridan has the most direct discussion of what seem to be definite descriptions. In one place he considers the phrase 'first Christian king of France' (*primus rex Francie christianus*).³⁰ This he took to be gen-

27. Versor, *Petrus Hispanus*, f. 57r.

28. Soto, *In Porphyrii Isagogen*, p. 71b.

29. Buridan, *Questiones de Anima* III.8, p. 79: "Alius autem modus singularium, ut 'Sophronisci filius', non est proprie dictum singulare, quia haec oratio 'Sophronisci filius' statim innata est convenire pluribus si Sophroniscus generat alium filium. Sed solo eo hoc nomen dicitur singulare: quia de facto, non convenit pluribus. Et manifestum est quod secundum talem impropriam locutionem sui intentionem isti termini 'sol', 'luna', etc., dicentur termini singulares, qui tamen sunt termini specifici." For a larger excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text III.

30. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.20, f. liiii ra-rb. For an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text I. For some discussion, see Perreiah 1972.

eral, insofar as it is made up of common concepts. In another place he considers the phrase 'largest and brightest heavenly body' (*planeta maximus et lucidissimus*) used to refer to the sun, and he remarks that the very same phrase, without any new imposition, could supposit for a second sun if God were to create another, either similar or greater in size and brightness.³¹ He could be interpreted as saying that the very same phrase, without being given any new signification, could refer to different individuals in different possible worlds.

The rejection of indefinite and definite descriptions from the category of singular term leaves us with the proper name and the vague individual. In order to understand how these were handled, we need to consider how grammarians and logicians approached names and pronouns. I shall begin with the name as discussed in my second authoritative text.

According to Priscian, the *nomen*, the noun or name, is the first of the principal parts of speech, and it signifies substance with quality, that is, it signifies a thing of a certain sort, or an individual established in a certain nature.³² The *nomen* is divided into the common or appellative name and the proper name.³³ We can see immediately that the proper name was regarded as a fully-fledged part of the language, and there was a fair amount of discussion of the conventions governing its use, some of which had to do with Priscian's distinction between four types of proper name (*praenomen, nomen, cognomen, agnomen*).³⁴ Nor was it just a matter of social conventions. Because the proper name is a subdivision of the name, it is taken to have the same semantic properties as the common name, and hence it can, indeed must, be taken to have a sense. According to Priscian, the proper name signifies a private substance and quality, and it may also include the apprehension of some-

31. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.18, f. liiii rb: "Verbi gratia, si hunc solem voluerimus diffinire quod ipse est planeta maximus et lucidissimus, verum est quod de facto illa oratio non supponit nisi pro isto sole, sed non repugnat ipsi ex modo significationis eius supponere pro alio, quia si deus faceret alterum solem isti similem magnitudine et luciditate vel forte maiorem, sine dubio illa oratio sine nova impositione supponeret pro illo sole novo facto."

32. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* II.IV.18, p. 55: "Proprium est nominis substantiam et qualitatem significare."

33. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* II.V.22, pp. 56-57 and II.V.25-26, pp. 58-59.

34. Helias, *Summa*, pp. 214-17.

thing common.³⁵ Thus if I say ‘Virgil’, the common notions ‘man’ and ‘poet’ will be understood. Hence there are two kinds of senses attached to proper names, a particular sense which cannot be expressed by common notions, and an associated sense, a description. The idea of a primary signification which is unique and a secondary signification involving common notions was later made explicit by the influential twelfth-century grammarian, Peter Helias, in his discussion of the four types of proper name.³⁶

So far as demonstrative pronouns are concerned, Priscian made a strong connection between the proper name and the pronoun (*pronomem*), saying that the pronoun is taken in place of a proper name.³⁷ It also has a kind of primacy over the proper name. As Priscian said, even if we know that Virgil is a man and a poet, we won’t be able to identify him (assuming we are in his presence) unless someone says “This is Virgil”.³⁸ The type of pronoun we are interested in here is what

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35. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* II.V.22, pp. 56-57: “Nomen est pars orationis, quae unicuique subiectorum corporum seu rerum communem vel propriam qualitatem distribuit.” II.V.25, pp. 58-9: “Proprium vero naturaliter uniuscuiusque privatam substantiam et qualitatem significat, et in rebus est individuus, quas philosophi atomos vocant, ut ‘Plato’, ‘Socrates’ et in proprio quidem etiam appellativa intellegi possunt, ut, si dicam ‘Virgilius’, intellegitur homo et poeta, in appellativis autem propria non intelleguntur, ut ‘homo’, ‘vir’, nisi per excellentiam loco proprii in quibusdam personis accipiantur, ut ‘poeta’ pro ‘Virgilius’ et ‘urbs’ pro ‘Roma’.” Cf. XVII.III.23, p. 122: “Trypho”, in quo etiam ‘homo’ intelligitur.” He does not explain what he means by ‘intelligere in’.
36. Helias, *Summa*, p. 216: “... cognomen illam eandem propriam qualitatem significat quam et proprium nomen cui adiungitur. Secundario autem significat cognitionem multis communem. Nominat vero eos qui de eadem cognatione sunt nec tamen est equivocum. Est cognomen itaque proprium nomen ex principali significatione, sed commune est secundaria et nominatione.” *Ibid.*, p. 217: “Dicimus ergo generaliter quatuor species proprii nominis idem principaliter significare, quod, quia propria qualitas est, ideo propria nomina dicuntur. Idem etiam nominant sed diversa secundario significant – quedam enim eventum, quedam cognationem, ut superius demonstratum est.”
37. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* II.IV.18, p. 55: “Proprium est pronominis pro aliquo nomine proprie poni et certas significare personas.” Cf. XII.I.1, p. 577: “Pronomen est pars orationis, quae pro nomine proprio uniuscuiusque accipitur personasque finitas recipit.”
38. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* XVII.X.63, pp. 145-146: “... nec mirum, cum propria quoque nomina, quamvis ideo ponantur, ut unumquemque ab aliis omnibus discernant, incerta sint tamen, cum non possint omnes eius qualitates, quae illum separant ab aliis omnibus, ostendere absque demonstrationis auxilio, quae fit per pronomem. quamvis enim sciamus, quod poeta sit Virgilius et filius Maronis, cernentes eum, si posset fieri, nesciebamus, eius esse hoc nomen, nisi si qui nobis eum demonstrans dixisset: ‘hic est Virgilius’.”

medieval grammarians called the primitive (non-derived) demonstrative pronoun, which includes personal pronouns such as 'ego' and demonstratives such as 'hic'. Demonstration (construed as 'pointing to') can be either direct, when something is before one's eyes, or intellectual, or a mixture of the two.³⁹ Leaving aside intellectual demonstration, which occurs when an object is incorporeal or absent, we can note that the use of a demonstrative pronoun in normal circumstances has the implication that the object pointed to must be present to the speaker.

The standard case is represented by 'hoc' or by 'hic homo', and the mental correlate in both cases is a common concept singularized by a demonstrative act. Because 'hic' is tied to particular demonstrative acts, Buridan, like many other logicians in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries, took it that genuine referring uses of the phrase 'hic homo' are equivocal. What I signify when I say 'hic homo' pointing to Socrates is quite different from what you signify when you say 'hic homo' pointing to Plato, and every use of the phrase requires a new imposition.⁴⁰ As Soto pointed out, this is quite compatible with the claim that 'hic homo' has an unchanging general sense which is understood by all speakers of Latin.⁴¹ It is also compatible with failures of reference of various sorts, as Buridan and others frequently remarked. I can say 'hic homo' and point to a donkey, or to nothing. Similarly, I can

39. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* XVII.VIII.57, p. 142. Helias, *Summa*, p. 955: "Quedam autem pronomina sunt demonstrativa oculorum, ut 'ego', 'tu', quedam oculorum et intellectuum ut 'hic'. Facit enim demonstrationem ad intellectum ut 'hic pietatis honos', quandoque ad oculum ut 'hic homo'. Quando autem fit demonstratio ad intellectum aut fit propter rei incorporeitatem ut 'hic pietatis honos', 'hic animus', aut fit propter rei absenciam, ut si dicam de absente aliquo, 'Hic fecit michi hoc', et est ad intellectum demonstratio." See also Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. b 3 rb-va. He appeals to intellectual demonstration in the context of suppositional verification.

40. Buridan, *Summulae de Praedicabilibus*, pp. 32-33: "... haec vox 'hic homo' non dicitur de Socrate et Platone secundum eandem rationem, quia requiruntur diversae demonstrationes, una Socratis et alia Platonis. Et sunt illis diversis demonstrationibus diversae rationes correspondentes, quarum una non significat vel supponit nisi pro Socrate et alia non nisi pro Platone." Cf. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.19, f. liiii vb.

41. Soto, *Summule*, f. xix rb: "Nempe si consideretur pronomen ut per se profertur, non demonstrando aliquod individuum, tunc habet significationem communem etiam si ponatur in propositione, nam cum legeris istam singularem 'iste homo disputat', certe formas conceptus communes, et si in mente loco de ly 'homo' poneretur ly 'equus', idem pronomen maneret. Sed cum digito demonstrans Petrum, dicens 'hic homo est doctus', tunc formo conceptum singularem Petri, vel singulare vagum, quod incomplexe significat solum illud quod demonstratur."

utter ‘ista chimera’, a phrase which can never have a referent, given that chimeras are impossible objects.⁴²

One might suppose that mere pointing is all that a demonstrative pronoun does, and certainly Priscian had claimed that while the name signifies substance with quality, that is, a referent plus its nature, the pronoun signifies substance without quality, that is, a bare referent.⁴³ However, medieval grammarians and logicians demanded some identification of the object denoted. One context for the demand is found in discussions of *evocatio* (called *devocatio* by Peter Helias), or constructions mixing first-person pronouns and first-person verb forms with proper names, which were counted as third-personal.⁴⁴ Priscian took such locutions as “Priscianus lego” to be ill-formed,⁴⁵ and in considering the well-formed expansion, “Ego Priscianus lego”, Peter Helias placed the emphasis on ‘ego’.⁴⁶ He explained that ‘ego’ cannot pick out a form, so ‘Priscianus’ has to be supplied in order for there to be a perfect subject. Nearly two and a half centuries later John Dorp appealed to the doctrine of *evocatio* in order to explain that the sense of the spoken phrase “Ego curro” is either “Ego Johannes curro” or “Ego homo curro”.⁴⁷ The mental correlate of a personal pronoun must involve an identifying concept, whether singular or universal.

For Dorp and other later logicians ordinary demonstrative pronouns such as ‘hic’ similarly require the presence of an identifying concept. This raised the issue of what in the mind corresponds to the pronoun itself. Some people apparently held that there are no pronouns in the mind. Hence one can argue that a demonstrative pronoun is a disguised categorematic term, and that the mental correlate of “Hic homo currit”

42. Ashworth 1982: 73-74. Cf. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.19, f. liii vb.

43. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* XVII.V.37, p. 131: “sed pronomina et finita volunt esse et loco propriorum accipiuntur et substantiam solam sine qualitate significant”

44. For discussion see Kneepkens 1981.

45. Priscian, *Inst. gram.* XVII.XII.75, p. 151. His example is “Priscianus scribo”.

46. Helias, *Summa*, pp. 972-73: “Et queritur qua ratione ibi nomen quod est tercie persone iungatur cum prima persona pronominis, quod ideo fit quia pronomem significat substantiam sine respectu qualitatis. Itaque hoc pronomem ‘ego’ significat substantiam, id est, suppositum proprietati, sed sine respectu proprietatis et sine forma. Res autem perfecta esse non potest sine forma quia omne esse ex forma est. Ideo exigit ut adiungatur sibi aliqua forma et propterea asciscit sibi aliquod proprium nomen / quod est datum ex forma et iungitur convenienter ex eadem parte orationis ut dicatur, ‘Ego Priscianus lego’, et quod dico de prima persona, hoc intellige de secunda.”

47. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. b 2 ra. See also sig. a 4 rb. Cf. Enzinas, *Tractatus*, f. x va-vb.

is “homo Sortes currit”.⁴⁸ On the more common view, pronouns are subordinated to special demonstrative or relative acts in the mind. If the pronoun is joined to a noun in the spoken phrase, then it represents a purely syncategorematic act in the mind.⁴⁹ If it appears alone in the spoken phrase, there are two possibilities, as John Dorp argued.⁵⁰ It can be taken to be subordinated to a mental phrase containing both a syncategorematic act and a name, and this case would be legitimate. Alternatively, it could be taken as purely syncategorematic, and this use would be illegitimate, because there would be no sign of the thing pointed to, and a purely syncategorematic term cannot be the subject of a proposition. You cannot successfully *think* “This is running” without identifying the ‘this’ in some way. However, it seems that the identification need not involve a sortal concept. A singular concept is enough.

3. Buridan

With this background material out of the way, we are now ready for a closer look at Buridan. I shall discuss his treatment of vague singulars, his construal of proper names, and his discussion of identity conditions for individuals.

In his commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima*, Buridan claims that the vague individual is the most proper singular term.⁵¹ While it is true that the phrase ‘this man’ can lack reference through improper use, if it is used properly it must point to one united existent present object, the very situation in which we form genuinely singular concepts. Demonstrative phrases are so clearly tied to the here-and-now that no problem

48. See Ashworth 1982: 71-73; Anonymus, *Commentum*, sig. b 2 v-sig. b 3 r and sig. o 6 r-v; Enzinas, *Tractatus*, f. xi ra.

49. Anonymus, *Commentum*, sig. b 2 v: “Nam si tale est pronomen primitivum et si suum substantivum est expressum, tunc est purum sincathegorema, ut ‘ille homo currit’. Iam ly ‘ille’ est purum sincathegorema et correspondet sibi purus actus demonstrativus.”

50. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. b 2 ra. Cf. sig. a 4 rb.

51. Buridan, *Quaestiones de Anima* III.8, p. 78: “Modo propriissime, ille modus ‘hoc album’, ‘hoc veniens’, etc., habet conceptus singulares sibi correspondentes quia illud pronomen demonstrativum ‘hoc’ non apponitur bene secundum modum significandi nisi sit cognitio rei per modum existentis in prospectu cognoscentis”; p. 80: “... unum quod solet vocari vagum, ut ‘hic homo’ vel ‘hic veniens’, quod vocari debet singulare simpliciter et proprie.” For an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text III.

of identity through time can arise. On the other hand, this allows for only a very time-bound usage. In his consideration of whether the singular term ‘Socrates’ could be defined by the phrase ‘iste homo’, Buridan remarked that if Socrates leaves the room, he is still Socrates, but he is no longer the referent of ‘iste homo’.⁵²

Buridan’s view of vague individuals was related to his discussion of Aristotle’s claim (*Physics* I, 184a22-24) that we must proceed from universals to particulars.⁵³ On the one hand, he insisted that cognition can only begin when a singular thing is present to the senses; on the other hand, he argued that our cognition must move from the more general to the less general, because it requires more skill to grasp the less general. Adults, he remarked, distinguish easily between dogs and cats, but small children do not.⁵⁴ Instead of supposing that the only appropriate singular is Socrates, Buridan argued that for each level of generality, there is an appropriate vague singular. First we cognize this body, then we cognize this animal, and then we cognize this man.⁵⁵ This account of the standard progression allows a recognition both of the primacy of singulars, and of the move from more to less general. It depends on Buridan’s epistemological claim that general notions are always involved in apprehension, and that what makes an apprehension singular is the ‘confusion’ or fusing together of circumstances, so that being a man is not abstracted from being here and now in such and such a way. Singularity is not tied to the absence of generality, but to the presence of ‘confusion’ or indiscriminatingness.⁵⁶ In other words, a concept can be semantically simple or singular while being what Gyula Klima has called metaphysically rich.⁵⁷ It has a complex content without being

52. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.18, f. liii rb: “Si per demonstrativam significationem velis diffinire Sortem, dicendo quod Sortes est iste homo, constat quod remota tali significatione adhuc est Sortes, sicut si recesserit, et tamen non amplius est iste homo.”

53. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, ff. vii v-x ra; *Quaestiones de Anima* III.8, pp. 64-83.

54. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. x ra: “intellectus tuus est ita habitatus de conceptibus specialibus equi, hominis, et asini etc. quod statim potest in illos conceptus venire obiecto presente, sed homo ab infantia habet primo conceptus confusiores, scilicet secundum individua vaga confusiora, et magnum tempus apponit antequam habet specialiores. Non enim distingueret inter canem et catum.”

55. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. ix vb. For more on some of the epistemological issues here, see King 2001.

56. For discussion, see Ria van der Lecq 1993.

57. In discussion at the Copenhagen conference at which these papers were given.

compositional, and without the elements having been distinguished from one another.

John Dorp recognized that Buridan's account depends on the claim that we can grasp generality directly, and that what makes a concept singular is not the absence of generality but the fact that the general has not yet been separated from the set of particular circumstances. Dorp rejected this account, and argued that we have no such singular term as a vague individual in our language.⁵⁸ To cognize a thing as singular must involve cognition of particular circumstances, and the general concept 'man' cannot be part of the singular cognition. If we want to introduce vague singulars into our language, we will have to invent some special term, such as 'a', to signify Socrates together with a connotation of all the individual circumstances, and 'a' will then count as a vague singular. Dorp's view was not adopted any more than was Buridan's own. For most later logicians, the vague singular was (contrary to Dorp) one type of singular term, but (contrary to Buridan) less properly singular than the proper name, on the grounds that it did indeed involve some generality.

Buridan's treatment of proper names depends on his insistence that a

58. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. e 1 va-vb: "Unde individuum vagum secundum aliquos est aggregatum ex termino communi et pronomine demonstrativo primitive speciei. Et secundum aliquos est precise terminus communis consideratus prout capitur cum pronomine demonstrativo primitive speciei. Sed istud non videtur verum: nam sensus exterior singulariter vage cognoscit, et tamen sensus exterior non format in [sig. e 1vb] se conceptus communes eo quod ille conceptus habentur per abstractionem a diversis circumstantiis: modo sensus exterior non est natus abstrahere ab huiusmodi circumstantiis. Ideo sequitur quod sensus exterior non cognoscit per aliquem conceptum communem, et per consequens non cognoscit aggregatum ex conceptu communi et pronomine demonstrativo. Secundo si singulare vagum esset aggregatum ex termino communi et pronomine demonstrativo primitive speciei, sequeretur quod res non prius cognosceretur singulariter vage quam universaliter. Consequens est falsum et contra Philosophum primo Physicorum. Probatur consequentia quia ex quo conceptus singularis vagus esset aggregatum ex termino communi et pronomine demonstrativo, tunc quodocunque res cognosceretur conceptu singulari vago, etiam cognosceretur per conceptum communem, quare sequitur consequens illatum. Dicitur ergo aliter quod singulare vagum est terminus singulariter representans rem cum circumlocutione multarum circumstantiarum, quas circumstantias est impossibile in alio reperiri, et tali singulari vago communiter non est nomen impositum. Sed si ly 'a' imponeretur ad significandum Sortem connotando istum situm, istam figuram, istum colorem, istum locum, et sic de aliis circumstantiis, tunc ly 'a' esset unum singulare vagum." See also sig. e 2 ra.

singular term must be subordinated to a singular concept,⁵⁹ and that the formation of a singular concept depends on the actual presence of the singular thing.⁶⁰ No one can hand on a singular concept to another by definition or explanation.⁶¹ In his *Questiones in Metaphysicam*, Buridan considered the names 'Antichrist' and 'Aristotle'. He argued that 'Antichrist', the favourite example of a name referring to a person who does not yet exist, is not a singular term, since it is formed from 'anti' and 'Christ', and could apply to many individuals. He then turned to his

59. See n. 17 above.

60. Buridan, *Quaestiones de Anima* III.8, pp. 76-79, especially p. 77: "tu non potes intelligere Aristotelem per modum simpliciter singularem, quia nunquam cognovisti eum per modum existentis in prospectu tuo." (For an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text III.) Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. ix ra. "Sed tu dices quomodo ergo possum concipere Aristotelem singulariter cum nunquam fuerit in prospectu meo. Ego dico quod non est tibi possibile loquendo proprie, quia tu non concipis eum differenter ab aliis hominibus nisi secundum quamdam circumlocutionem, ut quia summus philosophus, magister Alexandri, discipulus Platonis, qui composuit libros philosophie quos vel quales legimus etc. Modo licet hec descriptio secundum veritatem non conveniret nisi sibi, tamen ipsa non est proprie terminus singularis, sicut nec iste terminus 'deus' est terminus singularis. Licet non conveniat nisi sibi soli, non enim repugnat ex modo significationis vel impositionis quod conveniat pluribus et supponat pro pluribus. Si enim esset alter deus consimilis, hoc nomen 'deus' conveniret sibi et pro eo supponeret sine nova impositione vocabuli. Ita si fuisset alius qui fuisset supremus philosophus et magister Alexandri et discipulus Platonis etc., illi convenisset dicta descriptio et pro eo supposuisset. Sic autem non est de termino simpliciter et proprie singulari, quia si hunc in prospectu meo demonstratum voco 'Sortem' nomine proprio, non quia talis vel talis, sed quia isti nunquam alii quantumcumque simili conveniret hoc nomen 'Sortes', nisi ex alia impositione esset impositum ad significandum illum alium, et sic equivoce. Sed forte alio simili demonstrato mihi, crederem quod esset Sortes, et non esset Sortes, et essem deceptus. Hoc enim non est impossibile; et ista profundius perscrutanda sunt in septimo Metaphisice"

61. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.20, f. liiii ra: "Omnem conceptum meum debeo tibi posse manifestare per verba mea, sed conceptum meum singularem non possum tibi monstrare per verba nisi monstrando ad sensum illud quod ego concipio. Verbi gratia, si ego cognosco Sortem quem nunquam novisti, et tu petis quid intelligo per 'Sortem', et ego respondeo tibi quod per 'Sortem' ego intelligo unum hominem †morantem† qui est magister in theologia, et sic addendo quascumque circumstantias voluero, adhuc non exprimo tibi conceptum singularem, quia talis oratio ita bene conveniret uni alteri si illi alteri conveniret ille circumstantie. Et sic videtur quod non possum concipere rem singulariter nisi monstretur ad sensum." For an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text I.

own favourite example, ‘Aristotle’.⁶² If I am in the presence of Aristotle, and I dub him ‘Aristotle’, then the name is a genuinely singular term. But if Aristotle is a figure in the distant past, then my concept of Aristotle must be a descriptive one, containing such general elements as ‘man’, ‘great philosopher’, ‘born in Greece’, and so on. Given that there was indeed such a man, having just those characteristics, then my concept supposits for Aristotle, and so stability of reference is guaranteed, but since the concept is not and cannot be a singular concept, it seems that ‘Aristotle’ cannot be a proper singular term when uttered by me, but only an individual *ex circumlocutione*.

Buridan adds a very important clause to his discussion at this point. He remarks that I can treat ‘Aristotle’ as a singular term because I believe that the name was imposed or given its signification by a person who did have the appropriate singular concept. This move allows him to avoid the awkward consequence that whether ‘Aristotle’ is a proper name or not depends entirely on the experience of the speakers, and not at all on the linguistic practices of the community. If I have never known Aristotle, but am speaking with someone who did know him, we can both be taken to be using a proper name when we utter the word ‘Aristotle’. Buridan’s remarks can be expanded in at least two closely related ways. On the one hand, given his references to an original baptism or name-giving ceremony, we can regard Buridan as offering an early hint of the historical chain theory of proper names. On the other hand, given his apparent recognition of the speaker’s intention to refer to the person who was baptized as related to the social practices of the community, and to a body of information which, accurate or not, is

62. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.20, f.liiii rb-va: “Sed maior est dubitatio de isto termino ‘Aristoteles’, utrum sit terminus singularis, et utrum correspondeat ei conceptus singularis. Et ego credo quod bene fuit terminus singularis, et impositus fuit secundum conceptum singularem, scilicet quando Aristoteles denominabatur, dicebatur enim ‘iste vocetur “Aristoteles”’, et quia nos credimus quod secundum conceptum singularem illud nomen fuit impositum, ideo reputamus semper istum terminum tanquam singularem. Tamen credo quod in nobis qui non vidimus Aristotelem non correspondet illi nomini conceptus singularis quia in dicendo quid intelligo per Aristotelem non posset dici nisi unum hominem, philosophum magnum, de tali loco, qui fecit talia, et sic de aliis circumstantiis. Ista omnia convenirent alteri si fuisset alter talis cum Aristotele, sed tamen quia de facto non fuit talis alius, ille conceptus noster correspondens huic termino ‘Aristoteles’, et etiam iste terminus ‘Aristoteles’, non supponit apud nos nisi pro uno solo.” For an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text I.

causally connected with the man baptized ‘Aristotle’, perhaps Buridan is nearer to Gareth Evans than to Kripke (to mention just two names).⁶³ Buridan’s hints were picked up, though not developed, by later authors. For instance, Dorp remarked that we treat such names as ‘Aristotle’ as singular because they were singular for the original impositor.⁶⁴

The importance of some sort of causal link between the original producer of the name and the individual named and its relation to the representative nature of even singular concepts was brought out by Buridan and Dorp in their discussion of two cases. In the first case, Plato and Socrates are exactly similar and, without my knowing it, one replaces the other in my field of sight.⁶⁵ Buridan and Dorp argue that while my first-formed singular concept is equally similar to the second person to appear, it is not a concept of him, because it is caused by a different individual. The criterion for distinction is not the fit between concept and object but the causal relation. The second case was discussed by Dorp alone. If identical twins are born, and are both called ‘Socrates’, it may seem that ‘Socrates’ will function as a common name in this case, because the concepts will be exactly alike, but here too the causal relation becomes all-important. There are two singular terms, each with its own signification.⁶⁶

Another feature of Buridan’s approach to proper names is that he allowed the names of animals and rivers to be less properly singular than the names of people. This feature arose from Buridan’s discussion of identity through time in the last redaction of his commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics* where he posed the question “Is Socrates the same today that he was yesterday?”⁶⁷ He began by presenting arguments for a negative answer. For instance, if we call Socrates’ hand *a* and the rest of Socrates *b*, and if we postulate that he loses his hand, then yesterday Socrates was *a* and *b*, since the whole is equivalent to its parts, but today he is only *b*, so he is not the same. He then presented a number of

63. See Evans 1973 and 1982; Recanati 1993.

64. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. b 1 vb-2 ra.

65. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.7, f. ix ra; *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII. 17, f. lii va-vb. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. e 2 rb.

66. Dorp, *Compendium*, sig. e 2 rb: “Item, si in dicto casu ly ‘Sortes’ non esset individuum, hoc esset quia ly ‘Sortes’ significat duos gemellos univoce; sed hoc est falsum, quia illis duobus gemellis conveniunt diversos conceptus singulares determinati non synonymi mediantibus quibus iste terminus ‘Sortes’ significat istos duos gemellos.”

67. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam* I.10, f. xiii va-vb. For discussion and lengthy quotations from the best manuscript, see Pluta 2001, as well as below, Appendix, text II.

arguments for an affirmative answer. For instance, if the adult differs from the boy, then the adult will not be a Christian even though the boy was baptized, and that is an awkward conclusion.

In his solution, Buridan makes a careful distinction between three kinds of numerical identity through time. In the strictest sense, being totally the same in number, no change of any kind is allowed, and so there are very few real individuals, perhaps only God. In the less strict sense, being partially the same in number, the continuity of one part is sufficient. Socrates is the same Socrates despite bodily changes, because he has the same soul, but the human body will not retain its identity through time, and neither will a horse. In the least strict sense of identity, being the same according to the continuity of diverse parts succeeding one another, we find that animals, bodies, and rivers can be regarded as minimally the same through time. The Seine is the same river now as it was ten years ago because of the continuous succession of water-parts. This allows us to use the word 'Seine' as if it were a singular term in accordance with the customary modes of speech. It follows that the terms 'Socrates' and 'Aristotle' on the one hand and 'Seine' and 'Brunellus (the donkey)' on the other have a different status. The former are more properly singular terms than the latter even for those who are acquainted with all of these individuals through time. In both cases it is important to note that we are allowed to retain singular concepts through memory, so I can keep the same concept through time provided I have had the requisite original experience of the individual in question.⁶⁸

Reflection on the problem of identity through time led some logicians to adopt an even more restrictive account of proper names than Buridan himself had countenanced, and one which has much in common with his account of vague singular terms which change their reference from moment to moment. Various authors in early sixteenth century Paris, including Juan Dolz,⁶⁹ Gaspar Lax,⁷⁰ and William Mander-

68. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam* VII.20, f. liiii va (for an excerpt from this question, see below, Appendix, text I.)

69. Dolz, *Termini*, f. xxx ra-rb. He writes (rb): "iste terminus 'Sortes' equivoce significat Sortem qui est nunc et Sortem qui fuit heri; immo continue significat mediante alio et alio conceptu. Ex quo patet quod iste terminus 'Sortes' quando fuit impositus non precise fuit impositus ad significandum unum, sed etiam imponebatur ad significandum omnes qui illi succedere deberent, et tamen mediantibus diversis conceptibus; et sic bene significat plura divisim, sed hoc est equivoce."

70. Lax, *Termini*, sig. E ii ra-va. He writes (sig. E ii rb) "dico quod non est possibile quod

ston,⁷¹ argued that a sequence of different concepts of Socrates will be formed through time, even by one acquainted with him, and hence that the name 'Socrates' is no more a proper singular term than is the name 'Seine'. It is radically equivocal, since at every moment it is subordinated to a different concept. Nor is this incompatible with the intentions of the person who originally gave Socrates his name. Strictly speaking, only the baby was called Socrates, but the name was imposed equivalently or as a consequence to signify every successor to the boy by means of different concepts.

Domingo de Soto strongly opposed these views.⁷² He discussed the three types of identity, and agreed that the distinctions made were useful, but he held that to regard the name 'Socrates' as an equivocal term which refers to a succession of individuals is a denial of common speech and of the common sense of the wise men who originally gave terms their signification. Identity of the second type is sufficiently strong to be the basis for one singular concept to be predicated non-ambiguously through time, and this is not just because there is a continuous soul, but because there is an identity of the body as well, by virtue of its continuous form and function. Here he appealed to Aristotle to support his thesis. He insisted that horses and trees could also enjoy the

iste terminus 'Sortes' univoce incomplexo et singulariter significet Sortem qui tunc est et Sortem qui fuit heri, supposito quod aliquem partem quantuncunque parvam habeat Sortes qui nunc est quam non habuit Sortes qui heri fuit ... Et si contra hoc arguas: tunc sequeretur quod iste terminus 'Sortes' continue aliud et aliud significaret mediante alio et alio conceptu, sed hoc est falsum. Patet: ly 'Sortes' precise imponebatur ad significandum illum qui tunc erat puer, et iste non est ille qui tunc erat puer, ergo non imponebatur ad significandum istum per illam impositionem, nec per aliam ut suppono, igitur non imponebatur ad significandum istum nec significat naturaliter, ergo non significat istum. Ad hoc respondetur concedendo illatum, nec inconvenit quod aliquis terminus imponatur ad significandum aliquem cuius conceptum singularem non habemus. Ad argumentum nego illud esse falsum. Et ad probationem distinguo quod solum imponebatur ad significandum illam, vel formaliter, et sic concedo, vel equivalenter, et sic nego, unde equivalenter imponebatur ad significandum omnes illos qui debent succedere isti."

71. Manderston, *Dialectica*, sig. c 5 rb-va: "licet pater baptizans imponebat illum terminum 'Sortes' formaliter ad significandum Sortem qui tunc erat, equivalenter tamen et ex consequente imponebat ad significandum omnem hominem qui poterat illi succedere per augmentum vel decrementum, manente simili anima. Hoc tamen fit diversis conceptibus mediantibus." Like Buridan, he then claimed that having the same soul is sufficient for the continued efficacy of baptism: the adult Socrates is still a Christian.

72. Soto, *Summule*, ff. xviii vb-xix rb.

appropriate kind of identity, and so do rivers. The names ‘Seine’ and ‘Tormes’ (the river that flows through Salamanca) are singular terms in the proper sense.

Conclusion

During the sixteenth century, singular concepts remained a subject of discussion in commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics* and *De anima*, and even such Thomists as Franciscus Toletus continued to argue for singular concepts. However, while parts of Buridan’s discussion of singular terms were still very influential in the early sixteenth century, unfortunately the logicians who came after Domingo de Soto reverted to a very cursory treatment of proper names and vague individuals. We have to wait for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for a rediscovery of some of the problems that had exercised John Buridan in the fourteenth century.

Appendix: Three Texts from Buridan

I. Buridan, *Questiones in Metaphysicam*, VII.20, f. liiii ra-va.⁷³

Consequenter queritur vicesimo utrum possibile est aliquam rem cognoscere singulariter sine eius sensatione.

Arguitur quod sic.

Primo, quia deus omnia cognoscit singulariter et discrete, et tamen non sentit.

Item. Per nomina singularia tu loqueris de Aristotele et Antichristo, quos tamen nunquam sensisti, et oportet illis nominibus singularibus correspondere conceptus singulares, igitur

Oppositum arguitur.

Primo per Commentatorem tertio de Anima qui dicit quod intellectus intelligit universale per se, sed non singulare nisi mediante sensu.

Item. Omnem conceptum meum debeo tibi posse manifestare per verba mea, sed conceptum meum singularem non possum tibi mon-

73. The punctuation and paragraphing do not reproduce that of the edition. A few emendations have been performed, but they are marked as such. Critical notes enclosed between {...} refer to the immediately preceding word.

strare per verba nisi monstrando ad sensum illud quod ego concipio. Verbi gratia, si ego cognosco Sortem quem nunquam novisti, et tu petis quid intelligo per 'Sortem', et ego respondeo tibi quod per 'Sortem' ego intelligo unum hominem †morantem† qui est magister in theologia, et sic addendo quascumque circumstantias voluero, adhuc non exprimo tibi conceptum singularem, quia talis oratio ita bene conveniret uni alteri si illi alteri convenirent ille circumstantie. Et sic videtur quod non possum concipere rem singulariter nisi monstretur ad sensum.

Ista questio est multum difficilis et forte parum usitata.

Dico ergo primo quod bene certum est quod multi sunt termini quorum quilibet pro unica re supponit, et non est possibile stante eius significatione quod pro pluribus supponat, sicut iste terminus 'deus' secundum suam significationem propriam nunquam potest pro pluribus supponere, quia impossibile est plures deos esse. Et ita etiam iste terminus 'sol' vel iste terminus 'luna' non potest pro pluribus supponere nisi fiat miraculum, quia non est possibile per naturam quod sit alius sol vel alia luna vel alius mundus, etc. Et tamen dicti termini non sunt termini singulares; immo magis sunt termini communes quantum est ex modo sue impositionis, quia non repugnat illis terminis ex modo sue significationis supponere pro pluribus. Si enim per [possibile vel] impossibile esset alius deus vel alter sol vel altera luna, predicti termini sine nova impositione supponerent pro illis sicut supponunt pro iis que nunc sunt, et tantum {tamen *ed.*} ex parte rerum significatarum repugnat quod supponant pro pluribus, sed {licet *ed.*} ex tali repugnantia non vocatur terminus singularis. Et sic etiam dicendum est quod predictis terminis non correspondent conceptus singulares, immo conceptus specifici et communes, quia quantum est ex modo concipiendi non repugnat quod talis conceptus sit indifferenter plurium rerum.

Postea etiam dico quod de pluribus individuis eiusdem speciei habemus bene conceptum supponentem pro uno solo illorum individuorum sine sensatione illius. Et hoc est ex appositione plurium [liiii rb] proprietatum quarum collectio in nullo aliorum invenitur, ut dicit Porphyrius. Verbi gratia, ista oratio 'primus rex Francie Christianus' non supponit nisi pro uno determinato homine, et tamen isti orationi non correspondet conceptus singularis, sed congregatio plurium conceptuum communium, cum illa oratio sit composita ex terminis communibus.

Sed dubitatio est magna de impositione quam cotidie facimus et maxime in syllogismo expositoryo

Sed iterum est dubitatio de illo termino 'Antichristus'. Et ego credo quod ex modo sue impositionis non est terminus singularis, quia com-

ponitur ab ‘anti’ quod est ‘contra’, et ‘Christus’, quia finget se Christum, et non erit, quia magis erit contra eum. Et huic orationi non correspondet conceptus discretus; immo si essent plures se fingentes Christum et existentes contra Christum, quilibet esset Antichristus.

Sed maior est dubitatio de isto termino ‘Aristoteles’, utrum sit terminus singularis, et utrum correspondeat ei conceptus singularis. Et ego credo quod bene fuit terminus singularis, et impositus fuit secundum conceptum singularem, scilicet quando Aristoteles denominabatur, dicebatur enim ‘iste vocetur “Aristoteles”’, et quia nos credimus quod secundum conceptum singularem illud nomen fuit impositum, ideo reputamus semper istum terminum tanquam singularem. Tamen credo quod in nobis qui non vidimus Aristotelem non correspondet illi nomini [liiii va] conceptus singularis quia in dicendo quid intelligo per Aristotelem non posset dici nisi unum hominem, philosophum magnum, de tali loco, qui fecit talia, et sic de aliis circumstantiis. Ista omnia convenirent alteri si fuisset alter talis cum Aristotele, sed tamen quia de facto non fuit talis alius, ille conceptus noster correspondens huic termino ‘Aristoteles’, et etiam iste terminus ‘Aristoteles’, non supponit apud nos nisi pro uno solo.

Et sic finaliter videtur michi esse dicendum quod nullus est conceptus singularis nisi sit conceptus rei per modum existentis in presentia et in prospectu cognoscentis tanquam illa res appareat cognoscenti sicut demonstratione signata, et istum modum cognoscendi vocant aliqui intuitivum.

Verum est quod per memoriam bene concipimus rem singulariter per hoc quod memoramur hoc fuisse in prospectu cognoscentis, et per talem modum illud cognovisse. Et sic memorando de Sorte quem vidi, iterum concipio ipsum singulariter, licet ipsum non videam. Sed si eum non vidissem, non possem de eo formare conceptum supponentem pro eo solo nisi per congregationem circumstantiarum communium.

Similiter etiam in somnio bene res concipimus singulariter, quia per modum existentium in conspectu nostro, unde apparent nobis signate in conspectu nostro, sed sepe illi conceptus sunt ficti, quia non habent in re extra convenientem correspondentiam. Non est enim inconveniens quod sint conceptus singulares ficti sicut et communes.

II. Buridan, *Questiones in Physicam*, I.10, f. xiii va-vb.⁷⁴

Questio decima est consequens ad precedentem, scilicet utrum Sortes est hodie idem quod ipse erat heri, posito quod hodie additum est sibi aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} ex nutrimento et conversum in substantiam eius, vel etiam posito quod ab eo est aliqua pars remota ut si amputata est sibi manus.

Arguitur primo quod non sit idem, quia sequitur quod totum esset idem cum sua parte, et sic totum esset sua pars, cuius oppositum dictum est in alia questione. Consequentia patet ponendo quod illud quod hodie additum est Sorti vocetur *b* et residuum totum vocetur *a*, constat quod Sortes heri erat illud *a*, et si est hodie idem ipse est adhuc illud *a*, et tamen *a* est pars eius distincta contra *b*, ergo etc.

Iterum si manus que hodie amputatur vocetur *b* et residuum *a*, tunc Sortes heri erat *a* et *b*, cum totum sit sue partes, et ipse hodie non est *a* et *b*, cum *b* sit ablatum, ergo non est idem quod heri.

Iterum sequitur quod illud quod esset totum corruptum remaneret adhuc idem quod ante, quod est impossibile, cum dictum sit secundo de Generatione⁷⁵ quod corruptum non potest reverti idem numero. Consequentia probatur ponendo casum quod hoc dolium sit plenum vino, et illud vinum ponatur continere centum vel mille guttas, tunc si ille mille gutte fuerint {fuerunt *ed.*} corrupte totum hoc vinum erit corruptum, et tamen remanebit hoc idem vinum. Probatio ponendo casum quod qualibet hora una illarum guttarum defluat per fundum et corrumpatur et per os supra una gutta aque ad replendum apponatur. Constat quod post remotionem prime gutte et appositionem alterius adhuc erit idem vinum quod ante. Pari ratione sicut Sortes est idem licet sit aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} appositum ex nutrimento et aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} deperditum a calore consumente; et pari ratione si iterum auferatur una gutta et apponatur alia, adhuc erit idem et sic semper. Tunc ergo per mille horas omnes ille mille gutte erunt corrupte, et sic totum illud vinum erit unum corruptum, et tamen adhuc remanebit idem vinum.

Oppositum arguitur quia reverteretur opinio Eracliti quod non contingeret eundem hominem {*K* : equum *ed.*} intrare bis eundem fluvium quia continue {*K* : continuo *ed.*} mutaretur per continuam nutritionem et fieret alius quam ante.

74. The printed edition ("ed.") has been corrected with the help of ms. *K* = København, Det kongelige Bibliotek, Ny kgl. Saml. 1801, 2, the readings of which have been taken from the transcriptions in Pluta 2001: 53-59.

75. Arist. *GC* 2.11.338b16-17.

Iterum sequitur quod hoc nomen ‘Sortes’ non esset nomen discretum quia supponeret pro pluribus et diversis, licet prius et posterius sicut hoc nomen ‘tempus’.

Iterum quod augetur manet idem, ut habetur primo de Generatione,⁷⁶ et tamen augetur per appositionem aliquarum partium ex nutrimento.

Item sequitur quod ego nunquam alias vidissem te quem nunc video, sed vidissem unum alium; et periret actio iniuriarum et retributio bonorum. Tu enim non es ille qui heri me percussit vel qui heri defendit me ab inimicis, quare ergo peterem emendam vel quare deberem tibi retribuere?

Iterum sequitur quod tu qui hic es non fuisti baptisatus sed unus alius, ideo tu non es Christianus.

Iterum eodem die corrumperentur multi Sortes et generarentur multi alii quia in hac hora iste Sortes est et in hora precedente non erat, sed unus alius qui modo non est, ergo iste hodie est genitus et iste corruptus, cum generatio {*K* : generatum *ed.*} sit mutatio de non esse ad esse et corruptio econverso.

Non querimus de idemptitate secundum speciem vel secundum genus, sed de idemptitate numerali {*K* : naturali *ed.*} secundum quam hoc esse idem {*K* : *om. ed.*} illi significat hoc esse illud et tunc ista questio faciliter solvitur per distinctionem. [vb]

Tripliciter consuevimus dicere aliud alicui esse idem in numero.

Primo modo totaliter, scilicet quia hoc est illud et nichil est de integritate huius quod non sit de integritate illius et e converso. Et hoc est propriissime esse idem numero; et secundum istum modum dicendum est quod ego non sum idem quod ego eram heri, nam aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} heri erat de integritate mea quod iam resolutum est, et aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} etiam heri non erat de integritate mea quod post nutritionem est de substantia mea. Et sic dicebat Seneca in epistola ad Lucillum, que incipit ‘quanta verborum’, “nemo idem in iuventute et senectute, immo nec heri et hodie. Corpora enim nostra rapiuntur fluviorum more”.⁷⁷ Et ad istam intentionem locutus est bene Eraclitus quod sic continue mutamur, et non contingit {*K* : convenit *ed.*} eundem hominem {*K* : equum *ed.*} totaliter bis intrare fluvium et totaliter eundem. Et ad hunc modum capiendi ‘idem in numero’ procedunt bene rationes que fiebant in principio questionis ad probandum quod Sortes non sit idem hodie quod Sortes erat heri.

76. Arist. *GC* 1.5.321b12-13.

77. Sen. *Ep.* 58 (VI.6).22.

Sed secundo modo aliquid {*K* : aliud *ed.*} dicitur alicui idem partialiter, scilicet quia hoc est pars illius, et maxime hoc dicitur si sit maior vel principalior, vel etiam quia hoc et illud participant in aliquo quod est pars maior vel principalior utriusque. Sic enim dicit Aristoteles nono Ethicorum⁷⁸ quod homo maxime est intellectus, sicut civitas et omnis congregatio maxime est principalissimum, prout allegatum est in questione precedente, et exinde etiam proveniunt denominationes totorum a denominationibus partium. Et ita manet homo idem per totam vitam, quia manet anima totaliter eadem que est pars principalior, immo principalissima. Sed sic non manet equus idem, immo etiam nec corpus humanum.

Et sic bene est verum quod tu es ille idem qui a quinquaginta annis citra fuit baptisatus, maxime cum hoc nobis conveniat principaliter ratione anime, non corporis. Et possum te prosequi super iniuriis vel teneor ad remunerandum tibi, quia etiam opera iniuriosa vel meritoria sunt principaliter ab anima, non a corpore. Et sic etiam non dicimus te generari hodie quia non dicimus aliud generari simpliciter nisi generetur secundum se totum vel secundum eius partem maiorem vel principalem.

Sed adhuc tertio modo et minus proprie dicitur aliquid alicui idem numero secundum continuationem partium diversarum in succedendo alteram alteri. Et sic Secana dicitur idem fluvius a mille annis citra, licet proprie loquendo nichil modo sit pars Secane quod a decem annis citra fuisset pars Secane. Sic enim mare dicitur perpetuum, et iste mundus inferior perpetuus, et equus idem per totam vitam, et similiter corpus humanum. Et iste modus idemtitatis sufficit ad hoc quod nomen {*K* : nullum *ed.*} significativum dicatur discretum vel singulare secundum communem et consuetam locutionem que non est vera proprie. Non enim est proprie verum quod Secana quem ego video est ille quem ego vidi a decem annis citra. Sed propositio conceditur ad istum sensum quia aqua quam video que vocatur Secana et aqua quam tunc vidi que etiam vocabatur Secana et aqua etiam que intermediis temporibus fuerunt et vocabantur quelibet in tempore suo Secana continue fuerunt in succedendo ad invicem. Et ex idemtitate etiam dicta secundum huiusmodi continuationem dicimus hoc nomen 'Secana' esse nomen discretum et singulare, quamvis non ita proprie sit discretum, sicut esset si maneret idem totaliter ante et post.

78. Arist. *EN* 9.8.1168b31-35.

Et per hec dicta apparet manifeste quomodo sit dicendum ad omnes rationes que fiebant, et quomodo procedunt viis suis, etc.

III. Buridan, *De Anima* III. 8, ed. Zupko 1989: 77-79.⁷⁹

... Et ab hoc, dico corollarie esse credendum quod tu non potes intelligere Aristotelem per modum simpliciter singularem, quia nunquam cognovisti eum per modum existentis in prospectu tuo. Et verum est quod bene cognoscis singulariter hanc vocem ‘Aristoteles’ vel hanc vocem ‘homo’ quae tibi proponitur, quia audis eam per modum existentis in prospectu auditus tui. Sed rem significatam isto nomine tu non cognoscis per modum simpliciter et proprie singularem {singulare *ed.*}, quia tu nunquam cognoscis Aristotelem distincte a Platone vel Roberto, nisi per circumscriptionem tibi datam ab aliquibus: ut quod Aristoteles fuit unus homo natus in Graecia; discipulus Platonis; consultor Alexandri, qui composuit tales libros. Modo talis circumlocutio non est secundum conceptum simpliciter singularem, quia ponamus, sive sit verum sive sit falsum, quod unus alter homo habuit similes condiciones. Tunc illa circumlocutio ita conveniret isti sicut illi; nec magis per talem circumlocutionem intelligeres unum quam alium. Sed tamen, verum est quod illud nomen ‘Aristoteles’ fuit impositum ad significandum eum secundum conceptum singularem, quia demonstrantes eum in prospectu suo dixerunt ‘Iste puer vocatur “Aristoteles”’. Et illam sententiam Aristoteles intendebat in septimo *Metaphysicae*, ubi dicit quod non contingit singularia definire,⁸⁰ immo nec circumloqui circumlocutione propria, oportet enim circumlocutionem fieri, [78] ut dixi, per plurima nomina, et illa essent convenientia aliis, vel possibilea convenire, ut si alia singularia generarentur similia: verbi gratia, dicit Aristoteles, “si quis te definiat, dicit ‘gressibile’ aut ‘album’ aut aliquid aliud quod in alio sit”, etc.

Sed tu quaeres: Nonne hoc nomen ‘Aristoteles’ est nomen singulare et individuum? Et ego dico quod nomen vocale non debet dici universale vel singulare nisi ex eo quod sibi correspondet conceptus universalis vel singularis.

Porphyrus autem tetigit tres modos singularium: scilicet ‘Sortes’, ‘hoc album’ et ‘Sophronisci filius’.⁸¹ Modo propriissime, ille modus

79. I have corrected some typographical errors.

80. Arist. *Metaph.* 7.15.1039b27-28.

81. Porph. *Isagoge* 7.19-21.

'hoc album', 'hoc veniens', etc., habet conceptus singulares sibi correspondentes quia illud pronomen demonstrativum 'hoc' non apponitur bene secundum modum significandi nisi sit cognitio rei per modum existentis in prospectu cognoscentis.

Iste autem modus singularium, scilicet 'Sortes', 'Plato', 'Aristoteles', fuerunt proprie singulares habentes conceptus singulares sibi correspondentes, quia imponebantur ad significandum res conceptas per modum existentis in prospectu imponentium, quia dicebant "Hic puer vocatur nomine proprio 'Sortes'". Sed illa nomina aliis qui non videntur illos, non sunt iam singularia, nec habentia conceptus correspondentes simpliciter singulares, sed sicut notat Porphyrius,⁸² dicuntur singularia illis per circumlocutionem "ex [79] proprietatibus quarum collectio nunquam in alio eadem erit", vel fuit: ut per hoc nomen 'Aristoteles' intelligimus hominem generatum, sapientissimum, discipulum Platonis, etc., haec enim circumlocutio dicitur sic singularis quia non convenit nisi uni soli homini, sed non sic {sit *ed.*} singularis quod non {quod non: quoniam *ed.*} esset innata aliis convenire, non enim fuisset impossibile quod alius fuisset talis. Sed cum dico 'hic homo', impossibile est quod alius sit hic homo.

Alius autem modus singularium, ut 'Sophronisci filius', non est proprie dictum singulare, quia haec oratio 'Sophronisci filius' statim innata est convenire pluribus si Sophroniscus generat alium filium. Sed solo eo hoc nomen dicitur singulare: quia de facto, non convenit pluribus. Et manifestum est quod secundum talem impropriam locutionem seu intentionem isti termini 'sol', 'luna', etc., dicentur termini singulares, qui tamen sunt termini specifici.

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82. Porph. *Isagoge* 7.21-23.

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John Buridan and Jerónimo Pardo on the Notion of *Propositio*

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Summary: The first section of this article offers a reconstruction of Buridan's theory of propositions, along the following lines: on the syntactic plane, propositions obtain a special type of unity from the presence of a copula; on the semantic plane, the fact that a proposition does not have any specific significate (different from the significate of terms), does not eliminate the distinction between propositions and terms: the copula performs an act of "saying", in virtue of which propositions can be true or false. The second section summarises Pardo's theory of propositions, showing how in this case a Buridanian starting point led to a result very different from that which Buridan reached.

The best place to start in trying to reach an understanding of the medieval notion of the proposition¹ is the basic contrast between the simple and the complex: propositions are a kind of complex expression (*oratio*). But, because they are complex expressions of a certain kind, one can legitimately ask how propositions differ from other kinds of complex expressions. In the present paper I shall argue that John Buridan (c.1292-c.1360)² attributed a specific character to propositions that distinguished them from terms (even from complex terms), and I shall try to discover the precise nature of this specific character, together with the commitments Buridan has to make in order to maintain this.³

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1. On the medieval and postmedieval discussions concerning the proposition, see Nuchelmans 1973, 1980a, and 1982; Ashworth 1978; Kretzmann 1970.
2. The most recent bibliography of and about Buridan is that by Fabienne Pironet ("Bibliographie spéciale sur Jean Buridan", available online at: <http://mapageweb.umontreal.ca/pironetf>).
3. General information on Buridan's theory of the proposition is to be found in Nuchelmans 1973: 243-50; Biard 1989: 181-85 and 192-97; Scott 1966; King 1985; Reina 1959: 394-404 and 1960: 141-65.

To better illuminate some aspects of Buridan's theory, I will contrast it with the ideas of the Spanish logician Jerónimo Pardo (†1502) on the same topic.⁴

I shall base my analysis of Buridan's theory on texts from the Commentary on the *Metaphysics* (*In Met*), the *Summulae* (*Summ*, particularly treatises I⁵ and IV) and the *Sophismata* (*Soph*). As subsidiary sources I will also refer to texts from the Commentary on the *Physics* (*Quaest Phys*), the Commentary on the *De anima* (*Quaest de Anima*), the *Quaestiones Elenchorum* (*Quaest Elenc*), the *Quaestiones Longae super Librum Peri Hermeneias* (*Super Perih*), the *Quaestiones in Libros Priorum Analyticorum* (*Quaest Priorum*), and the *Consequentiae* (*Conseq*). As for Pardo's theory, I include as an Appendix a transcription of the relevant pages of his *Medulla dyalectices* (*MD*).

1. Buridan's theory

1.1 Syntactic analysis: kinds of complexity

Before approaching Buridan's discussion of propositions, it is important to bear in mind that Buridan's main theses about the proposition concern primarily the mental proposition, and can only be applied to spoken or written propositions by extension.⁶ In his commentary on the *Summulae*, Buridan explicitly disagrees with Peter of Spain, who (following Aristotle)⁷ had defined the proposition as a kind of *vox*.⁸ Buridan prefers (also following Aristotle)⁹ to distinguish three kinds of *ora-*

4. For more information on Pardo, see Pérez-Ilzarbe 1999.

5. This treatise was partly edited by J. Pinborg (1976a: 82-88), and Ria van der Lecq is preparing the critical edition (available on her website: <http://www.phil.uu.nl/~lecq>). She is part of an international team (the Buridan Society) which is working on critical editions of all the treatises (on this publishing project, see the introductions to the editions which have already appeared, included in the bibliography below).

6. On mental language in Buridan, see Reina 1959: 382-87; Pinborg 1976a: 79-80; Nuchelmans 1980a: 17-20; King 1985: 7-14, and Forthcoming; Biard 1989: 169-71; Pannaccio 1999: 295-300.

7. *Peri Hermeneias* 1, 16b 26.

8. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus* I, 6 and 7.

9. *Peri Hermeneias* 1, 16a 3-4.

tiones (mental, spoken, and written),¹⁰ and he introduces the necessary modifications to adapt Peter of Spain's ideas to this threefold division.

According to Buridan, the basic syntactic structure of every mental proposition is that it is made up of three principal parts: subject, copula, and predicate. Correcting Peter of Spain's description of a categorical proposition as a composite of two principal parts, the subject and the predicate,¹¹ Buridan asserts that the copula is also a principal part of every categorical proposition (making three parts rather than two).¹² This three-part structure holds for all mental propositions, even if they are signified by a spoken proposition that appears to have a different structure. For example, adjectival verbs conceal a structure of copula-plus-predicate, so that the spoken phrase 'Homo currit' must be analysed, in Buridan's view, as 'Homo est currens'; and even the verb 'est' when occurring as second adjacent can be broken down into a copula and predicate, so 'Homo est' becomes 'Homo est ens'.¹³ The key point is whether Buridan recognises this structure as a special type of unit, or whether the three elements are simply linked together as a mere list of

10. *Summ I*, 1.6: "Ad evidentiam dictorum et dicendorum quod voces significativae incomplexae sunt termini orationum, dicenda sunt aliqua de terminis significativis et orationibus modicum disgreduendo. Sciendum est ergo quod triplex potest distingui oratio et triplex terminus vel dictio, prout tangitur in principio libri Peri Hermeneias, scilicet mentalis, vocalis et scripta."

11. Peter of Spain, *Tractatus*, I, 7.

12. *Summ I*, 3.2: "Ad secundam dubitationem dicendum est quod illa copula vere est pars principalis categoricae, quia sine illa non potest esse categorica propositio et habet se per modum formae ad subiectum et praedicatum, et forma est principalis pars compositi, ideo bene suppleverunt secundam clausulam vel tertiam dicentes quod propositio categorica est illa quae habet subiectum et praedicatum et copulam principales partes sui." *QL super Perih I*, 7: "... de propositione categorica, cuius principales partes sunt subiectum et praedicatum et copula." See also Maierù's contribution to this volume, at and around nn. 35-38, 68-70.

13. *Summ I*, 3.2: "Tertia clausula exponit dictam descriptionem propositionis categoricae exemplificando de ista propositione 'homo currit', in qua hoc nomen 'homo' est subiectum et hoc verbum 'currit' est praedicatum. Circa quod est notandum, sicut statim innuit auctor, quod verbum non est praedicatum proprie loquendo, sed copula praedicati cum subiecto vel implicans in se copulam cum praedicato. Nam hoc verbum 'est' tertio adiacens est copula et quod sequitur est praedicatum, sed hoc verbum 'est' secundo adiacens, ut cum dico 'homo est', vel etiam quodlibet aliud verbum implicat in se copulam cum praedicato vel cum parte principali praedicati. Ideo ad accipiendum subiectum, praedicatum et copulam tale verbum debet resolvi in hoc verbum 'est' tertium adiacens, si propositio sit de inesse et de praesenti, et in participium illius verbi, ut 'homo currit' idest 'homo est currens'. Similiter 'homo est' idest 'homo est ens'."

terms. In order to answer this question, it is useful to compare propositions with other kinds of complex expressions.

First, propositions are distinguished from what are usually called *complexiones indistantes*, such as ‘homo albus’, in which a term is immediately linked with another term, without the mediation of any particle. But Buridan’s view of the distinction between *complexio distans* and *complexio indistans* is rather unusual, inasmuch as Buridan takes *complexiones distantes* to include only combinations that make use of the copula ‘est’, while *complexiones indistantes* are those in which terms are combined without the mediation of the copula.¹⁴ He thus seems to ignore combinations of the kind ‘homo vel albus’, in which there is a uniting element other than the copula ‘est’. This apparent omission suggests that Buridan’s intention when he makes this distinction is in fact to mark a difference between propositions and other complexes, and that the “distance” to which he alludes by using the word ‘distans’ has more to do with its being a composition of a different kind (i.e. a proposition) than with the presence or absence of a mediating particle.

In Buridan’s view, a mental proposition is a combination of concepts that is constructed by adding to the terms that are to be combined a syncategorematic concept whose purpose is to join concepts together (*conceptum complexivum*).¹⁵ Although there are other complexive concepts, like those corresponding to ‘et’, ‘vel’, ‘si’, ‘ergo’, and so on,¹⁶ the type

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14. *In Met* IV, 14: “Dico ergo quod apud intellectum est duplex complexio conceptuum: una potest vocari distans, alia indistans. Distans vocatur quando in propositione predicatum complectitur cum subiecto mediante copula, et hoc potest fieri affirmative vel negative, ut ‘homo est animal’, ‘homo non est animal’. Sed complexio indistans vocatur quando adiectivum complectitur cum substantivo sine copula media, et etiam potest fieri affirmative aut negative, ut ‘homo albus’, ‘homo non albus’.” *In Met* VI, 6: “Indistans est prout determinatio complectitur cum suo determinabili sine copula verbali mediante, ut si dico ‘animal rationale’, ‘homo albus’.” *Quaest Elenc* 17.3.2: “Non tamen complexus complexione distante, que fit mediante hoc verbo ‘est’, sed complexione indistante, ut si fieret talis complexio ‘homo albus’ vel ‘homo equus’.” *Quaest Priorum* I, 12 (cited in Reina 1959: 409 note 109): “Sed notandum est quod aliqua complectuntur ad invicem [...] mediante hoc verbo ‘est’, et talis complexio vocatur distans.” On the distinction *distans-indistans*, see Nuchelmans 1980a: 31–33.
15. *Summ* IV, 2.3: “Illae copulae ‘est’ et ‘non est’ significant diversos modos complectendi terminos mentales in formando propositiones mentales, et isti <modi> complectendi sunt conceptus complexivi pertinentes ad secundam operationem intellectus, prout ista addit super primam operationem.”
16. *Summ* IV, 2.3: “Et ita etiam istae dictiones ‘et’, ‘vel’, ‘si’, ‘ergo’ et huiusmodi designant conceptus complexivi plurium propositionum simul vel terminorum invicem in mente et nihil ulterius ad extra.”

of combination effected by the mental copula ‘est’ or ‘non est’ is special: it is an act of affirming or denying one concept of another.¹⁷ This understanding of the role of the copula is in agreement with one of the traditional definitions (of Aristotelian origins)¹⁸ of the proposition as an expression in which “something is said of something”, and seems to point towards a kind of unity specific to propositions which makes them something more than a mere list of terms.

Among the various types of combinations of terms, however, there is a group of very special ones: the constructions involving accusative and infinitive together, such as ‘hominem esse album’. They seem to share the structure of propositions (subject, copula, predicate), but, Buridan says, they are not propositions in the true sense: the mere fact that under certain conditions a complex of this kind, taken materially, can stand for a proposition does not mean that it *is* a proposition.¹⁹ The non-propositional nature of these complexes is due, it seems, to the fact that the infinitive verb acts not as a copula (and therefore does not state something about something), but as a noun. The proof of this is that the construction with infinitive and accusative can be converted into a construction with participle and nominative, in which the similarity with propositions fades: for example, according to Buridan ‘hominem currere’ is reducible to ‘homo currens’.²⁰

On the syntactic level, therefore, Buridan recognises that propositions constitute a special type of combination (different from other combinations of terms such as ‘homo albus’ and even ‘hominem esse album’), a *complexio distans* in which there is a copula that performs a special act of “saying”. The question now is whether this special kind of

17. *Summ* I, 3.2: “Propositio autem mentalis consistit in complexione conceptuum; ideo praesupponit conceptus simplices in mente, et super hos addit conceptum simplicem complexivum quo intellectus affirmat vel negat unum illorum conceptuum de reliquo.”

18. Cf. *Prior Analytics* I, 1, 24a 16; *Peri Hermeneias* 4, 17a 21; *Posterior Analytics* I, 2, 72a 14.

19. *Quaest Phys* I, 18: “Secunda conclusio es quod ‘generare’ vel ‘benefacere’ vel ‘Deum creare’ vel ‘Socratem secare lignum’ et sic de aliis non est una propositio. Verum est tamen quod aliquando tales orationes infinitivi modi supponunt materialiter pro aliquibus propositionibus, ut si dicamus ‘Deum creare est propositio affirmativa’, sic enim ista oratio ‘Deum creare’ supponit pro ista propositione ‘Deus creat’.” See also: *In Met* IV, 6 and V, 7; *Conseq* II, 7; and *Summ* IV, 3.2 and VIII, 2.1.

20. *Soph* II, concl 3: “Nam sicut hominem currere, si est, est homo currens, et hominem esse album, si est, est homo albus, ita hominem esse asinum, si est, est homo asinus existens.” See also *In Met* IV, 10.

combination has some special kind of relationship with the world outside the mind.

1.2 Semantic analysis

In my opinion, a proper semantic analysis of propositions cannot be carried out unless a clear distinction is made between two planes on which the relationship between language and reality unfolds: signification, on the one hand, and verification, on the other. In addition, a third intermediate level, the level of supposition, will be developed to bridge the gap between the two.

1.2.1 Signification

Signification is a property of terms: in Buridan's theory, vocal terms are imposed to signify the concrete individuals in his ontology. It may be useful to recall here the distinction that Buridan draws between two types of signification for all vocal signs: first, they immediately signify the concepts by means of which they were imposed to signify (*significatio apud mentem*); and second, they indirectly signify (by means of these concepts) the things which are known by the corresponding concepts (*significatio ad extra*).²¹ When we use a term, we signify (*ad extra*) by it all the concrete individuals that it is imposed to signify: not only existent individuals, but also past and future, and even merely possible ones.

But we are now dealing with combinations of terms. Complex terms are not themselves imposed to signify, but are able to signify through the signification of their parts. In Buridan's view, any complex term signifies the same as its parts signify separately ('homo albus' signifies men and white things).²² Thus, in some sense, considered as a combina-

21. *Soph* II: "Et ad loquendum intelligibiliter, ego suppono, secundum dicta prius, quod voces habent duplices significationes, unam apud mentem, quia immediate significant conceptus sibi correspondentes a quibus vel sibi similibus imponebantur ad significandum. Aliam habent quia mediantibus dictis conceptibus significant res quae illis conceptibus concipiuntur. Et quia multotiens illae res conceptae sunt extra animam, ut lapis et asinus, ideo ad placitum ego vocabo primam significationem apud mentem et secundam vocabo significationem ad extra."

22. This is what Spade calls the "additive principle", which is also attributed to Ockham in Spade 1975: 58. Although Buridan does not explicitly formulate the principle, it is evident that he admits it in various places: *In Met* IV, 14; *Q L super Perih* I, 2; *Soph* I concl. 8 and 11, II concl. 5.

tion of terms, a proposition may be said to signify; but since the proposition as a whole is not imposed to signify anything,²³ Buridan does not accept that there is a specific significate for the proposition taken as a whole (*significatum propositionis*). Since taken on their own syncategorematic terms have no signification *ad extra*,²⁴ it follows that if a proposition is said to signify something *ad extra*, it signifies exactly the same thing or things that are signified by its categorematic parts. This is why Buridan can say that two contradictory propositions signify *ad extra* exactly the same thing.²⁵

It is clear that Buridan's opinion on the signification of propositions does not hold him to any special ontological commitment: to account for the signification of a proposition, he only needs to admit the individual things signified by the subject and predicate. Buridan explicitly rejects any real composition (such as Burley's *propositio in re*)²⁶ as a correlate of the syntactic composition of propositions.²⁷ And he also rejects that any special kind of entity, such as the *complexe significa-*

23. *Soph* II concl. 5: "Immo propositio imposita non est secundum se totam simul ad significandum, <sed secundum> terminos eius seorsum quos intellectus componit affirmative vel negative sicut vult."

24. *Summ* IV, 2.3: "Aliae autem sunt voces significativae quae ultra illos conceptus non significant per se res aliquas illis conceptibus conceptas, sicut sunt copulae et negationes et signa distributiva." See also n. 16 above.

25. *In Met* VI, 12: "Ultima conclusio potest poni quod cum metaphysicus de omni termino significativo et de omni propositione habeat inquirere et scire que res significantur vel connotantur, tamen principalius debet hic considerare de termini quam de propositionibus, quia preter significationes terminorum nihil aliud significant extra propositiones. Unde intentio Aristotelis esset quod illa propositio: 'Deus est bonus', et ista etiam: 'Deus non est bonus', non significant aliquid extra se nisi Deum et bonitatem, que etiam significant isti termini 'Deus' et 'bonus'. Et ista propositio: 'homo est albus', non significat nisi hominem et albedinem, que etiam significant isti termini 'homo' et 'albus'." See also *Soph* I, ad tertium.

26. See Nuchelmans 1973: 219-25; Biard 1989: 151-59; Pinborg 1967: 394-404; Conti 1996: 268-78.

27. *Summ* I, 1.6: "Sed oratio mentalis non amplius dicitur oratio quia significat ultra in re aliam orationem, sed quia est complexio plurium conceptuum in anima [...]. Sed statim tu quaeres: si in rebus significatis vel re significata non sit aliqua complexio, quid ergo significat oratio mentalis qua scilicet intellectus dicit Deum esse Deum vel Deum non esse Deum? Respondeo quod nihil ad extra plus vel aliud significat una dictarum orationum quam alia. Neutra enim significat aliud quam Deum ad extra; sed alio modo significat affirmativa et alio modo negativa, et illi modi sunt in anima illi conceptus complexivi quos secunda operatio intellectus addit supra simplices conceptus, qui designantur per illas copulas vocales 'est' vel 'non est'."

bilia made popular in Paris by Gregory of Rimini,²⁸ are the “things” signified by a proposition.²⁹

Now, although a proposition can be said to signify the same things that are signified by its categorematic parts, propositions are not specifically designed to signify things (this task is already performed by the terms, and, strictly speaking, only by them). Rather, propositions are designed to accomplish something different: to perform an act of a higher level, i.e. to say something about something by means of the copula.³⁰ This special function of propositions endows them with a new property that is not present on the level of the terms: the capacity to be true or false. Although the vocal propositions ‘Deus est’ and ‘Deus non est’ do not signify *ad extra* anything different from God himself, each of them adds something to the signification of the terms: they signify *apud mentem* different ways of thinking of God; and precisely this difference is the reason why they have a different truth value.³¹

28. See Élie 1936; dal Pra 1956; Nuchelmans 1973: 227-37; Grassi 1976. As J. Zupko (1994-1997) shows, Gregory transmits a faulty interpretation of the teaching of Adam Wodeham, and this fuels the criticism of the theory of the *complexe significabile* on the part of the Parisian nominalists. For Wodeham’s original theory, see: Gál 1977; Nuchelmans 1980b; Grassi 1986; Reina 1986; Tachau 1987 and 1988: 303-10; Karger 1995.

29. On the one hand, Buridan holds that Gregory of Rimini’s *complexe significabilia* are absurd and inadmissible “entities” (*Quaest Phys* I, 18; *In Met* V, 7 and VI, 8). On the other hand, Buridan maintains that there is no need to propose any special “entity” that is the meaning of the propositions, since anything can be signified in different ways, by simple or complex expressions (*In Met* V, 7; *Quaest Phys* I, 18; *Soph* I).

30. The interest which Buridan shows in the problem of determining the subject of a categorical proposition (for example, in the case of propositions with oblique terms) is proof of his concern with “saying”: according to the accepted definitions of ‘subject’ and ‘predicate’ as “illud de quo aliquid dicitur” and “quod dicitur de alio” respectively, the problem of determining the subject of a categorical proposition seems to be a question of determining what is said of what in each case. See *Summ* I, 3.3, *Summ* IV, 2.6, *Super Perih* I, 6, and also Karger 1984.

31. *In Met* IV, 14: “Modo de complexione distante dico quod iste propositiones vocales: ‘Deus est ens’, ‘Deus non est ens’, habent oppositas significationes, ita quod significant propositiones mentales diversas et oppositas, unam veram et alteram falsam. Sed propositiones mentales correspondentes istis predictis vocalibus non amplius ad extra significant vel representant alias res, immo quicquid ego intelligo per illam mentalem ‘Deus est’, illud idem intelligo et nihil plus per istam ‘Deus non est’, quoniam per utramque propositionem nihil intelligo nisi Deum et esse vel ens. Sed tamen illa que ego intelligo, ego alio modo intelligo per propositionem affirmativam et alio modo per propositionem negativam, quoniam per istam propositionem ‘Deus est Deus’ ego intelligo Deum secundum conceptum complexum et complectionem compositam.

In my view, in Buridan's theory the two perspectives that give rise to the two classic definitions of the proposition are brought together: the one that we have seen, i.e. a statement that says something about something, as well as the traditional definition (also Aristotelian in its inspiration, but formulated by Boethius),³² i.e. a statement that signifies something true or false. It is precisely because the proposition says something about something that it has the property of being true or false.

1.2.2. *Debita correspondentia in re*

At this point, one might object that 'homo rationalis' and 'homo hinnibilis', for example, also have different "truth values". In fact, Buridan sometimes applies the terms 'true' and 'false' to non-propositional complexes. This is the reason why Gabriel Nuchelmans maintains that Buridan reduces the difference between *complexiones distantes* (like the proposition 'Homo est albus') and *complexiones indistantes* (like the complex term 'homo albus') to such an extent that he "tends to treat a mental *propositio* as a complicated act of thinking of a thing and the corresponding vocal *propositio* as a referring expression".³³

In fact, Buridan draws a distinction between the *complexiones indistantes* that have a *debita correspondentia in re* (for example, 'homo rationalis') and those that do not have such a *correspondentia* (for example, 'homo hinnibilis'). Although there are indeed passages in which complex terms of this type are called by Buridan 'true' or 'false',³⁴ in my view these words should be understood in an analogous

Sed secundum istam propositionem 'Deus non est Deus', ego intelligo Deum secundum complexionem divisivam. Et tunc complexioni compositivae est in re debita correspondentia, scilicet est pro quo subiectum et predicatum supponunt, et complexioni divisive non est in re correspondentia debita, ideo illa complexio apud mentem est falsa."

32. Cfr. *Peri Hermeneias* 4, 17a 3-4; *De Differentiis Topicis* I (Patrologia Latina 64, 1174B 7).

33. Nuchelmans 1980a: 245.

34. *In Met* VI, 6: "Modo ergo compositio indistans dicitur habere convenientem correspondentiam si res significata per determinationem sit eadem cum re pro qua determinabile supponit vel si ei adiaceat, et tunc illa compositio diceretur vera, sed si non esset ita diceretur falsa vel ficta. Verbi gratia, iste conceptus diceretur falsus vel fictus: 'asinus rationalis', 'mons aureus'. Et e converso esset dicendum de divisione indistans: unde ille conceptus esset verus: 'asinus non [est] rationalis', et ille falsus: 'homo non [est] rationalis', 'homo non [est] animal'. Et isto modo isti termini vocales 'chimera', 'vacuum', designant conceptus falsos sive fictos, designant enim conceptus complexos, quia idem significat 'vacuum' quod 'locus non repletus corpore', et idem 'chimera' quod 'compositum ex impossibilibus componi'."

sense, since in other passages Buridan says explicitly that this has to do with the “reference” of terms: the “correspondence” signifies that there is something for which the complex term supposit, ³⁵ and although the descriptions ‘true’ and ‘false’ may be applied, this is not in the same sense as propositions are true or false. ³⁶

Supposition is the property of terms that effects the linkage between terms and real things. A term that signifies present, past, future, and possible things, when it is used in a proposition, comes to supposit only for the things of which it is true to say ‘this is x’ (according to the time of the copula, etc.). A simple term that signifies several things actually refers to one or another when it is used in a proposition. When a complex term – which signifies all the things signified by its categorematic parts – is used in a proposition, it may come to supposit for some of them, or it may not supposit at all (because of the restrictive effect of one term on another). ³⁷ It is in this context that Buridan considers the

35. *In Met* IV, 14: “Et si sit idem pro quo supponit ‘album’ et ‘homo’, conceptus compositus habet debitam correspondentiam in re et supponit pro illa re. Si autem idem nihil sit album et homo in re, tunc conceptus [divisivus] <compositus> non habet correspondentiam in re, ideo est conceptus fictus et pro nullo supponit. Et e converso si substantivum et adiectivum non supponant pro eodem, ut dicendo ‘homo hinnibilis’, iste esset conceptus fictus, et pro nullo supponeret, et tamen significaret veras res, scilicet omnes homines indifferenter propter istum terminum ‘homo’ et omnes hinnibiles equos propter istum terminum ‘hinnibilis’, sed tales res tali modo intelliguntur et significantur per istam orationem: ‘homo hinnibilis’, quia tali modo significandi non est in re debita correspondentia.” *Quaest de Anima (tertia lectura)* III, 12: “Conceptuum autem qui non sunt propositiones, sed termini qui possunt subici vel praedicari in propositionibus, consonantia secundum quam dicuntur veri attenditur penes hoc quod possunt pro aliquo vel aliquibus supponere; et si non possunt, tunc dicuntur falsi. Talium autem conceptuum quidam sunt complexi ex determinatione et determinabili, et aliqui incomplexi. Et statim secundum haec dicta apparet quod complexi aliqui sunt veri et aliqui sunt falsi, nam illud complexum ‘equus risibilis’ pro nullo supponit, et illud ‘equus non risibilis’ pro aliquo supponit, et e converso illud ‘equus hinnibilis’ pro aliquo supponit, et illud ‘equus non hinnibilis’ pro nullo supponit.”

36. *Quaest Priorum* I, 12 (cited in Reina 1959: 409 note 109): “Alia autem complectuntur ad invicem tanquam determinatio ad determinabile ... et talis complexio vocatur complexio indistans ... et complexa tali complexione indistante nec sunt vera nec falsa ... Sic ergo patet qualiter sint aliqui conceptus complexi, qui nec sunt veri nec falsi eodem modo quo propositio dicitur vera vel falsa, et quomodo talium conceptuum complexorum quidam supponunt pro aliquo ... quidam pro nullo ...”

37. *Soph* I concl. 6 and 8: “Sed de conceptu complexo est alia ratio. Nam si sit conceptus complexus per modum determinationis et determinabilis, ut conceptus correspondens huic orationi ‘homo albus’, si fieret propositio mentalis quod ‘Homo albus currit’, tunc licet conceptu hominis concipiatur indifferenter omnis homo, tamen conceptus

possibility of success or failure of the referential function of terms, and this is what he calls *debita correspondentia in re*, and sometimes “truth”.

In contrast, Buridan does not consider propositions to be “referring expressions”. This is because a proposition as a whole, taken personally, cannot supposit for anything: no term can supposit unless it is the subject or predicate of a proposition, but no proposition, taken personally, can be the subject or predicate of another proposition.³⁸ In addition, a further proof of the distinction between referring expressions and propositions is the relationship of the latter to assent and dissent. In Buridan’s view, propositions are the only type of linguistic unit that can be met with assent or dissent.³⁹

Propositions are not referring expressions. But, even so, it is possible to investigate some kind of “fit” between propositions and reality. When a proposition does “fit”, it is said to be true; when it does not, it is said to be false.

1.2.3. Verification

Just as propositions are not imposed to signify as a whole, so they are linked to reality not directly, but via the medium of the semantic properties of their terms. More specifically, the relevant semantic property is, according to Buridan, not signification, but supposition. It is true that

ille non supponit pro omnibus hominibus, sed solum pro albis, quia per conceptum albi sibi coniunctum restringitur. Nec conceptus albi supponit pro omnibus albis, sed restringitur per conceptum hominis ad supponendum solum pro illis albis qui sunt homines. [...] Octava conclusio sequitur, scilicet quod aliquis conceptus complexus factus subiectum vel praedicatum in propositione mentali pro nullo supponit [...]. Possum enim formare conceptum asini et conceptum risibilis simul per modum determinationis et determinabilis [...]. Et tamen ille conceptus complexus pro nullo supponit, quia conceptus risibilis prohibet ne supponat pro aliis quam pro risibilibus, ideo non potest supponere pro asinis. Et conceptus asini prohibet ne supponat pro aliis quam pro asinis, ideo non potest supponere pro risibilibus.”

38. *Summ* IV, 1.4: “Quia nullus terminus proprie loquendo supponit, nisi subiectum et praedicatum propositionis, ut suppono.” *Summ* IV, 2.6: “‘Sexta regula est quod nulla perfecta oratio potest subici vel praedicari.’ [...] Sexta regula etiam conceditur, quia apud omnes grammaticos oratio esset incongrua.”
39. *Quaest de Anima (tertia lectura)* III, 12: “Notandum est quod ad simplicem conceptum, vel etiam ad complexum non per modum enuntiationis, nullus sequitur assensus vel dissensus. Sed ad propositionem formatam potest sequi assensus vel dissensus [...]. Ideo saepe restringimus haec nomina ‘verum’ vel ‘falsum’ ad iudicia assentiva vel dissentiva, aut ad conceptus ad quos innati sunt consequi assensus vel dissensus. Cuiusmodi sunt propositiones mentales.”

a proposition is able to say something about something precisely by means of the ability of its terms to signify. But, at the same time, a proposition surpasses the mere signification of its terms. This is the reason why the different attempts to account for truth in terms of signification do not work, as Buridan shows in the second chapter of his *Sophismata*: “saying” does not amount to adding up significates, nor to signifying a new thing.

Rather, a proposition involves a different type of intellectual operation. As we have seen, the copula is the “complexive act” by means of which the intellect affirms or denies something about something. The act of affirming, as Buridan states, is an act of identifying something with something, the act of denying an act of distinguishing something from something.⁴⁰ According to the syncategorematic nature of the copula, the proposition does not *signify* an identity, but it *makes* an equation. This is why propositions demand a different type of link to reality: verification cannot be reduced to signification. This special nature of the “fit” between propositions and reality results in a concrete method for determining the truth or falsity of a given proposition. As is well known, Buridan substitutes some new truth conditions based on supposition for the traditional rules based on signification.⁴¹ As far as verification is concerned, supposition acts as an intermediary between propositions and reality. For something to be identical with something, the things have to be real, and the link to real things is a matter of supposition. Thus, to say that real things verify the proposition ‘A est B’ is tantamount to saying that real things are such that the subject and predicate of the proposition supposit for the same things.⁴²

40. *Soph* II: “Idem valet dicere ‘A est B’ et dicere ‘A idem est quod B’, sicut etiam dicere ‘A non est B’ valet idem sicut dicere quod A non est idem quod B.”

41. *Soph* II: “Et sic videtur mihi quod in assignandis causis veritatum et falsitatum non sufficit ire ad significationes terminorum, sed ire ad suppositiones.”

42. *Soph* II: “Decima conclusio est quod ad veritatem categoricae affirmativae requiritur quod termini, scilicet subiectum et praedicatum, supponant pro eodem vel eisdem. Ideo etiam ad eius falsitatem sufficit quod non supponant pro eodem vel eisdem. Et forte quia haec non est conclusio sed principium et indemonstrabile, vel si est conclusio, ipsa est propinqua principio indemonstrabili, tamen in libro Posteriorum apparet quod aliquando principia indemonstrabilia indigent bene aliqua declaratione vel exemplari vel inductiva aut huiusmodi, ideo dictam decimam conclusionem ego sic declaro. Certum est quod in hac propositione: ‘A est B’, iste terminus ‘A’ vel pro nullo supponit vel supponit pro A, et ita de ‘B’. [...] Deinde etiam manifestum est quod dicendo ‘A est B’, posito quod non sint termini ampliativi ad praeteritum vel futurum, idem valet dicere ‘A est B’ et dicere ‘A idem est quod B’. Sicut etiam dicere ‘A non

However, this way of expressing truth conditions (“supposit for the same things”) is an oversimplified way of formulating the issues, and may lead us to misinterpret Buridan’s theory. To avoid misunderstandings, Buridan insists that there cannot be a single way of formulating truth conditions that would be valid for all propositions. On the one hand, there is the special problem raised by self-referential propositions (*insolubilia*):⁴³ for these to be true, identity of supposita is not enough. On the other hand, as far as non-self-referential propositions are concerned, the basic structure of the subject-copula-predicate can be modified by different syncategoremata, which of course do not alter only the outward appearance of the proposition, but also modify what the proposition says about things. If the simple ‘A est B’ (or ‘A non est B’) is according to Buridan an identification (or a distinction), the presence of the different quantifiers responds to the possibility not of simply identifying A with B, but of specifying how many of things A can be identified with how many of things B. When something more specific is said about things, it would be expected that the truth conditions of each proposition would also be more specific. For this reason, Buridan has to indicate which supposita of the subject must be identified with which supposita of the predicate so that the categorical propositions of each of the basic types are true or false. Thus, instead of accepting a general formulation of truth conditions valid for all propositions, Buridan offers, in the second chapter of his *Sophismata*, the set of rules that determine the truth/falsity conditions (based on supposition) for the basic forms of categorical proposition.⁴⁴

est B’ valet idem sicut dicere quod A non est idem quod B. Et tamen si est verum quod A est idem quod B, oportet quod isti termini ‘A’ et ‘B’ supponant pro eodem, quia ‘A’ pro A et ‘B’ pro B, quod quidem A ponitur idem esse quod B. Et ita similiter est de praeterito vel futuro.”

43. Buridan devotes the eighth chapter of his *Sophismata* to this subject, and there is a wealth of literature on this. Some examples are: Hughes 1982; Pironet 1993; Prior 1962; Sirridge 1978; Spade 1978.
44. *Soph* II: “Ideo recolligendo ponitur ista decimaquarta conclusio, quod omnis propositio particularis affirmativa vera ex eo est vera quia subiectum et praedicatum supponunt pro eodem vel eisdem. Et omnis universalis affirmativa vera ex eo est vera quia pro quocumque vel pro quibuscumque subiectum supponit, pro eodem vel pro eisdem praedicatum supponit. Et omnis particularis affirmativa falsa ex eo est falsa quia subiectum et praedicatum pro nullo eodem supponunt nec pro eisdem. Et universalis affirmativa falsa ex eo est falsa quia non pro omni illo nec pro omnibus pro quo vel pro quibus subiectum supponit supponit praedicatum. Et omnis particularis negativa vera ex eo est vera ex quo universalis affirmativa sibi contradictoria est falsa, et dic-

As was the case on the level of signification, it is once again clear that Buridan's handling of verification does not hold him to any special ontological commitment: to account for the truth of a proposition, all he needs to accept are the individual supposita of subject and predicate. More specifically, in consonance with his rejection of the *complexe significabilia* as the significates of propositions, Buridan rejects anything like "facts" or "states of affairs" as truthmakers of propositions: that is, the *ita esse in re* or *non ita esse in re* in the traditional definition of truth.⁴⁵ On the one hand, the individual things signified by the categorical terms are the only truthmakers admissible.⁴⁶ On the other hand, in many cases no truthmaker is needed: when the truth/falsity conditions involve a non-identity of supposita, the condition might be met if there were no suppositum at all, because then there is obviously nothing with which anything can be identified. For the truth of a negative proposition, as for the falsity of an affirmative, no real cause is required.⁴⁷

tum est unde hoc esset. Et omnis universalis negativa falsa ex eo est falsa ex quo particularis affirmativa sibi contradictoria esset vera. Et dictum est quod haec est decimaquarta conclusio quae continet octo conclusiones partiales. Apparet omnino ex praexistentibus propter hoc principium quod quicquid est causa veritatis unius contradictoriarum vel requisitum ad veritatem eius, illud est causa falsitatis alterius vel requisitum ad eius falsitatem."

45. *Soph* II, ad primum: "Et hoc valde facit homines errare, scilicet quod si quis dicat propositionem veram, dicimus quod ita est sicut ipse dicit. Et male intelligentes credunt quod hoc sit dictum quod ita est in rebus significatis sicut illa propositio significat. Et isti male intelligunt." Buridan only accepts the formula "*ita esse*" as an abbreviation for the set of rules which he had already provided (see above, n. 44); *Soph* II: "Sed ultimo notandum est quod nominibus uti possumus ad placitum; quando plures communiter hoc modo loquendi utuntur, ut de omni propositione vera dicamus quod ita est et de omni falsa quod non est ita, ego non intendo illum modum loquendi remove, sed ad brevius loquendum ego forte utar eo, semper intendens per eam non quod significat de primaria impositione, sed causas veritatum vel falsitatum prius assignatas, diversas in diversis propositionibus, sicut dictum est."
46. *Soph* II: "Ad secundum sophisma, respondetur quod istae sunt concedendae: 'equus Aristotelis ambulavit', 'equus Aristotelis est mortuus', et non quia ita est in rebus significatis, sed quia subiectum et praedicatum supponunt pro eadem re (non tamen quae est, sed quae fuit)."
47. *In Met* VI, 8: "Alia conclusio ponitur quod ad falsitatem affirmative nulla est causa, quia nihil requiritur in re significata vel in rebus significatis, quia sufficit quod sit formata et non vera, si enim sit formata et non vera sequitur quod est falsa. Modo ad hoc quod non sit vera non oportet aliquid esse a parte rei significate, sed sufficit non esse eam propter quam esset vera si esset vera, et hoc patet etiam per argumenta que fiebant in principio questionis, quia si nunquam fuisset vel etiam nunquam foret equus vel asinus, adhuc illa esset falsa: 'equus est asinus', et ista vera: 'equus non est asi-

Once again, it seems to me that this stance towards truthmakers reflects Buridan's attitude concerning the specific character of propositions. Propositions are "about" things, but do not simply "mirror" things. The asymmetry that can be found in Buridan's treatment of true affirmative propositions and false negative ones on the one hand, and the false affirmative and true negative propositions on the other, is a proof that verification is not a simple relationship of mapping. The possibility of being compared with reality in a way that is not simply a quest for correspondence arises out of the radically different nature of propositions as opposed to terms.

2. Pardo's theory

Leaving aside some interesting topics, such as the reception of Buridan's theory by his students in Paris,⁴⁸ or how it spread through European universities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,⁴⁹ I shall jump to the very end of the fifteenth century, when Buridan came back into fashion at the University of Paris (where Buridanism was vigorously reintroduced by Thomas Bricot, after the repeal, in 1481, of the decree passed by Louis XI banning the teaching of nominalist ideas).⁵⁰ Around 1500, one of the nominalists in Paris, the Spaniard Jerónimo Pardo, declared himself to be a follower of Buridan, yet he betrayed the spirit of Buridan's ideas. I would like to summarise Pardo's theory, and to

nus', et tamen huiusmodi falsitas non est in rebus significatis aliqua causa, nihil vero est in eis ex quo nihil sunt. Tunc statim sequitur alia conclusio: quod ad veritatem negative nulla causa requiritur, immo nihil requiritur ex parte rerum significatarum, quia dictum fuit quod quaecunque cause requiruntur ad veritatem alicuius propositionis, eedem requiruntur ad falsitatem sue contradictorie; igitur, si ad veritatem negative alicue cause requiruntur ex parte rerum significatarum, ille eedem requiruntur ad falsitatem affirmative sibi opposite. Sed statim dictum est quod nihil requiritur ad falsitatem affirmative, et hoc ex parte rerum significatarum; igitur, nihil requiritur ad veritatem negative." On the possibility of truly saying something about non-existent things, see Spruyt 1993.

48. On the theories of the proposition of Albert of Saxony and Marsilius of Inghen, see Nuchelmans 1973: 240-42 and 251-54.

49. See Federici Vescovini 1976; Markowski 1984.

50. See Ashworth 1974: 6-7.

contrast his points with the main theses that I have attributed to Buridan.

In the first chapter of his *Medulla dyalectices* (1500, 1505), Jerónimo Pardo discusses the problem “of the truth and falsity of propositions”. To approach this problem, since he believes that truth and falsity should be based on signification, he examines three famous theories about the signification of propositions: that of Gregory of Rimini, which he considers erroneous; that of Buridan, which he says is the correct view; and that of Pierre d’Ailly, which he examines only with regard to the aspects which might come into conflict with Buridan’s theory (in order to defend the latter from possible objections).⁵¹ However, when Pardo tries to base truth and falsity on signification, Buridan’s theory proves insufficient, and Pardo decides to enrich it with certain modifications,⁵² thereby, I submit effectively changing the essence of Buridan’s semantics of propositions.

The strong point of Buridan’s theory is, in Pardo’s view, his refusal to accept extraneous entities as significates of propositions: the proposition can have no significate beyond the individual things signified by its terms.⁵³ The weak point of the theory, on the other hand, is that it does not permit an explanation of truth as a function of signification. Buridan was aware of this, but Pardo wants precisely this type of an explanation,⁵⁴ so he adds to the Buridanian ontology some “relative modes of being” (the different ways in which things may be related: *modus se habendi*), which in some sense are not different from the related things,⁵⁵ but which in some other sense are the added aspect of reality that acts as spe-

51. *MD*, 1ra-7ra.

52. *MD*, 5ra-7ra. (A part of this text is included in the Appendix, and a preliminary edition of the whole first chapter is available on my website: <http://sophia.unav.es/pilzarbe/medulla.html>).

53. *MD*, 2va: “Alius est modus dicendi [Buridanus] qui licet verus multas tamen oppugnationes patitur, ut contra veritatem plerumque contingere solet. Pro quo ponitur talis conclusio: complexe significabile seu significatum propositionis non distinguitur a significationibus terminorum. Ut ista propositio ‘homo est animal’ significat hominem esse animal, tunc dicit quod hominem esse animal non distinguitur ab homine et animali seu ab illis que significantur per istos terminos ‘homo’ et ‘animal’.”

54. See Appendix, A.1 and A.5.a.

55. Appendix B.1.d.

cific significate and ground for the truth and falsity of propositions.⁵⁶ The great difference between Pardo and Buridan is that Pardo does not believe in the autonomous activity of the intellect, but rather interprets the phrase “intellectus movetur a re” as the demand for a strict parallelism between language and reality.⁵⁷ As a result, a) in contrast to the ontological economy implied by the compositional nature of language, Pardo ends up by proposing a specific significate for each linguistic entity (which makes it difficult to distinguish between propositions and terms, because both have a “referent” in reality); and b) abandoning the autonomy of the semantic plane of verification, Pardo adheres to the idea that truthmakers are rigorously needed for every proposition (which makes it difficult to distinguish between signification and verification, because every proposition has a real correlate which is at the same time its significate and the cause of its truth or falsity).

Pardo's theory can be summarised as follows.⁵⁸ Mental propositions are special acts of the intellect: by means of a proposition, the intellect conceives the same things that are conceived by the categorematic terms, but (due to the syncategorematic nature of the copula) it conceives them in some way (*aliqua*liter). Since (in Pardo's opinion) the intellectual act must be caused by reality, for the intellect to be able to form an affirmative proposition (so conceiving things *affirmatively*) there must be in reality an affirmative way of being (the way in which the things signified by subject and predicate are *affirmatively related*); and for the intellect to be able to form a negative proposition (so conceiving things *negatively*) there must be in reality a negative way of being (the way in which the things signified by subject and predicate are *negatively related*). Thus, although strictly speaking the significate of a proposition can be nothing other than the things signified by the categorematic terms, the meaningfulness of propositions requires cer-

56. *MD*, 17ra: “Non sequitur: cognosco Socratem, ergo cognosco Socratem unitive in ordine ad seipsum; nam per noticiam cui subordinatur iste terminus ‘Socratem’ cognosco Socratem et tamen non cognosco Socratem unitive in ordine ad seipsum. Et ex hoc videtur apparentia quedam, quod ille modus se habendi unitive non omnino ydemptificetur cum Socrate, ex eo quod stat aliquem cognoscere Socratem et tamen non cognoscit quod Socrates se habeat unitive in ordine ad seipsum. Et istud argumentum posset applicari universaliter de omnibus modis se habendi unius ad aliud, probando esse aliquam distinctionem inter rem et modum se habendi (sed hoc omitto quia non est presentis inquisitionis).”

57. Appendix A.4.b.

58. On Pardo's theory of the proposition, see: Nuchelmans 1980a; Ashworth 1978; Coombs 1995; Pérez-Illarbe 1999.

tain “ways of being related” as the real correlate for each proposition.⁵⁹ On the other hand, propositions, in addition to being meaningful, can be true or false, and these properties also require, in Pardo’s opinion, some real correlates: for the intellect to be able to conceive things *truly*, these things that must be affirmatively/negatively related *in re* must also be *truly related*; and for the intellect to be able to conceive things *falsely*, these things that must be affirmatively/negatively related *in re* must also be *falsely related*. For this reason, Pardo posits “relative modalities” *in re*, prior to any act of the intellect, as the real ground for every propositional modality.⁶⁰ Since the intellect’s potentiality is infinite, Pardo admits that there are infinite “modes of being related”, although these modes are not really (*non realiter*) different from the related things themselves.⁶¹

Thus, for every proposition (affirmative, negative, present, past, modal, and so on), and for every propositional modality (truth, falsity, possibility, contingency, and so on), Pardo postulates in reality, as a foundation, not the individual things themselves, but those individual things related in different ways (affirmatively, negatively, etc.), and the different ways in which these relationships exist (truly, falsely, etc.). It seems that individual things “on their own” are not able to account for propositional semantics. The result is something as far removed from Buridan’s theory as a theory in which:

a) The difference between propositions and terms is dissolved: given that there is a real correlate for every proposition, it seems that in Pardo’s theory the reduction of propositions to referring expressions does take place. For example, the proposition ‘Homo est asinus’ would be a complicated way of naming men and donkeys insofar as they are affirmatively related (since in reality, in some way, “there are” men and donkeys related affirmatively although falsely).⁶² Buridan is capable of escaping from this reduction through the important role that he ascribes to the copula, and therefore, the semantics of “saying” as opposed to “signifying”.

b) The semantic evaluation of propositions is reduced to a referential relation, which seems to dilute the distinction between true and false propositions. Both ‘Homo est asinus’ and ‘Homo non est asinus’ have

59. Appendix, A.5.b, e.

60. Appendix, A.5.a, c, d, f.

61. Appendix B.1.d.

62. Appendix A.5.e.

their real correlate in Pardo's theory, which is the cause of their respective falsity and truth: men affirmatively related to donkeys in a false way, and men negatively related to donkeys in a true way. In Buridan, there is no such referentialism of truth and falsity, since he explicitly rejects the need for truthmakers for many kinds of proposition.

c) Because of all this, Pardo's theory runs the risk of taking on undesirable ontological commitments. It seems that the requirement that language and reality should be parallel turns his theory into a disguised version of the *complexe significabile* theory that he criticises so heavily. The propositions 'Homo est asinus' and 'Homo non est asinus' demand, as a foundation for their semantic properties, a more complex reality than the terms 'homo' and 'asinus'. Buridan, by contrast, only requires the individual things for which these terms supposit; what is more, sometimes he does not need them to supposit for anything at all. What he does require, though, is the acknowledgement of the independence of the intellect with regard to reality.

3. Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that Buridan is capable of maintaining that propositions have a specific character, without being obliged to take on any undesirable ontological commitment. What distinguishes a proposition from a mere list of terms is the fact that it contains a copula, and it can therefore be true or false. But on the one hand, the syncategorematic act of saying something about something does not require any object to be signified other than the individual things signified by the subject and predicate, whereas, on the other, the truth/falsity conditions do not require any real thing other than the individual things for which the subject and predicate supposit. In contrast, Pardo's theory of propositions requires *in re* some "modes of being related" (as the ground for the meaningfulness of propositions), and also some "relative modalities" (as the ground for their capacity for being true or false).

It would be interesting to explore whether Buridan's nominalism would be compromised if he were to admit a deeper structure for these individual things (which could help to explain, for example, the nature of essential and accidental predication).⁶³ But what I have tried to show

63. On Buridan's ontology, see: Scott 1966; Normore 1985; Klima 1999; Klima's contribution to this volume.

here is that Buridan's theory of propositions is rich enough to avoid an assimilation of propositions to terms, and consequently, a referentialist semantics of the proposition. By concentrating on signification and ignoring the special nature of predication and verification, one might easily fall into accepting an assimilation of this kind. In my opinion, although this charge may be levelled at some "Buridians", Buridan himself cannot be accused of it.

Appendix

Jerónimo Pardo, *Medulla dyalectices* (Paris, 1505): cap 1, 5va-6rb.

A. <Responsio ad quintum>

1. [f. 5va] Sed quod necesse sit et veritatem et falsitatem, et necessitatem et contingentiam, possibilitatem et impossibilitatem ex parte significati propositionis sumi, quod negabat unus doctor, ostenditur maxime de necessitate et impossibilitate sic: propositio non dicitur necessaria vel impossibilis per intrinsecam denominationem secundum formalem necessitatem vel impossibilitatem sue entitatis, quia ipsa formaliter est res contingens; dicitur ergo necessaria vel impossibilis per extrinsecam denominationem, et non nisi quia ei correspondet aliquod intelligibile et necessarium vel impossibile pro suo per se significato.

2. Cuius oppositum probatum est de aliquibus propositionibus que sunt necessarie quibus non correspondet tanquam significatum nisi aliquod intelligibile contingens. Etiam probatum est quod nulli propositioni impossibili correspondet aliquod intelligibile impossibile tanquam eius per se significatum.

3. a) Ad quod respondet alius doctor [Andreas de Novocastro] quod per propositiones illas que sunt necessarie, de quibus probatum est quod non significatur per eas nisi res contingens, apprehenditur quoddam quasi intelligibile necessarium in proportione et figura vel forma loquendi, quia intellectus fertur super obiecta intelligibilia quasi sibi corresponderet tale intelligibile necessarium significabile complexum, sed non est ita secundum veritatem et proprietatem rei (sicut intellectus apprehendendo universaliter videtur per conceptum communem apprehendere aliquod universale intelligibile extra animam, et tamen non est ita in re).

b) Unde declarat doctor iste subtiliter causam erroris quam habet primus modus dicendi, quia sicut respectu rerum singularium forma-

mus conceptus individuales et específicos et generales, ideo ex hoc aliqui sunt ymaginati huiusmodi varietati conceptuum correspondere extra animam proportionabiliter <varietatem> de istis modis obiectorum intelligibilium, quorum unum esset singulare et inferius, aliud minus commune, aliud magis commune, et inquisiverunt quid sunt et ubi sunt; ita in proposito, quia de rebus existentibus et possibilibus apprehensiones varias formamus, quasdam incomplexas et quasdam complexas, et harum quasdam affirmativas et quasdam negativas, et quasdam veras et quasdam falsas, quasdam contingentes et quasdam necessarias, quasdam posibles et quasdam impossibiles, ex hoc yma- [f. 5vb] -ginati sunt quod huiusmodi diversitati apprehensionum correspondet proportionabiliter differentia intelligibilium obiective terminantium. Et quia non potuerunt salvare esse incomplexa significabilia, posuerunt ista esse quorundam intelligibilium complexe significabilium, sed non ita est secundum veritatem et rei proprietatem, sed tantum secundum similitudinem et modum intelligendi, intelligimus enim varie et res dicuntur variari quasi esset talis diversitas in re.

4. a) Sed adhuc iste doctor non videtur satisfacere, quia, ut dicit, per tales propositiones necessarias aut etiam impossibiles solum apprehenditur aliquod intelligibile quasi necessarium, et non quod ita sit in re, sed tantum secundum quandam figuram et modum loquendi; infero ergo etiam tales propositiones secundum rei veritatem non debent dici necessarie vel impossibiles, sed tantum secundum figuram et modum loquendi. Quia, ut argumentatum est, propositio non dicitur necessaria vel impossibilis per denominationem intrinsecam, sed tantum per denominationem extrinsecam a suo significato. Sed, per ipsum, suum significatum non dicitur necessarium secundum veritatem, sed tantum secundum similitudinem et figuram, et ita non sufficienter assignat rationem necessitatis, contingentie, possibilitatis vel impossibilitatis propositionum.

b) Item, sic arguo: aliter concipitur res aliqua per propositionem necessariam, aliter per propositionem contingentem, et aliter per propositionem impossibilem, et illa alietas non tantum in conceptu est consideranda, intellectus enim movetur a re; si ergo res non aliter se habet ut concipitur per unam propositionem et per aliam, non videtur unde una propositio dicatur possibilis et alia impossibile (et non capio ly 'ut' causaliter, ita quod causa quare res aliter se habet sit quia cognoscitur per talem noticiam). Et confirmatur, quia seclusa omni operatione intellectus quero an necesse sit ita esse taliter qualiter significabatur per istam 'Sortes possibiliter est albus' aut non. Si dicatur quod non, que-

ratur unde sumit illa propositio suam necessitatem quando est. Si dicatur quod sic, ergo aliqua necessitas est in re significata propter quam res apprehensa secundum talem necessitatem dicitur necessaria.

5. a) Dico ergo, salvo meliori iudicio, quod a re sumenda est veritas et falsitas, possibilitas et impossibilitas, necessitas et contingentia, ita quod in re seclusa omni operatione intellectus reperitur veritas vel falsitas, necessitas vel contingentia, possibilitas vel impossibilitas. Ad quod deducendum pono talem distinctionem: duplex est necessitas, scilicet, absoluta et simpliciter dicta, alia est necessitas relativa; seu aliquid dicitur necessarium dupliciter, scilicet, absolute et relative. Similiter, de contingentia dicendum est quod est duplex, absoluta et relativa; et pariforma impossibilitas dicenda est duplex, absoluta et relativa.

b) Exemplum: circumscripta omni operatione intellectus homo et asinus sunt res diverse (hoc cuilibet est manifestum). Si ergo sunt res diverse, habent quandam divisionem inter se, propter quam diversitatem intellectus potest cognoscere hominem non esse asinum. Est ergo prius in re divisio quam in intellectu, immo ille actus cognoscendi hoc nomen 'divisionis' propter res ab eo representatas sumpsit, ideo homo relative dicitur ad asinum negative seu divisive. Ideo negatio in re importata per istam propositionem 'homo non est asinus' est homo negative se habens in ordine ad asinum, a qua negatione noticia illa qua cognoscitur homo negative in ordine ad asinum habet quod dicatur negatio. Et hoc videtur dicere commentator sexto Methaphisice commento octavo, dicens quod vera affirmativa significat compositionem in entibus, et vera negativa divisionem in entibus.

c) Et homo similiter in ordine ad asinum se habet negative, non solum negative sed vere negative, et ideo est veritas relativa in re, puta ipse asinus relative se habens in ordine ad hominem.

d) Et vere est amplius necessitas relativa, nam homo non solum negative et vere refertur ad asinum, sed etiam relative necessario, ita quod homo est quid necessarium necessitate relativa in ordine ad asinum negative, homo enim necessario non est asinus, licet non sit quid necessarium necessitate absoluta (illud enim dicitur necessarium necessitate absoluta quod non potest non existere in rerum natura). Homo igitur et asinus habent necessitatem relativam in re, a qua necessitate propositio habet quod dicatur necessaria.

e) Et si queras an illa res que est homo se habeat relative affirmative ad asinum, respondeo: homo se habet relative affirmative ad asinum, sed non relative vere sed relative false, ita quod est ponenda falsitas re-

lativa in re que est ipse asinus relative affirmative et false se habens in ordine ad hominem.

f) Et non solum relative false se habens in ordine ad hominem, sed relative impossibiliter, ita quod asinus est impossibilis impossibilitate relativa, a qua impossibilitate relativa in re existente propositio illa 'homo est asinus' dicitur impossibilis. Ideo bene concedo quod non est aliquid impossibile in re impossibilitate absoluta, illud enim dicitur impossibile impossibilitate absoluta quod non potest existere in rerum natura, sed aliquid bene potest esse in re impossibile impossibilitate relativa.

6. a) i) Et si obiiciatur auctoritate Aristotelis primo Peri Hermeneias, qui ait in sola compositione et divisione intellectus esse veritatem vel falsitatem, non ergo in re est veritas vel falsitas.

ii) Respondeo: ea que logice signis attribuuntur methaphisice rebus ipsis signatis attribuuntur, sicut est de illis: affirmatio, negatio, veritas, falsitas, possibilitas, impossibilitas, necessitas, contingentia, que logicus signis, puta propositionibus, attribuit, methaphisicus vero significatis propositionum.

iii) Et si omnino contendas in re seclusa omni operatione intellectus nichil dici verum vel falsum, immo res tantum dicitur vera quando supra ipsam cadit actus intelligendi aut saltem cognoscendi, de nomine tantum contendis, ut constat, non de re. Ideo, si non placet appellare veritatem nisi quando supra ipsam fertur actus intelligendi, non contradico, sed satis est quod in re ponendum est a quo propositio denominetur illis denominationibus, quo nomine appelletur non curamus.

b) i) Sed moralis philosophus fortasse obiceret quod etiam bonitas et malicia secluso actu volendi reperirentur in re volita vel nolita,

ii) sed dico quod hoc non est concedendum, licet in aliis sit concedendum. Actus enim volendi vel nolendi per denominationem intrinsecam dicitur bonus vel malus, et non per denominationem extrinsecam.

iii) Et si diceretur quod unum actus volendi unum actum exteriorem peior est altero, et hoc non est nisi quia in obiecto uno est maior malicia, etiam seclusa volitione, quam in altero obiecto,

iv) respondeo: hoc ideo est quia ratio dictat unum esse magis nolendum quam alterum conformiter ad voluntatem divinam que vult unum obiectum esse magis nolendum quam alterum, cuius ulterior non est assignanda causa. De hoc non plura, quia aliene est investigationis.

c) i) Sed preterea sophista investigaret huiusmodi veritatem vel falsitatem relativam: nam capiatur illa propositio 'homo non est asinus', et

ponatur quod nullus sit homo neque asinus, tunc nulla est veritas relativa, quia neque homo neque asinus.

ii) Respondeo: homo et asinus sunt veritas relativa, sic intelligendo: quod homo et asinus referuntur adinvicem vere negative, quod est dicere quod homo non est asinus, cum enim dico 'homo non est asinus', ly 'est' subordinatur uni conceptui quo concipiuntur homo et asi- [f. 6rb]-nus relative, puta unitive negative, et sic se habent negative, ideo copula modum illum relationis dat intelligere (de quo in sequenti capitulo), et ita de aliis propositionibus discutiendum est. Nec profecto in hac magna difficultate verba et rigor logices in modo loquendi est tantum aspiciendus quantum sententia.

d) i) Sed ulterius instaretur, quia capta ista propositione 'omne ens est Deus' ipsa non esset possibilis, quod est falsum. Consequentia tamen probatur, quia per eam significatur asinus secundum quod refertur ad Deum affirmative, et taliter refertur impossibiliter, ergo ab illa impossibilitate illa propositio debet denominari impossibilis.

ii) Respondeo: illa propositio simpliciter denominatur possibilis, quia licet per eam tunc significetur asinus ut se habet relative affirmative ad Deum (significatione accepta ex acceptione terminorum), tamen posito quod solus Deus sit non significabitur asinus ut relative ad Deum se habens (significatione accepta ex acceptione terminorum, penes quam significationem sumitur possibilitas vel impossibilitas propositionum, ut declarabitur postea).

B. Ad rationes:

1. a) Ad primam respondeo quod propositio vera recte sic diffinitur: propositio vera est que significat taliter qualiter est, et accipitur 'qualiter est' large, ut se extendit ad significatum propositionis de presenti, preterito et futuro (quia de hoc postea fiet mentio), et in secunda diffinitione per ly 'qualiter est' explicatur modus se habendi unius extremi vere ad alterum. Ideo, ad formam argumenti cum dicitur quod ista propositio 'homo est asinus' esset vera, negatur, et ratio est quia non significat taliter qualiter est, significat enim hominem et asinum affirmative et non est vere, quia illi affirmationi unius extremi ad alterum extremum non correspondet veritas relativa in ordine ad idem extremum.

b) i) Et si dicas: bene sequitur ista 'homo est asinus' significat hominem et asinum affirmative, et affirmative se habet homo in ordine ad asinum, ergo significat taliter qualiter est.

ii) Respondeo: ut dictum est, per ly 'qualiter esse' intelligo vere esse.

Et ideo ad pleniorum diffinitionis predictae explicationem dicendum est quod propositio vera est que significat taliter esse qualiter vere est, intelligendo copulative, ita quod sensus sit quod significat aliquid taliter esse et taliter vere est.

c) i) Et ideo ista 'homo est asinus' est falsa, quia significat hominem et asinum affirmative, et non taliter vere est veritate relativa correspondente affirmationi, unde per illos modos 'verum' et 'falsum' signantur veritas et falsitas relativa. Ideo hoc resolvendo, si queratur quare ista est falsa 'homo est asinus', respondeo quod ideo quia significat hominem affirmative in ordine ad asinum qualiter non vere est, ymo false.

ii) Ideo propositio falsa posset sic diffiniri: propositio falsa est que significat taliter qualiter false est, id est, significat aliquid taliter false est. Ideo ista est vera 'homo false est asinus' quia significat quod homo false se habet ad asinum et taliter vere est.

d) Ideo patet quod ad asinum relative false se habere ad hominem sequitur quod vere relative asinus false se habet ad hominem, neque est inconveniens aliquam rem infinitis modis se habere et in illis modis se habendi procedatur in infinitum, non tamen dico ut modum se habendi de quo in presenti est mentio realiter distinctum a re que se habet.

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John Mair on Future Contingency

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Summary: John Mair was one of the leading logicians and theologians in Paris at the beginning of the Reformation but his work has been curiously ignored by historians of both logic and theology. This paper examines Mair's contribution to the treatment of a problem that belongs to both of these disciplines, the reconciliation of divine foreknowledge with human freedom. It is shown that Mair's solution attempts to combine Thomas Aquinas' theory of God's relation to the world with John Duns Scotus' metaphysics of possibility and William of Ockham's logic of future contingent propositions.

John Mair, or Major, lived from 1469–1550. He was born in Gleghornie, near Haddington, a few miles from Duns. After first studying at Cambridge he was a student and then a very famous teacher in Paris from 1493 to 1517 and again from 1526 to 1531. The break in his career in France was spent first as Regent and Principal of the University of Glasgow and then as a teacher at Saint Andrews.¹ Mair taught at an extraordinary time. In 1518, as he tells us in the *Introduction* to the 1530 edition of his *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences*, the Theological Faculty at Paris mobilised itself to combat the “execrable heresy” of Luther. Later, he was one of those who were asked to give an opinion on Henry VIII's book against Luther and on Erasmus' *Paraphrases on Matthew*. His name heads the list of theologians who in 1530 took Catherine of Aragon's side in the discussion of Henry's marriage. Mair had famous students: certainly Antonio Coronel, Jacques Almain, David Cranston, and George Buchanan, perhaps also John Calvin, John Knox, and François Rabelais. Rabelais tells us that in the Library at St Victor, Pantagrue came across many curious volumes. Everyone has heard of the *Questio subtilissima, utrum chimera, in vacuo bombinans, possit comedere secundas intentiones*, but with it he found the *Barbouillamenta Scoti*, the scrawlings of Scotus, the *De differentiis soupparum*, of Bricot, and by Ioannes Maior, the *De Modo*

1. See Farge 1980: 304–11, from where most of the biographical information here is taken. See also the “Life of the Author” prefaced to John Major, *A History of Greater Britain, As Well England As Scotland*.

faciendi boudinos, or *How to Make a Haggis*, a work which has sadly been lost.²

Given all this, one might expect that Mair's work would have attracted the interest of historians of theology, but curiously he has been quite ignored. In what very little has been written about him he is typically described as upholding in some way both realism and nominalism.³ He tells us himself that he lectured on the *Sentences* Commentaries of Scotus, Ockham, and Rimini but also that the students stayed away in droves. Mair certainly seems to have divided his literary energies between realism and nominalism: he supervised the editing and publication of an edition of Scotus' *Reportata*, an edition of Adam Wodeham's *Sentences Commentary*, and a revision of John Dorp's edition of Buridan's *Compendium Logicae*. As far as logic goes, Prantl characterised Mair, like his teacher Jerónimo Pardo, as one of the *terministae moderni* but notes that another of his teachers was Thomas Bricot, whom he classifies as a "terminist-Scotist or scotist-Terminist".⁴ In theology Torrance finds Mair "using the tools forged by the logical analysts to establish a form of realism".⁵ Mair himself, in the Preface to the 1519 edition of his *Commentary on Book Four of the Sentences*, seems to locate his own theological position there as, at least in a limited way, conciliating between nominalism and realism:⁶

I have yet to see a Nominalist who has penetrated to the core of the *Fourth Book*. Others abuse them with this, saying that the Nominalists are so tied up in logic and philosophy that they neglect theology. Nevertheless, there are various points of theology that presuppose metaphysics. I will try, therefore,

2. F. Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, ch. 7. In fact, Rabelais (ca. 1494-1553) may not have been in Paris before 1528. *Pantagruel* was published in 1532 and condemned by the University of Paris in the following year.

3. The only modern study is Torrance 1969-1970.

4. Prantl 1870: 198-99. Prantl quotes a number of texts from the fifteenth century in which the contrast between Antiqui and Moderni is identified with that between Realists and Nominalists and in which the "terministae" are identified as "nominales", the "reales" as "formalistae".

5. Torrance 1969-1970: 1969: 532.

6. Ioannis Maioris, *In Quartum Sententiarum* (1519), iv: "Insuper nominalium adhuc vidi neminem qui opus in Quartum ad umbilicum calcemque perduxerit: quod in eos tanquam probrosum alii retorquent dicentes nominales logice et philosophie sic implicari ut theosophiam negligant: et tamen varia sunt theologica que metaphysicam praesupponebant. Conabor ergo nominalium principiis adhibitis in singulas distinctioes Quarti unam quaestionem vel plures scribere quas et reales si advertant facile capient. Utri[n]que enim vie theologia (circa quam praecipue versabor) erit communis."

while applying the principles of the Nominalists, to deal with one or more questions in various distinctions of the *Fourth Book* in a way that the Realists, if they pay attention, will easily comprehend. Theology, with which I am mostly concerned, will be common to both systems.

Since Ockham clearly and explicitly disagrees with Scotus on a number of points concerning divine predestination and foreknowledge, and their reconciliation with human freedom, and Mair's views here can be easily located in a couple of distinctions, these provide a good set of topics with which to test his relationship to his two illustrious predecessors. The results of the test can be stated briefly in advance: Mair attempts to combine Ockham's logic for future contingents with Scotus' metaphysics of contingency and the Boethian-Aquinian picture of God's relation to time. Given the importance of Mair's works in Spanish universities in the sixteenth century, this combination of views may perhaps be responsible for the account of Ockham's reconciliation of foreknowledge and freedom offered by Luis de Molina in his *de Concordia*.

Although it has been argued recently⁷ that any complete account of the reconciliation of divine foreknowledge and freedom must be based upon a satisfactory account of divine providence, I will in this paper limit myself to examining Mair's views on divine foreknowledge, leaving the broader issue of his understanding of the nature of providence for another time.⁸ In this I believe that I am following Ockham who seems to me to hold that a logically satisfactory account of the reconciliation of divine foreknowledge and human freedom can be given without reference to an account of divine providence.

The first question that Mair asks in Distinction 38 is whether there

7. By Alfred Freddoso in his introduction to Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*.

8. Mair's views on predestination merit study if only because he taught at the beginning of the Reformation, was involved in formulating a response to the "execrable heresy" of Martin Luther, and had as his students perhaps both John Calvin and John Knox. Mair tells in his Dedicatory Epistle that he rewrote the second edition of his commentary in a style different to that of the first edition (published in 1510 and reprinted in 1519) in response to the changing demands of his audience. A translation of the Epistle is included as an appendix to this paper. Mair's treatment of the problems that I am interested in is different in the two editions and I will be concerned here only with what he says in the second edition. For a discussion of Mair's approach to future contingency and divine foreknowledge in the first edition, see Schabel 2003.

For more biographical and bibliographical information see Farge 1980: 304-11.

are in fact any future contingent propositions.⁹ Ockham had claimed that although there can be no *a priori* proof of the fact, nevertheless we must maintain that there are future contingents. Mair certainly does not offer a proof, and indeed in his discussion does not directly answer the question. His concern is rather to show that, given the appropriate definition of determinateness, there can be true propositions about the future that are not determinately true. Thus Mair commits himself to the logical project initiated by Ockham. He is not prepared, however, to accept the criticism of Aristotle's account of claims about the future mounted by Ockham and Gregory of Rimini.¹⁰

To Gregory of Rimini's plausible reconstruction of Aristotle's argument to show that we may infer from bivalence applied to claims about the future the determinateness of such claims, Mair responds with a move already made by Peter Abelard four hundred years earlier.¹¹ The putative argument relies upon the use of what we now call the *T-principle* to connect material and formal claims and so, implicitly, on the conventions establishing the denotations for the terms that we employ. The equivalence "a man is an ass" is true if and only if a man is an ass" is false if 'ass' is imposed to denote a being with the ability to laugh (*risibile*). This really isn't much of an argument, however, since all reasoning obviously takes place against the background of conventions of denotation. The best that it shows is that you shouldn't engage in a debate if you don't know what you are talking about.

Mair proposes to defend Aristotle by attributing to him a notion of determinate truth that allows him to claim that God may have knowledge of future truths without those truths being determinate. What he does in effect is to appeal to Ockham's distinction between propositions

9. Ioannis Maioris *In Primum Sententiarum Disputationes*, Paris (1530), d. 38, q. 1, f. 68va: "Primo indagabimus utrum sit aliqua propositio de futuro contingenti vera."

10. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb: "Dicam hic pauca. Non capiunt arguentes <sc. Guillelmus et Gregorius> modum philosophi, propterea eum gratis suggillant, et licet ipsum in aere, non tamen ad eius mentem aggrediuntur, partimque incircumspecte eum oppugnant." Mair cites here Ockham's *Logica* and Rimini's *I Sent.*, d. 38: loc. cit.: "Ceterum Ockam in logicam et Gregorius Ariminensis in hanc distinctionem sinistre philosophum taxant. Suspiciantur enim eum velle dicere idem esse propositionem veram et determinate veram. Arbitrantur enim eum concessurum disiunctivam veram et negaturum copulativam et adversam: et nullam esse veritatem aut falsitatem in illarum partibus." For discussion of many later medieval theories of future contingents and divine foreknowledge, see Schabel 2000, as well as the literature referred to there.

11. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb. Cf. Peter Abelard, *Logica "Ingredientibus"*, pp. 291-93.

purely about the past or present and those about the future to make precise the notion of determinateness in a way that Ockham never did.¹² Mair's determinate truth is what has recently been called "accidental necessity", the necessity, that is, with which the genuinely past is fixed and unchangeable:¹³

A proposition according to <Aristotle> is said to be determinately true which is true in such a way that a past tense proposition signifying it to have been true is not falsifiable at a later time.

What it is to be determinately true will thus depend upon what it is to be falsifiable and what claims, at least verbally about the past, are falsifiable. In these distinctions Mair offers no account of the nature of a human being's power to do other than what he or she will in fact do in the future but rather assumes that all singular categorical claims simply about the future are falsifiable prior to the actualisation of the state-of-affairs which they assert will be actual or its contradictory. Tacitly appealing to *modus tollens* he maintains that a claim verbally about the past – say 'the Antichrist was to come' – will be falsifiable if its truth "requires" the truth of such a claim about the future.¹⁴ Mair interestingly proposes to save Aristotle's words by attributing to him the "common" view that a proposition is determinately true if it is known to be true by some human being. He does not expand on this epistemic for-

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12. *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus* – English translation by M.M. Adams & N. Kretzmann: William Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*. Pace Adams & Kretzmann, neither Aristotle nor Ockham has anything like a criterion of "determinateness". Ockham indeed seems generally to use 'determinately true' simply to mean having the truth value 'true', i. e. being true.
13. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb: "Propositio apud eum <i.e. Aristotelem> vocatur determinate vera: que sic est vera quod enunciatio de preterito significans illam fuisse veram haud est in posterum falsificabilis: unde hec enunciatio Socrates est: determinate est vera: licet sit contingens in hoc momento."
14. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 69va: "Ex his liquere arbitror quanam via propositio de futuro contingenti est indeterminate vera secundum Aristotelem: et enunciatio de presenti et preterito est determinate vera: si eius veritas a futuro contingenti haud pendeat. Pro illius perspicua notitia scito quod veritas propositionis a futuro contingenti dependet: quia ad illam esse veram exigitur veritas unius de futuro: vel infert unam de futuro contingenti sane intellecta: ut Antichristus fuit futurus respicit illius future veritatem. sane intellecta dixi, hoc est ante positionem rei inesse."

mulation, however, and clearly any attempt to do so would lead directly back to the semantic notion of determinateness.¹⁵

Mair's own example of a determinate truth is 'Socrates exists'. Which, supposing that Socrates does now exist, following Scotus without acknowledgement, he holds to be contingently rather than necessarily true at the present moment. At any future moment the claim 'Socrates existed' will be unfalsifiable. On the other hand:¹⁶

The assertion 'Antichrist will exist' is indeterminate; the singular 'this was true' indicating it is falsifiable, for it may be falsified by not positing the contingent Antichrist.

Modern discussions of Ockhamism have noted the difficulty of formulating the notion of determinacy in such a way as to make just the right facts hard.¹⁷ Mair's definition fails in the same way that modern definitions have. He can perhaps argue that Socrates' present existence does not depend upon any truths about the future in the sense of logically entailing one. But assume Aristotle's theory of ceasing and coming to be, and the truth of 'Socrates exists' implies the truth of 'Socrates will exist'. Worse, setting aside physical theory, while simple affirmative categoricals true of the present are determinately true according to the definition, simple negations are not. 'Socrates is not speaking Latin' is now true and for the next few months 'this was true' referring to it will also be true. A year hence, however, after he has taken an intensive course in the language it will be false. The obvious way to avoid this problem is to index assertions to dates but, as in other medieval treatments of the question, there is no trace of such a move in Mair.

15. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb–69ra: "Communiter propositio dicitur determinate vera quae cognoscitur talis ab aliquo mortalium: ut enunciationes de presenti et preterito <non> a futuris dependentes. Antichristus fuit futurus est ita ambigua sicut Antichristus erit. Si enim esset intellectus creatus qui rem sicut est deprehenderet agnita plane esset veritas. Licet ego nesciam Platonem delitescere in antro: opilio vicinus hoc cernit. Et licet arator nescit in quo gradu tauri vagatur sol, astronomus tamen illud novit. Et sic unus nostrum hominum veritates preteritas et presentes communiter capit. Secus est de implexis [*sic!*, *fort.* 'complexis' *scribendum*] futuris. Cecus est eventus periculosi duelli aut iactus tessere future. Loco determinate vere ponas cognite a mortalibus vere."

16. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb: "Secundo sequitur: hanc enuntiationem 'Antichristus erit' esse indeterminate veram: ista enim singularis: hec fuit vera, illam demonstrando est falsificabilis: nam ipsa falsificari valet per non positionem Antichristi contingentis."

17. E.g. Widerker 1990.

Despite insisting that “logical strophes are out of order in these matters”,¹⁸ Mair proceeds in the rest of the question to draw out the logical consequences of his definition of determinateness. On the crucial epistemic point he notes that determinate truth entails truth but not vice versa and insists that God knows certainly the truth values of propositions about the future even though they are not determinate.

Much of Mair’s discussion of the logic of future contingents is familiar from Ockham. The most striking consequence of the definition is that some claims verbally about the past are indeterminately true. It has always been true, for example, that the Antichrist will exist, but until he walks upon the earth that truth remains indeterminate.

The possibility that a past tense proposition that is indeterminately true might be false is a logical possibility that cannot be actualised in a change from truth to falsity – though there may be a change from falsity to truth, as in the case of ‘Adam existed’ during the week of creation. Future tense propositions, on the other hand, can change from being true to being false, and do so when the state-of-affairs that they assert to be going to be the case comes to be so.

Mair’s logic of future contingency is thus that developed by Ockham. Future contingent propositions are immutably true or false but nevertheless indeterminately and thus not inevitably so. Ockham holds that parts of the past are just as soft as the future though they neither can change nor be changed from being the way they are. Mair’s formulation is much less careful and he claims as a corollary of his definition that:¹⁹

... some proposition has been true from eternity but nevertheless it is in my power to make it to have been perpetually false. For example ‘John is speaking’ before the instant A.

We will see in a moment that taken in conjunction with Scotus’ account of the origins of contingency this view of possibility may be thought to give humans, or God, a causal power over the past.

Having dealt with the semantic problems associated with future contingents Mair moves on in question 2 of Distinction 38 to deal with one half of the epistemological problem that confronted Christian philoso-

18. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 68vb: “... logicas strophas materia quam tractamus non patitur.”

19. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 1, f. 69va: “Secundo sequitur quod aliqua propositio ab eterno fuit vera, et tamen in facultate mea est situm, illam perpetuo falsificasse. Patet de hac Ioannes loquitur ante a instans.”

phers writing on this topic. Given that there are truths about the future such a philosopher might be asked (a) how the contingency of such truths is to be reconciled with divine omniscience.²⁰ Call this “the Reconciliation Problem”. And (b) how does God come by his knowledge of the truth value of propositions and in particular of the truth value of indeterminate propositions. Call this “the Source problem”. Mair’s treatment of the Reconciliation problem basically follows Ockham, or at least Ockham’s account of the logic of statements concerning divine knowledge as it was developed by Robert Holcot.²¹ Mair lectured on Ockham and may well have lectured on Holcot; his student Jacques Almain certainly did.²²

To deal with the logic of divine knowledge Mair makes a number of familiar distinctions. The most basic principle here is an application of the thesis of divine unity, that God is identical with his properties.²³ Thus God’s cognition is God, and God’s will is God. God’s knowledge of all non-propositional items whether these are possible or actual is called his knowledge of vision, or simple intelligence. His knowledge of propositional contents Mair calls adhesive or, as it is more usually known, apprehensive knowledge. Knowledge by vision of futures is foreknowledge: if it is of what is good, it is knowledge of approbation; if of what is bad, knowledge of reprobation.²⁴

20. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 2, f. 69vb: “Secundo queritur an cum prescintia dei stet futurorum contingentia.”

21. Cf. Robert Holcot, *Seeing The Future Clearly*.

22. *Dicta Super Sententias Holcot* in J. Almain, *Opuscula*.

23. The standard medieval view is that God is identical with his non-relational properties. X’s knowing Y is a paradigmatically relational property, but if we distinguish the faculty from the act of understanding we can preserve an identity. Mair does not discuss this issue in Distinction 38.

24. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 2, f. 69vb: “Pro primo, multiplex est notitia dei, multipliciter ex parte cognitorum et non ipsius dei sumendo. Notitia dei est deus, qui ut unus est sic eius notitia est unica. Et confunditur ex usu loquentium scientia cum notitia. Non capimus hic scire more philosophi primo et secundo posteriorum pro assensu evidenti conclusionis demonstrare. Scire cum cognoscere miscetur. Ceterum scientia dei ob ipsa obiecta in que fertur varia sortitur nomina. Vocatur scientia simplicis intelligentie: scientia visionis et prescintia. Notitia simplicis intelligentie est notitia apprehensiva, quam habet respectu omnium rerum possibilium sive existant sive non. Hec est respectu incomplexorum et rerum ad extra. Necessario omnia possibilis representant. Notitia adhesiva est respectu enunciabilium. Illam adhesivam aliubi apprehensivam diximus: sed de hoc nunc non magnopere interest. Vocatur scientia visionis respectu eorum que sunt, fuerunt aut erunt: Dicitur prescintia respectu futurorum. Respectu bonorum est scientia approbationis. ... Nonnumquam sumitur pro notitia evidenti cum detestatione sic cogniti: et vocatur scientia reprobationis.”

In this question Mair goes no further than Ockham in the *Tractatus* in his analysis of the character of divine knowledge. Like Ockham he is concerned at this stage simply to offer a consistency proof for his chosen logic, to show that divine foreknowledge need not threaten contingency. Unlike Ockham, however, who thought that it is beyond our power to solve the Source problem,²⁵ Mair, as we will see, follows Scotus in offering a solution that appeals to the relationship between divine will and divine understanding.

God's omniscience and the fact that all well-formed propositions have a truth value entail that God assents to all truths about the future and dissents from all falsehoods. Though he does not claim until Distinction 40 that God knows the temporal order in an eternal present – like an eye at the centre of the world watching the heavens – Mair deploys Boethius' familiar reasoning here to argue that contingency is preserved since cognition alone does not necessitate. Thus foreknowledge does not affect the status of what is foreknown as contingent.

The thesis of divine unity in conjunction with divine immutability entails that, since propositions may change their truth value, God makes only one judgement with respect to contradictory propositional contents. Thus though God can know what he does not know, there is no change, or at least only a Cambridge change, involved in his doing so.

Among the various arguments that can be brought against God's propositional omniscience Mair considers one which is very striking and which does not seem to be used by his fourteenth century predecessors. He raises the following objection to his own claim that God assents to all and only truths:²⁶

God is an adhesive judgement of some falsehood. Thus we have absurdly claimed that God does not assent to what is false. The antecedent is obvious: God assents to this 'this is false' where the pronoun demonstrates the proposition of which it is a part. That falsifies itself; consequently it is false and things are as it signifies them to be, so God assents to it.

25. William of Ockham, *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum*, d. 38, pp. 383-84: "Ideo dico ... quod indubitanter est tenendum quod Deus certitudinaliter et evidenter scit omnia futura contingentia. Sed hoc evidenter declarare et modum quo scit omnia futura contingentia exprimere est impossibile omni intellectu statu isto." For Ockham's logic of future contingents see *De praedestinatione* and the comments by Adams and Kretzmann in their translation.

26. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 2, f. 70ra: "... alicuius falsi deus est iudicium adhesivum. Itaque insulse diximus deo non esse assensum falsi. Antecedens patet, deus assentit huic hoc est falsum per pronomen demonstrando propositionem cuius est pars. illa se falsificat proinde est falsa, et ita est sicut ipsa significat deus illi assentitur."

Mair seems to be reporting his own theory of self-referential sentences here. He holds,²⁷ accepting a principle first proposed by Roger Swinhead,²⁸ that a proposition is true if and only if it signifies that things are as they are and is not “self-falsifying”. Unfortunately he doesn’t take this opportunity to deal with what seems to be a compelling objection to this account of the semantics of self-referential sentences, replying to it only that there is a great difference between self-referential falsehoods and the usual kind.²⁹

The traditional objection to the Ockhamist account of the logic of future contingents gets rather more attention from Mair. Although an Ockhamist may perhaps deal with the argument from divine foreknowledge in the same way as he deals with the semantic argument against future contingency, he cannot at first sight do the same with the argument from revelation. A revelation is, at least in certain circumstances, the utterance, or inscription, of a true assertion about the future. The apparent non-falsifiability of the claim that such an utterance took place in conjunction with the contingency of what is revealed seems to entail that revelations may turn out to be false.

Ockham had very little to say on this issue, suggesting only either that his account of future contingents applies equally well to revelations or, perhaps, that all revelation is conditional.³⁰ I will return to Mair’s treatment of the second solution later. He himself follows Holcot’s development of Ockham’s first suggestion.³¹

Mair notes, though without saying who was involved in the controversy, that the question of whether or not God can deceive us (*fallere*) was a controversial one. He says, however, that no wise man doubts

27. Ioannis Maioris, *Insolubilia*, f. Bi: “Secunda diffinitio propositionis insolubilis. Propositio se falsificans sive insolubilis est propositio sic se habens quod ita est in re sicut ipsa significat significatione totali et ad ita esse partialiter sive per se vel cum addito infert ipsam esse falsam.”

28. Cf. Spade 1982a.

29. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 2, f. 70ra-b: “Ad secundum dico quod latum est discrimen inter falsum significans taliter esse qualiter est vel etiam aliter esse quam est, per reflectionem: ut hec significat aliter esse quam est et de aliis falsis communibus.”

30. William of Ockham, *De predestinatione*, q. 1.8, p. 513: “... Prophetæ non dixerunt falsum, quia omnes prophetiæ de quibuscumque futuris contingentibus fuerunt conditionales, quamvis non semper exprimebatur conditio.”

31. Cf. Robert Holcot, *Quodlibet* III q. 8: “Utrum generalis resurrectio necessario sit futura”, in Holcot, *Seeing the Future Clearly*, pp. 80-112.

that God cannot be deceived,³² and so some way has to be found of saving infallibility in conjunction with the contingency of revelation. The standard thought-experiment here is to investigate the possibility that is held to have been open to Peter not to deny Christ three times as Christ revealed he would. Suppose the possibility as actual in an *obligatio* of *positio* and it seems that we must concede that Christ uttered a falsehood. Interestingly, Mair seems to have a rather more dynamic notion of *positio* than Holcot in that he allows that the *positum* may be changed during the exercise and that if the new *positum* is inconsistent with the original one, then that immediately falls from its position.³³ In the case under investigation it thus seems that we must deny that Christ asserted that Peter would deny him three times.

This material had been worked over very thoroughly by Holcot, and Mair follows one of the approaches that he had suggested. To the further objection that Christ uttered the words and that they were uttered assertorically, he replies, in effect, that, though the fact of utterance is determinate, its assertoric character is not. In the hypothetical situation posited, the words uttered may have been false and only recited by Christ. There are many kinds of non-assertoric utterance, but all we are bound to say is that Christ never intends to deceive his listeners. Mair does not, however, go as far as Holcot, who is prepared to allow even deliberate deception to Christ and God just so long as it is not malicious.³⁴

Most of the remainder of the question deals with various changes rung on what contemporary philosophers call “the consequence argument” for the incompatibility of divine foreknowledge and freedom.

32. *Op. cit.*, d. 38, q. 2, f. 70rb: “Licet an deus fallere possit sint controversie, eum tamen non posse falli a nullo sapiente ambigitur.”

33. For details of the way in which medieval logicians regimented hypothetical reasoning in *obligationes* and a discussion of the history of the theory of these devices, see Stump 1982 and Spade 1982b.

34. Holcot, *Seeing the Future Clearly*, pp. 102-3: “Alio modo potest dici quod Christus potest non implere quod promisit, et quando arguitur quod potest esse mendax, vel perius, etc., dicitur negando consequentiam. Et ratio est quia omnes tales termini consignant – saltem ex usu loquendi – quandam malitiam in genere moris, quae nullo modo Deo convenire potest. Et ideo potest ista consequentia negari ‘Deus promisit quod resurrectio erit, et resurrectio numquam erit; igitur Deus mentiebatur’. Sed conceditur quod Deus dixit falsum scienter et quod decepit homines, quia istud non videtur expresse continere malitiam mori, quod hoc dicat falsum scienter vel decipiat.”

This argument claims that the consequence of God's knowing, and having always known, that X will be is that X will be in a manner incompatible with its claimed contingency. The answer to these objections often turns on the familiar distinction between the composite and divided senses of a modal claim. One argument, however, returns to the question of the relationship of contingency to power. It is, I think, intended to go as follows:³⁵

It is true that if God knows that Socrates is going to sin, then Socrates is going to sin;
 so if Socrates had the power not to sin, he would have the power to bring it about that God knows that he will not sin;
 but Socrates has no power over God's knowledge;
 therefore Socrates has no power not to sin.

This kind of argument is familiar in modern discussions of Ockhamism as an appeal to what Hasker has called a "*Power Entailment Principle*":³⁶ if P entails Q , and Q is false, then it is in a 's power to bring about P only if it is in a 's power to bring about Q . While Mair does not accept the principle in general, he is prepared to embrace it here and the inference that it supports. He explicitly attributes to Socrates a power to affect the truth value of a claim about God:³⁷

I deny that the antecedent is not in the power of Socrates; if Socrates never will sin, which is possible for him, then God knew from eternity the opposite <of what he now knows>, that is that Socrates is not going to sin.

So far Mair has simply been developing the modal and epistemic logic for future contingent claims invented by Ockham. In the next question he begins to address contingency as an ontological issue, and in doing so shifts his allegiance to Scotus.

35. *Op. cit.* d. 38, q. 2, f. 70va: "Octavo argumentor. Bene sequitur 'deus scit Socratem peccaturum'; ergo Socrates peccabit, ut semper dicimus. et antecedens non est in potestate Socratis; ergo nec consequens: sed proinde necessario peccabit. Quod antecedens non sit in potestate Socratis patet bifariam [et omne eternum est immutabile]. Tum primo quia ab eterno illud fuit verum et prescitur, et omne eternum est immutabile. Tum secundo quia prescientia dei est deus, et quicquid est deus necessario est."

36. Hasker 1985.

37. *Op. cit.* d. 38, q. 2, f. 70va: "Ad octavum concedo consequentiam. sed nego antecedens non esse in potestate Socratis si Socrates nunquam peccet quod est ei possibile. deus ab eterno sciuit oppositum scilicet Socratem non peccaturum."

One of issues on which Ockham most vehemently disagreed with Scotus was over the time with respect to which a contingent item is said to be contingent. For Ockham the relevant possibility is irreducibly diachronic, any claim to possibility for an agent must be supportable with an account of the power that would actualise that possibility in time. For Ockham, to claim that x is contingently F at t_0 is to claim either that it was at some earlier time not F or that there is a power which can bring it about that it is not F at some later time. For Scotus, on the other hand, though there certainly may be such a power, the contingency of x 's being F at t_0 can also be attributed to a 'non-evident' power at t_0 for x to be other than it is at t_0 . Notoriously this power is, according to Scotus, to be referred to an ordered sequence of non-temporal instants of nature associated with each instant of time.³⁸

For his third question Mair thus asks to what period the contingency of a contingent being is to be referred.³⁹ The background to this is Scotus' famous appeal to the hypothesis of an instantaneous will to argue that the power for opposites that we attribute to such an agent must belong to it at, and with reference to, the very instant at which it is said to be contingent.

Rejecting Ockham's view that the contingency of a contingent being cannot be referred to the instant at which it is said to be contingent, Mair offers a series of arguments in support of Scotus' account of the properties of an instantaneous angel. It is not likely that these arguments would have convinced Ockham, but they do allow Mair to nicely turn one of Ockham's own moves to his own, and Scotus', advantage.

Ockham had tried to save the possibility for the instantaneous angel to merit in the instant of its production by allowing it to resolve to act in the appropriate way at that temporal instant. If the angel has the required knowledge, Ockham argues, it can instantaneously formulate, and grasp all at once, a practical syllogism, the conclusion of which is meritorious action. That is to say, the deliberation required for meritorious action can be instantaneous.⁴⁰

38. See, e.g., Normore 1996.

39. *Op. cit.* d. 38, q. 3, f. 71rb: "Quæritur tertio circa hanc materiam, cum his sit sermo de contingentia, qua mensura temporum contingens est contingens: hoc est an est contingentia in ea mensura adequata qua contingens producitur. Partem negatiuam tenet Ockam: subscribit et Holkotus, et aliqui alii dicentes quod potentia non vocatur libera eo quod pro hac mensura potest non habere actum malum, sed eo quod immediate ante hanc mensuram fuit in potentia ut non esset in hac mensura."

40. William of Ockham, *Quodlibet* II, q. 6.

To the objection, then, that for Scotus' instantaneous agents there can be no contrast between morally significant actions requiring deliberation and "sudden" non-deliberate actions, Mair simply adopts Ockham's account of instantaneous deliberation. The relevant contrast, he claims, is not between a process that takes time and one that does not but rather between different epistemic states supporting reflective and unreflective action. Given perfect knowledge, reflection may be instantaneous.⁴¹

What Mair does not do in this discussion is to connect this account of the possibility of an instantaneous practical inference to the fundamental Scotistic principle that the temporally instantaneous power for opposites is to be explicated in terms of instants of nature. He firmly commits himself to this principle, however, arguing against various objections to it and in particular defending the contingency of the present against various glosses of Aristotle's principle that all that is, when it is, is necessarily.⁴²

Mair's picture of foreknowledge and freedom thus grafts together Ockham's logic for contingency and Scotus' ontology. In the next two questions he argues at greater length that God may reveal any and all true future contingents to a creature, and did so to the soul of Christ, but that such revelation does not conflict with the contingency of the future. In passing he dismisses Ockham's suggestion that revelation cannot fail since it is conditional. To the contrary, Mair insists, God can reveal whatever he wants to in whatever way he wants to.

Mair's last two questions return to the issue of the character of God's understanding and will. Here again the theory is taken from Scotus. Something is not going to be so because God knows that it will be so but rather because something is going to be so God knows that it will be so. This dependence, however, results from a prior dependence of things upon God's will. Without introducing here the apparatus of instants of nature, Mair has the divine will choosing between alternatives indifferent to being or non-being and the divine understanding "seeing the result" of this choice. To the suggestion that such an ac-

41. *Op. cit.* d. 38, q. 3, f. 71vb: "Ad secundum nego sequelam. Pro cuius intelligentia scito quod nonunquam in manifestis intellectus repente iudicat et potest esse iudicium subitarium sufficienter regulatiuum actus. Non enim vocatur actus deliberatus nisi ob notitiam sufficientem. Plena et formalis deliberatio perfectum {an perficitur scribendum?} intellectus iudicio, cui consensus formalis in voluntate respondet volendo nolendove."

42. *De Interpretatione* 9, 19a23.

count will do away with human freedom, since all actions will be necessitated by the divine will, Mair simply refers us back to the claim that the human will is free.

The result of all of this, then, is that we have a picture of world-history as the result of an act of divine will executed outside of time, the result of a choice between complete alternatives. At the same time Mair wants to insist that human actions are free and that indeed agents have a power to change the future history of the world. This could only be by their having some power to affect God's atemporal choice of world-histories. Such very definitely was not Ockham's view. For him the possibility of alternative futures is expressed in a counterfactual without causal implications. Peter might not deny Christ three times, and if he were not to do so, then God would always have known that he was not going to.

In criticising the work of his predecessors, Luis de Molina imposes upon Ockham a theory of causal power over the past, claiming that if Peter were not to deny Christ, then God would cause the past to be such that it was never true that he would deny Christ.⁴³ The theory criticised by Molina is surely much closer to Mair's than it is to Ockham's. If there is a connection it would not be historically too surprising since Mair's main, and enduring, influence seems to have been in Spain.

Appendix

The Prefatory Dedication from the Second Edition of John Mair's Commentary on the First Book of *Sentences*.⁴⁴

John Mair of Hadington sends greetings to John Major of Eck in Swabia, his namesake and fellow theologian, a strenuous protector of the orthodox faith, and most beloved in faith and Christian charity.

Almost twenty years ago, O best of men, I published several little questions on the First Book of the Master of the *Sentences* in which I discussed, as far as I was able, many issues of concern to the liberal arts, on the intension of forms and the like, and disproved many claims.

43. See Freddoso in Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*.

44. *Ioannes Maioris Hadingtonani, scholae Parisiensis Theologi in Primum Magistri Sententiarum ... nuper repositae*, Paris, Jose Bade & Jean Petit, 1530. I am very grateful to Sten Ebbesen for help with the translation.

For this was then generally the way in which theologians wrote. But although I had then passed a good many years in the study of Aristotle, nevertheless, as I freely admit, that manner of writing pleased me little since I saw that it was neither pleasant nor agreeable to my audience. For when I lectured on the *Fourth Book of Sentences*, listeners came in great numbers to hear me. When, on the other hand, I lectured on the *First Book of Sentences* of my compatriot John Duns, or of the Englishman William of Ockham, or of Gregory of Rimini, it was remarkable how few listeners there were before I lectured on the work itself. Furthermore, twelve years ago, if my memory serves me, there befell the catholic faith a new and detestable calamity, the execrable heresy of Martin Luther and those who, setting their mouths against heaven⁴⁵, took from him their cue to speak outrageously. In order to confute which, all the theological scholars of Paris bound themselves to Holy Writ, setting aside the definitions of the *Sentences*, so that the members of our Sorbonic Academy fixed their minds on matters easy for everyone to comprehend, and converted Sorbonic theses worthy of gifted minds into matter suitable for what are vulgarly called the greater ordinaries⁴⁶. Seeing this, our holy Faculty, afraid lest the ingenuity of many should thus be blunted and degenerate into a dull Minerva, instructed the Bachelors (who had been initiated into sacred theology) that in their Sorbonic and, as we say, Tentative Disputations, in the manner of our predecessors they should deal with and uphold scholastic and argumentative opinions, allowing them, however, to introduce one thesis with easy corollaries and less theoretical complexity. Because of this I have accommodated my style to the time, not unmindful of the Aristotelian

45. Ps 73.9.

46. A candidate for the Doctorate in Theology at Paris at the beginning of the sixteenth century studied theology for 15 years after gaining his Master of Arts degree. Before he was permitted to lecture on the *Sentences* – after 9 years of study – he had to engage in a disputation known as the *tentativa*. After lecturing on the *Sentences* for a year he became a *baccalarius formatus* for three years and was required to engage in three more disputations. In the first year the *magna ordinaria*, the *great ordinary*, so called because it took part in the main academic year. In the second year the *parva ordinaria*, the *small ordinary*, so called because it took place in the shorter, summer, term. Finally, in the summer of his last year, the student was required to engage in the *Sorbonica*, the most famous of all academic disputations. Having passed these tests he was awarded his licence to teach. For details see the excellent account of teaching in Paris at this time in Farge 1985: 13-27. “Greater ordinaries” is presumably a colloquial form of “great ordinary”.

dictum that “opinions often return”. The fashion of school disputations changes frequently, they move from one extreme to the other, and when one extreme has become boring to the crowd they run back to the other ignoring, as it were, the middle. Considering this point with care, I have passed briefly over some things which I formerly disputed in the *Prologue* and which have a flavour of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, and I have dealt piecemeal with a few physical questions which make clear the thing at issue. Moreover, to your excellent self, who deserves to be noted and honoured by all, I have dedicated this redone first book. Both because we share name, surname, and studies, and because you have achieved a singular noteworthiness for your name not only among your theological comrades at Paris but also among all Christians of good name. Farewell!

From our room in the College of Montaigne, September 1, 1530.⁴⁷

47. Iohannes Maior Hadingtonanus

Domino Iohanni Maiori Eckio Sueuo cognomini ac contheologo, fideique orthodoxae protectori strenuo, in fide ac charitate Christiana dilectissimo. Salutem.

Abhinc annos ferme viginti virorum optime, quaestiunculas complures in primum Magistri Sententiarum emisimus, in quibus multa quae liberales concernunt artes, de formarum intensione et similia placita pro virili nostra discussimus, multaque refellimus. Hic enim fere mos scribendi tunc theologis erat. At quamquam bonam aetatis illius partem in Aristotelica doctrina transegi, tamen (quod ingenue fateor) mos ille scribendi parum mihi placuit cum viderem eum auditoribus meis nec gratum nec iucundum. Quando enim quartum sententiarum profitebar, auditores ad me numerosi confluebant: dum vero in primum Sententiarum contreranei mei Ioannis Duns, aut Anglicani Guilhelmi Ockam, aut Gregorii Arminensis, praelegerem, mira erat, antequam opus ipsum praelegerem, auscultatorum paucitas. Accessit praeterea a duodecim (si rite recordor) annis fidei catholicae nova et detestanda calamitas, Martini Luteri, et qui ab eo os ponendi in caelum temeritatis ansam acceperunt, execranda haeresis: ad quam onfutandam, omnes theologiae studiosi Luteciae ad sacras sese literas, neglectis sententiarum definitionibus, accinxerunt, ita ut nostra Academia Sorbonica obtutum mentis omnem ad materias cuilibet captu faciles fixerit, positionesque Sorbonicas ingeniosis animis dignas in materias maiorum ordinarum (ut vulgato more loquar) comutarint. Quod videns sacra nostra facultas, ac verita ne sic multorum ingenia torperent, et in crassem degenerarent Minervam, Baccallauriis (qui sunt theologicis sacris initiati) indixit, ut in Sorbonicis et tentativis (ut dicimus) disputationibus, scholastica et argutiora placita more maiorum nostrum tractarent ac sustinerent permittens tamen eis thesim unam interserere cum corollariis facillioris et minus theoriae farraginis. Quocirca stilum tempori accomodavi, non immemor illius Aristotelici dicti, saepius redeunt opiniones. Hoc est mos scholasticarum disputationum variatur crebrius: de extremo enim in extremo transeunt: et rursus dum unum extremum est multitudini taediosum in alterum quasi neglecto medio recurrunt. Qua re non oscitanter perspecta nonnulla in prologo {prologum ed.} olim a me disputata,

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quae Aristotelica posteriora sapiunt, paucis percurri, et pauca physicalia quae rem de qua agitur patefaciunt carptim exaravi. Hunc autem primum librum sic repositum observandae et omnibus honorandae praestantiae tuae nuncupavi, cum propter nominis cognominisque ac studiorum inter nos communionem tunc ob singularem observantiam nominis tui, quam non solum apud commilitones tuos theologicis Parisiensis, verum apud omnes boni nominis Christianos meruisti, ob egregiam istam fidei Christianae adversos impios defensionem. Vale.

Ex conclavi nostro in collegio Montis Acuti ad Calendas Septembris 1530.

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Sémantique et doctrine de la proposition: Hobbes inconciliable avec la tradition terministe?

MARTINE PÉCHARMAN

Summary: Hobbes' logic is sometimes viewed as an awkward attempt to use analytical tools borrowed from the medieval terminist tradition. This paper shows the incompatibility between, on one hand, the semantics involved in the Hobbesian doctrine of names and propositions, and, on the other, the Porphyrian understanding of semantics that (among others) Buridan inherited. The paper goes on to argue, however, that the break with tradition manifested in Hobbes' systematic rejection of the Porphyrian model, in fact constitutes the means by which Hobbes renewed the central importance of terminist logic.

1. Introduction

La logique étudiée par Hobbes à Oxford au début du XVII^{ème} siècle¹ n'est pas une logique dominée par l'étude des *proprietaes terminorum*, bien que les *Summulae Logicales* de Pierre d'Espagne ou la *Summa Totius Logicae* de Guillaume d'Ockham se trouvent alors constamment rééditées². Les manuels de logique les plus répandus durant cette période omettent en général de consacrer un développement aux définitions spécifiques des traités terministes, et leur éventuelle lecture par Hobbes pendant la longue préparation de sa *Computatio sive Logica* (publiée seulement en 1655 comme première partie du *De Corpore*³) ne risque guère de l'influencer à cet égard. En effet, seul le *Logicae Artis Compendium* de Robert Sanderson, publié pour la première fois en

1. Voir, pour la formation logique de Hobbes, Schuhmann 1998: 23 («début 1603-5/15 février 1607/08: *Hobbes étudie à Oxford (Magdalen Hall) la physique et surtout la logique aristotélicienne... Il devient Bachelor of Arts: admissus fuit ad lectionem cujuslibet libri logices*»).

2. Voir Ashworth 1968: 179, et Ashworth 1969: 260.

3. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, Pars I, c. I-VI (éd. K. Schuhmann), p. 11-73.

1615, comporte un exposé relatif à la théorie de la supposition⁴. A supposer qu'il l'ait lu, ou qu'il n'en ait lu que l'introduction, Hobbes ne pouvait guère en retenir que la description sommaire que voici:

Terminis propositionis, respectu significationis accidunt *suppositio*, *ampliatio* et *restrictio*, quarum suppositio ipsam significationem, reliquae latitudinem potius significationis respiciunt; suppositio est acceptio termini in propositione pro eo quod quomodocumque significat; non est ipsa significatio, sed determinatio significationis; et a significatione in eo differt quod significatio sit ipsius vocis, suppositio vero termini compositi quodammodo ex voce ut materiali, et significatione ut formali⁵.

Mais il est bien entendu d'autres formes d'appartenance à une tradition logique, et *a fortiori* de proximité avec elle, que celle qui se limite à la pratique du commentaire direct de ses textes cardinaux. Un éditeur des textes d'Aristote, spécialiste éminent de leur transmission à travers leurs traductions latines, Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, n'a-t-il pas lui-même recommandé d'élargir la notion de «tradition aristotélicienne» de façon à y inclure beaucoup plus que la tradition exégétique, à savoir, toutes les analyses philosophiques dont on peut justifier qu'elles se fondent sur «un noyau aristotélicien», en ce qu'elles n'auraient jamais été telles qu'elles sont, s'il n'y avait pas eu Aristote⁶? Ne pourrait-on au même sens parler d'une tradition terministe, à laquelle Hobbes ne serait peut-être pas totalement étranger, en dépit de l'absence, dans ses oeuvres, de textes témoignant de quelque familiarité avec les chefs de file de cette tradition? Pareille hypothèse ne paraîtrait peut-être pas excessive à Gabriel Nuchelmans, car, dans son ouvrage *Judgment and proposition from Descartes to Kant*, le passage qu'il consacre à une explication de la doctrine de la proposition dans l'oeuvre de Hobbes⁷ contient plu-

4. Ce point est établi par Trentman 1976: 191 (Trentman précise aussitôt que le chapitre en question «is admittedly a rather truncated treatment of the subject without much detail or subtlety, let alone originality»). Cf aussi Geach 1956: 73-74 pour le sort réservé à la *suppositio* dans les traités alors fort appréciés de John Seton (*Dialectica*, 1549) et John Sanderson (*Institutiones Dialecticae*, 1589).

5. Nous empruntons la citation de ce passage de l'Introduction du *Logicae artis compendium* à Dal Pra 1962: 417. Dal Pra précise que ce passage est suivi de la division de la supposition des termes en ses diverses espèces.

6. Pour cet argument, voir Minio-Paluello 1972: 405-24 («La tradition aristotélicienne dans l'histoire des idées»).

7. Nuchelmans 1983 (la partie consacrée à Hobbes se trouve dans le chapitre 7.2: 123-37).

sieurs mentions de l'importance pour ce dernier de l'apport de Guillaume d'Ockham. D'après Nuchelmans, la conception hobbesienne de la proposition catégorique ne se comprend qu'à la condition d'être rapportée à une «vue traditionnelle» particulièrement (mais néanmoins pas exclusivement⁸) illustrée par l'école des *nominales*: la thèse, soutenue par Ockham dans la *Summa Logicae* (II, 2) à propos de la proposition singulière, selon laquelle, pour la vérité d'une telle proposition, «il est suffisant et nécessaire que le sujet et le prédicat supposent pour la même chose». On pourrait ajouter à cette évocation d'Ockham par Nuchelmans que, dans ses *Sophismata*, Buridan donne pour «un principe indémontrable» (ou quasiment) le principe selon lequel «pour la vérité d'une proposition catégorique affirmative, il est requis que les termes, à savoir le sujet et le prédicat, supposent pour la même chose ou pour les mêmes choses» et «c'est pourquoi il suffit pour sa fausseté qu'ils ne supposent pas pour la même chose ou pour les mêmes choses»⁹. En écrivant dans sa *Computatio sive Logica* qu'«est vraie, <la proposition> ... dont le prédicat est le nom de chaque chose dont le sujet est le nom»¹⁰, Hobbes aurait ainsi quelque chose d'un terministe. Mais quelque chose de fort vague, puisque la règle de l'identité de la chose nommée par le prédicat et par le sujet ne s'y trouve pas articulée à une théorie de la supposition. Nuchelmans souligne aussi que notre philosophe «suit les nominalistes médiévaux en identifiant la vérité à une proposition vraie»¹¹. De fait, quand on lit dans la *Computatio* que les mots «*verum, veritas, vera propositio*» veulent dire la même chose, car la vérité est une propriété seulement propositionnelle et se trouve *in dicto* et non pas *in re*¹², on est enclin à y voir une thèse comparable à celle d'Ockham dans le chapitre 43 de la Première Partie de la *Summa*

8. Nuchelmans (1983: 129) insiste sur l'importance d'une thèse «assez semblable» dans la tradition thomiste et remarque que la publication de l'*Ars Logica* (1634) du thomiste Jean de Saint Thomas est survenue seulement «quelques décades avant la parution de la *Computatio sive Logica* de Hobbes».

9. Voir Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre II, Sixième sophisme, Dixième conclusion, éd. J. Biard, p. 90. Voir aussi Treizième conclusion, p. 93. Pour l'interprétation de la copule comme copule d'identité, par opposition à son interprétation dans une théorie de l'inhérence, on peut se reporter à Moody 1976: 32-38 (c. III, «The theory of truth conditions», § 9).

10. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 7 (éd. K. Schuhmann), p. 35.

11. Nuchelmans 1983: 127.

12. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 7 (éd. K. Schuhmann), p. 35.

*Logicae*¹³. Hobbes ne prend pas cependant la peine, comme Ockham, de fonder, au moyen d'une longue analyse¹⁴, l'identification de la vérité à la proposition vraie sur la distinction aristotélicienne entre la manière dont une substance admet des qualifications contraires et la manière dont un *logos* peut être dit d'abord vrai puis faux. Il ne démontre pas¹⁵, à la façon d'Ockham, que la relation de la vérité à la proposition n'est pas comparable à la relation d'inhérence des accidents à la substance et qu'il faut aller jusqu'à exclusion, en ce qui la concerne, ce genre de distinction réelle que constitue la distinction entre des accidents et leur sujet d'inhérence – au point que, en réponse à la question «qu'est-ce que la vérité et la fausseté?», Aristote lui-même «dirait» que «la vérité et la fausseté ne sont pas des choses réellement distinctes d'une proposition vraie ou fausse»¹⁶. A considérer donc tant la possibilité d'imputer à d'autres que les logiciens terministes la thèse selon laquelle la vérité de la proposition requiert que le sujet et le prédicat dénotent la même chose, que l'excès de concision des thèses logiques de Hobbes par rapport à celles des médiévaux, l'hypothèse de son appartenance à la tradition terministe a du mal à s'imposer. En outre, une remarque marginale de Nuchelmans incline plutôt à insister sur une incompatibilité radicale entre la logique de Hobbes et la logique d'Ockham, en soulignant qu'«il y a une certaine similitude entre la conception de la proposition de Hobbes et la vue de William of Crathorn»¹⁷, autrement dit, la vue selon laquelle la «proposition mentale» qui a pour termes selon Ockham ces signes naturels des choses que sont les intellections de l'âme, loin d'être composée de tels concepts, l'est seulement de simples «images» des mots proférés ou écrits dans une langue particulière¹⁸. Qu'il soit fondé

13. Nuchelmans 1983: 127 opère ce rapprochement en renvoyant en note (n. 28) à ses travaux précédents (voir Nuchelmans 1973: 202).

14. Voir Guillaume d'Ockham, *Somme de Logique*, Première Partie, éd. J. Biard, p. 134-38.

15. La même économie de démonstration de la part de Hobbes apparaît dans *Elements of Law*, Part I, chapter V, § 10 (ed. F. Tönnies), p. 21-22 et *De Cive*, cap. XVIII, § IV (ed. H. Warrender), p. 283-84 ; de même, dans *Leviathan*, I, chap. 4 (ed. C.B. Macpherson), p. 105: «*True and False are attributes of Speech, not of Things. And where Speech is not, there is neither Truth nor Falshood*».

16. Guillaume d'Ockham, *Somme de Logique*, Première Partie, éd. J. Biard, p. 137.

17. Nuchelmans 1983: 127 n. 30.

18. Pour Crathorn, voir Nuchelmans 1973: 212-13. Voir aussi Panaccio 1999: 280-82 et l'article de Meier-Oeser dans ce volume-ci.

ou non (en fait, il ne l'est pas)¹⁹, pareil rapprochement met l'accent sur un point incontestable: l'impossibilité de trouver chez Hobbes l'équivalent de la doctrine du discours intérieur ou langage mental au sens propre et strict²⁰ qui est une pièce maîtresse du dispositif théorique dans lequel s'inscrit le nominalisme du XIV^{ème} siècle. L'impossibilité, autrement dit, de tenir le sujet et le prédicat qui doivent être deux noms d'une même chose pour que la proposition soit vraie, pour des noms mentaux. Il n'est pas pour Hobbes de proposition dans la «*tacita cogitatio*», laquelle n'est jamais formée qu'à partir d'une suite d'images particulières d'une chose individuelle, objet de différentes considérations²¹, et l'on ne saurait transposer dans la *Computatio sive Logica* le passage des *Sophismata* où Buridan écrit: «une proposition vocale est vraie parce qu'elle est subordonnée à une proposition mentale vraie, et fausse

19. Nuchelmans (1983: 127 n. 29) s'appuie sur quelques textes dans lesquels Hobbes introduit à propos des mots le couple oral/mental ou conçu (*Elements of Law*, I, c. V, § 4, ed. F. Tönnies p. 19: «... neither would a man, without repeating orally, or mentally, the words of number, know how many pieces of money or other things lie before him» ; *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. VI, § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 66: «... rem ipsam tacite cogitando sine omni verborum tam conceptorum quam prolatorum usu ...»). Mais il s'agit seulement dans ces textes d'une mise en oeuvre de la distinction hobbesienne entre l'usage des mots comme marques pour soi (les mots conçus) et comme signes pour autrui (les mots proférés): Hobbes n'adhère nullement à une thèse sur le discours intérieur qui l'identifierait à la représentation dans l'esprit des mots d'une langue donnée. Le discours mental n'est pas pour lui dépendant d'une langue particulière, il n'est pas, comme pour Crathorn, «une intériorisation du langage parlé ou écrit» (Panaccio 1999: 282). Voir *int. al.*, pour la doctrine du discours mental chez Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, I, chap. IV et *Leviathan*, chap. III. Pour une étude de cette doctrine, voir Pécharman 1992b.

20. Par opposition (voir Ashworth 1981a: 62) au langage mental «improperly so-called», autrement dit au langage mental consistant dans l'usage silencieux de mots d'une langue donnée, ou langage mental porteur de signification «conventionally rather than naturally», que les auteurs médiévaux tenaient pour «non-ultimate mental language».

21. Voir *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. I, § 3 et c. IV, § 8 (éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 12-13 et p. 45-46). Voir au contraire le texte de Buridan (*In Metaphysicen Aristotelis quaestiones*) cité par de Rijk 1992: 43: «Alia ponuntur esse universalialia in significando vel representando, quia non significant determinate hoc vel illud, sed indifferenter omnia similis generis vel speciei ; ut iste terminus "homo" omnes homines, iste terminus "color" omnes colores. Et sic universalialia sunt termini significativi sive in voce sive in mente sive in scriptura. Et isti termini ita singulariter existunt vel in mente vel in voce, sicut iste color in pariete, quamvis dicantur universalialia in significando».

parce qu'elle est subordonnée à une proposition mentale fausse»²². Adeptes d'un nominalisme qui se passe de la doctrine de la proposition mentale comme lieu de la vérité, Hobbes s'expose ainsi à être qualifié par Leibniz, dans la *Dissertatio Praeiminaris* ouvrant en 1670 son édition du *De Veris Principiis* de Nizolius, de nominaliste plus que nominaliste (*plusquam nominalis*), c'est-à-dire d'ultra-nominaliste: un nominaliste qui, non content de réduire les universaux à des noms – ce qui suffit à faire un nominaliste, observateur scrupuleux de la règle de non-multiplication des étants *praeter necessitatem* –, fait dépendre la vérité des propositions de la volonté humaine à l'origine de l'imposition des noms²³. Sans le discours intérieur auquel les *nominales* du XIV^{ème} siècle arriment la réduction des universaux à des termes, Hobbes devient ainsi un nominaliste extravagant, qui, dans le *De Corpore*, déduit de sa définition de la proposition vraie et de sa thèse de l'indistinction entre la vérité et la proposition vraie, l'assertion d'après laquelle «les premières de toutes les vérités sont issues de la volonté de ceux qui, les premiers, ont imposé des noms aux choses, ou qui les ont reçus tels qu'ils avaient été imposés par d'autres»²⁴. Peu importe, à cet égard, que Hobbes n'entende pas chaque usage d'un nom comme discontinu par rapport à son imposition originaire ou même simplement précédente²⁵: son nominalisme est de toute façon hors-norme, puisqu'il rend les vérités contingentes dès la première imposition des noms. Comment pourrait-il donc prétendre, aussi bien qu'un Ockham et un Buridan, rendre possible une science du réel tout en refusant la réalité des universaux?

Faut-il en conclure, à la façon de Norman Kretzmann dans le bref

22. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre VI, Premier sophisme, Première conclusion, éd. J. Biard, p. 195.

23. Voir Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophischen Schriften*, IV, p. 158.

24. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 8, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 36. Voir encore, outre les textes déjà mentionnés dans la n. 15: Hobbes, *Objectiones Tertiae*, Objectio IV (dans *Oeuvres* de Descartes publiées par Ch. Adam et P. Tannery, VII, p.178) et *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, c. XXX, § 17, éd. Jacquot-Jones, p. 357.

25. C'est abusivement que Watkins 1965: 144 (c. VIII, § 28) envisage à propos de Hobbes une doctrine – qu'il propose d'appeler «a Humpty-Dumpty theory of meaning» – fondée sur la thèse d'une stricte individualité des usages des noms, tous et toujours différents de leur institution première: ce qui «fait de tout nom, dans ses occurrences singulières, l'occasion de multiplications indéfinies des sens» (Pécharman 1988b: 105).

passage de son *History of Semantics* consacré à Hobbes²⁶, que la seule relation que ce dernier entretienne véritablement avec les théoriciens des *proprietates terminorum* est une relation d'incompréhension, au point par exemple de commettre d'impardonnables bévues quant au statut des différentes catégories analytiques utilisées par les terministes pour traiter de la référence des termes dans la proposition? D'après Kretzmann en effet, Hobbes «a rencontré d'importantes difficultés dans sa discussion des noms de signification "certaine et déterminée" et des noms de signification "incertaine et indéterminée", qui est de toute évidence une survivance malheureusement déformée de la théorie de la supposition»²⁷. Hobbes ne pourrait-il donc faire que piètre figure dans la compagnie d'Ockham et de Buridan, et sa logique ne serait-elle qu'un abâtardissement du terminisme du XIV^{ème} siècle?

Porter d'emblée un tel jugement marquerait trop de précipitation. Mieux vaut s'interroger sur la théorie de la signification que requiert la doctrine de la proposition chez Hobbes, car ce sera en réalité le moyen de montrer comment la rupture même entre la logique de Hobbes et la sémantique d'Ockham et Buridan permet d'accomplir, par d'autres voies, l'une de fins principales poursuivies par la logique terministe: le discernement des différentes formes de *category-mistake* entre les termes de la proposition.

2. Deux vues différentes sur la signification

Qu'est-ce donc, selon Hobbes, que le discours en quoi consiste la proposition? La définition donnée dans l'un des manuscrits préparatoires du *De Corpore*, le Manuscrit Chatsworth A 10 (publié par Jean Jacquot et Harold Whitmore Jones en appendice de la *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*), et conservée telle quelle dans le texte publié en 1655²⁸, substitue, à la notion traditionnelle du discours déclaratif comme discours signifiant l'affirmation ou négation, et donc signifiant le vrai ou

26. Kretzmann 1967: 376 b-378 a.

27. Kretzmann 1967: 377 b.

28. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, ed. J. Jacquot-H.W. Jones, p. 465 et *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 2, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32.

le faux²⁹, celle de la proposition comme «discours constitué par la liaison de deux noms, au moyen duquel celui qui parle signifie qu'il conçoit que le second nom est le nom d'une même chose que le premier nom»³⁰. L'usage d'une proposition ou «addition de deux noms»³¹ est ainsi réglé pour Hobbes par la représentation que se fait le locuteur des pensées diverses en raison desquelles tel nom et tel autre sont attribués à une même chose. En opérant l'attribution combinée, à «une seule et même chose»³², de deux noms que le *loquens* conçoit – l'un autant que l'autre – comme les noms de cette chose, la proposition permet d'attester la présence, dans l'esprit du locuteur, de deux manières distinctes de concevoir la nature de la chose ainsi nommée: elle n'unit pas deux noms d'une même chose sans marquer par cette liaison même que ce sont là des noms qui, s'ils lui conviennent également, lui conviennent assurément en raison de conceptions différenciées de sa nature³³. Le fondement sémantique de cette acception de la proposition ne requiert donc pas que l'on postule pour les noms dans la proposition des propriétés autres que celles qui sont capables de les caractériser en dehors même de leur usage propositionnel. Il suffit, pour fonder la théorie de la proposition et de sa condition de vérité, de se donner comme indissociables les deux propriétés constitutives d'un nom, la propriété de dénotation³⁴ d'une chose individuelle à laquelle ce nom est imposé et la pro-

29. Voir Boèce, *In librum De interpretatione*, Editio Prima, Liber Primus, cap. 5-6, ed. Meiser, p. 78-79 (Patrologia Latina 64, 317 A-B), et *In librum De interpretatione*, Editio Secunda, Liber Secundus, cap. 4, ed. Meiser, p. 95-96 (Patrologia Latina 64, 442 A-B).

30. Pour cette substitution, voir dans *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32, l'enchaînement du § 1 («Philosophiae unica orationis species est, quam vocant alii quidem *Dictum*, alii *Enuntiatum* et *Pronuntiatum*, plerique autem *Propositionem* ; videlicet orationem *affirmantium* vel *negantium*, notamque veritatis et falsitatis») au § 2 («Est autem *Propositio oratio constans ex duobus nominibus copulatis, qua significat is qui loquitur, concipere se nomen posterius ejusdem rei nomen esse, cujus est nomen prius*»).

31. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. IV, § 6, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 44.

32. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32.

33. Voir *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, I, c. V, § 5, ed. F. Tönnies, p. 19 ; Hobbes, *Objectiones Tertiae*, Objectio VI, *Oeuvres de Descartes VII*, éd. Adam-Tannery, p. 182 ; *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, c. XXXV, § 16, éd. J. Jacquot-H.W. Jones, p. 395.

34. La notion de dénotation ou désignation ne s'entend pas ici par restriction à un individu présent au moment de l'énonciation.

priété de signification d'une conception en raison de laquelle ou à cause de laquelle ce nom est imposé à cette chose. L'une de ces propriétés (celle de signification) est principielle par rapport à l'autre: un nom ne dénote une chose que parce qu'il lui est imposé afin de signifier une certaine conception dont elle est la cause dans l'esprit. On peut laisser ici de côté la manière dont le discours mental fournit selon Hobbes les raisons conceptuelles de l'imposition des noms: contentons-nous de retenir que pareil discours ne consiste pas seulement en une succession d'images suscitées dans l'esprit par la perception des choses extérieures, mais aussi en des considérations que l'esprit exerce sur des consécutives de plusieurs images. En revanche, il importe d'apporter une précision concernant l'utilisation que l'on vient de faire du terme de "signification" pour qualifier une propriété constante du nom, aussi bien dans son emploi non-discursif que dans son emploi propositionnel. En soutenant que, chez Hobbes, la doctrine sémantique au fondement de la théorie de la proposition se contente de deux propriétés du nom en tant que tel (c'est-à-dire du nom en dehors de la proposition), la propriété de dénotation et la propriété de signification qui est son principe, on semble ne tenir aucun compte du sens strict accordé par Hobbes à la signification dans le *Leviathan* (c. IV) et le *De Corpore* (I, c. II, § 2-3)³⁵. Selon ces deux ouvrages en effet, on ne saurait conférer au nom le statut de signe qu'à l'intérieur d'un contexte discursif: la signification, strictement entendue comme manifestation de nos pensées à autrui, dépend de la liaison entre les noms. Néanmoins, un sens plus étendu de la signification se justifie à partir des textes de Hobbes. Il n'est que de voir ce qui, d'après ces mêmes ouvrages, rend nécessaire que l'on impose des noms aux choses: avant d'assurer la «démonstration» pour un autre de la présence d'une certaine conception dans mon esprit (signification au sens strict), un son vocal est la marque, pour moi, d'une pensée déjà causée dans mon esprit par une chose auparavant perçue. Imposer des sons vocaux ou mots comme noms des choses, cela n'a pas seulement pour fin d'exprimer à l'intention d'autrui un concept que l'on forme présentement, de façon à susciter dans un autre esprit la reconnaissance du concept correspondant; la fin première de l'imposi-

35. Voir *Leviathan*, c. IV, ed. C.B. Macpherson, p. 101 et *De Corpore*, I, c. II, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 20. Ni les *Elements of Law* (I, c. V), ni la *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White* (c. XXX) ne font place à la distinction fondant cette restriction (i.e. la distinction, dans le nom, entre son usage de marque pour moi-même et son usage de signe pour un autre).

tion nominale, c'est de se rappeler à soi-même les concepts que l'on a déjà formés des choses existantes perçues. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de faire retrouver à un *audiens*, à partir du mot qu'il entend proférer, une pensée du *loquens*, mais d'abord de parvenir soi-même à se remémorer un concept que l'on a déjà eu d'une chose sensible. Le sens large ou étendu de la signification (celui qui fait d'elle une propriété principielle du nom par rapport à la dénotation), est donc un sens qui englobe et la remémoration de mes pensées précédentes, et la déclaration à autrui de mes pensées présentes afin qu'il retrouve en lui-même des pensées semblables. On peut dire qu'en entendant le nom comme signe en un sens restreint (*ad alios*)³⁶, Hobbes ne fait rien d'autre que souligner que le nom acquiert dans la proposition (ou, de façon plus générale, dans une forme discursive quelconque), non pas à proprement parler une nouvelle propriété, mais une nouvelle destination de la propriété de signification d'une pensée, qu'il possède déjà en tant que marque. S'il soutient que, *per se*, les noms ne manifestent pas à autrui quelles sont les pensées dans l'esprit de leur usager, mais ne peuvent servir que de *notae* permettant de faire revenir à l'esprit des pensées semblables aux pensées auxquelles ces marques ont été attachées³⁷, c'est qu'il importe à ses yeux de dénoncer, contre toute une tradition de lecture du *Peri Hermeneias*, l'attribution aux noms, quand ils sont *secundum se dicta*, du pouvoir d'engendrer dans l'esprit de l'auditeur une intellection bien arrêtée, dès que le locuteur a fini de les proférer dans leur entier³⁸. Comment l'*audiens* pourrait-il avoir la certitude que c'est la totalité d'un nom qui se trouve prononcée par le *loquens*? En entendant la *vox* "homo", l'esprit de l'auditeur reste en suspens, ne sachant pas, non seulement ce que le locuteur veut dire au sujet de l'homme, mais même si c'est bien de l'homme que le locuteur a l'intention de parler. L'auditeur sait que le locuteur a voulu dire quelque chose, mais il n'est pas sûr que

36. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 4, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 21: «Nomen est vox humana arbitrato hominis adhibita, ut sit nota, qua cogitationi praeteritae cogitatio similis in animo excitari possit, quaeque in oratione disposita et ad alios prolata signum iis sit, qualis cogitatio in ipso proferente praecessit vel non praecessit».

37. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 20: «nomina per se singula *notae* sunt, nam cogitata revocant etiam sola, signa vero non sunt, nisi quatenus in oratione disponuntur et partes ejus sunt».

38. Voir, pour cette lecture du *Peri Hermeneias* (se basant sur 16 b 21), Boèce, *In librum De interpretatione*, Editio secunda, Liber Primus, cap. 3, ed. Meiser, p. 71-78 (Patrologia Latina 64, 429 D-430 D).

ce qu'il a entendu constitue la totalité de ce que le locuteur a voulu dire: "homo" n'était peut-être qu'une profération avortée, le locuteur voulait peut-être dire "homogeneum", rien n'est certain³⁹. Qu'un mot proféré produise dans l'esprit d'autrui quelque idée ne suffit donc pas pour Hobbes à rendre raison du *constituere intellectum* qui définit depuis Boèce la signification, le *sêmeinein ti* du *Peri Hermeneias* 16 b 21: l'idée ainsi produite n'est peut-être pas l'idée que le locuteur voulait faire naître chez son auditeur, cela reste indécidable. En l'absence de toute liaison entre plusieurs noms, comment saurait-on que la limite de ce qui est prononcé s'identifie à la limite du vouloir-dire, et manifeste celui-ci dans sa totalité? Loin de trouver repos et contentement, l'esprit de l'auditeur ne peut alors que rester voué à une incertitude – et donc à une inquiétude – indépassable, quant aux pensées du locuteur. C'est à cet égard que Hobbes s'attache à entendre la signification strictement comme *prolatio ad alios*: il s'agit pour lui de déterminer la condition de possibilité de la manifestation aux autres des pensées qui sont dans l'esprit du *proferens*: cette condition *sine qua non* se trouve dans l'usage du discours. Les noms *secundum se* ne sauraient signifier des pensées que dans un usage privé, et non pas si on les utilise *ad alios*: lorsque la relation à autrui se trouve impliquée, la signification accomplie d'un mot suppose, à partir de ce qui est dit par le locuteur, la médiation d'une inférence réalisée dans l'esprit de l'auditeur; or, cette inférence serait irréalisable si ce mot n'était pas uni à d'autres mots dans un discours et ne recevait pas de cette liaison la délimitation de sa propre identité. L'insistance de Hobbes sur le sens restreint de la signification des noms (leur signification *in oratione*) doit ainsi se comprendre comme motivée par le souci de préserver la signification des pensées (signification au sens large) en récusant ce facteur d'opacité que serait l'usage à l'intention d'autrui d'un vocabulaire (les noms disjoints), plutôt que d'un discours.

Une conciliation est-elle envisageable entre ce mode de traitement de la signification des noms et la doctrine sémantique à laquelle adhère un logicien terministe tel que Buridan? Dans un article intitulé «Porphyry's legacy to logic», Sten Ebbesen⁴⁰ a suggéré que, parmi toutes les façons possibles d'analyser la science du langage d'Ockham ou de Buridan,

39. Pour cet exemple, voir *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 20.

40. Voir Ebbesen 1990.

l'une consiste à procéder à une «reconstruction» de la sémantique de Porphyre, avec laquelle le nominalisme du XIV^{ème} siècle entretient une forte connivence (*via* Boèce). La partie centrale de cette sémantique porphyrienne peut être ainsi décrite au moyen d'un «modèle génétique» de la formation des concepts et du langage, fondé sur une «théorie de l'imposition»: l'acquisition des concepts et des mots passe par certaines étapes naturelles, qui décrivent à elles toutes la manière dont la logique se construit à partir du monde sensible. Dire les choses du monde est ainsi le premier acte d'une construction qui s'achèvera avec l'analyse du discours lui-même, rendue possible par la formation d'un métalangage.

Suivons donc, à très grands traits, le schéma reconstitué par Ebbesen, afin de confronter avec lui le modèle sémantique élaboré par Hobbes. La première étape dans la sémantique porphyrienne (ou étape du langage le plus simple, par lequel commence la constitution du langage-objet) consiste, étant supposé que plusieurs individus ont eu en même temps la perception d'un objet sensible donné et ont convenu de lui attacher un certain son vocal, dans l'expression par l'un d'eux, à l'intention d'un autre, du concept qu'il a formé pour sa part de cet objet, afin de susciter chez cet autre le concept correspondant. Jusque là, le modèle de Porphyre ne peut qu'agréeer à Hobbes, qui est lui aussi convaincu que la communication entre des hommes requiert que chacun puisse retrouver, à partir d'un mot entendu, un concept antérieurement formé dans l'esprit. Mais ce que Hobbes refuse, c'est de maintenir dans le processus de signification la relation à la chose qui a été la cause de la formation d'un concept dans l'esprit, alors que la sémantique porphyrienne repose sur la triade chose/concept/mot. Que la présence du concept d'une chose dans l'esprit puisse être manifestée à un autre esprit par le moyen du mot (qui a ainsi ce concept pour signifié), soit. Mais que ce rapport de signification puisse être repris à partir du mot pour retrouver la chose par la médiation de son concept, non. Dans la sémantique dont se nourrit Buridan au contraire, la position intermédiaire du concept⁴¹ rend légitime que l'on compare le rapport du

41. Voir Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre I, Sixième sophisme, Deuxième conclusion, éd. J. Biard, p. 57: «les sons vocaux significatifs signifient les impressions psychiques, c'est-à-dire les concepts de l'âme, et ne signifient d'autres choses que *par la médiation* de la signification des concepts» (nous soulignons) ; voir aussi p. 82. Ockham parlerait plutôt de la position de subordonnant du concept: voir *Somme de Logique*, I, c. 1, éd. J. Biard, p. 3, sur les *voces* comme «*signa subordinata conceptibus*» (nous soulignons). Pour Ockham, à la différence de la sémantique dont nous

concept à la chose, au rapport du mot au concept, et que l'on allègue une similitude entre ces deux rapports⁴². Le signifié du mot est ainsi lui-même signe de la chose, il y a un signifié du concept comme il y a un signifié du mot. Cette similitude recèle une antériorité d'une signification sur l'autre, autrement dit, avant que le mot ne soit signe de la présence du concept dans le locuteur, le concept était déjà signe de la présence de l'objet dans le monde sensible: il faut postuler une signification naturelle de la chose par le concept, avant la signification conventionnelle du concept par le mot⁴³. Ainsi, le discours mental ou discours intérieur auquel appartiennent les concepts se rapporte lui-même au monde selon une relation sémantique. Cette antériorité a une conséquence pour la signification même du mot, qui ne doit finalement pas être arrêtée au concept, mais plutôt poursuivie jusqu'à la chose, jusqu'à retrouver la chose: pour la sémantique porphyrienne, le mot peut être dit signifier la chose, tout autant que le concept de la chose (il signifie la chose par la médiation du concept, ou encore il signifie immédiatement

empruntons la description à Ebbesen 1990, ce ne sont pas les concepts, mais les choses signifiées par les concepts, qui sont les signifiés premiers et propres des mots. Cf. le commentaire donné par Michon 1994: 178 (ch. V): «La subordination est réalisée par l'acte d'imposition, qui associe le domaine de signification du concept formé par l'impositeur à un terme conventionnel, qui signifie dès lors les individus du même domaine».

42. Rappelons qu'il ne s'agit pas là d'une démarche que l'on impute à Buridan, mais de la reconstruction d'un modèle dont Buridan est pour partie tributaire. Comme le souligne Ebbesen 1990: 150-51, il est impossible de produire un auteur médiéval d'obédience porphyrienne qui soutiendrait absolument tous les points de la doctrine ainsi reconstruite: c'est ainsi que la thèse selon laquelle les concepts signifient les choses se trouve rarement (hormis chez Ockham, mais elle n'est pas alors intégrée à un schéma transitif). Buridan serait à ranger du côté de l'ordinaire des philosophes du Moyen-Age, qui représentent la formule complète de la signification transitive («les mots signifient les concepts qui signifient les choses») par l'expression condensée «les mots signifient les choses par la médiation des concepts».
43. Encore une fois, cette thèse de la sémantique porphyrienne *de jure* n'est pas explicite chez Buridan, pas plus que chez Ockham – pour des raisons différentes: Buridan «n'insiste pas sur le statut de signe du concept» (Biard 1989: 171), tandis qu'Ockham de son côté récusé que les concepts soient les signifiés immédiats des mots (*Somme de Logique*, I, c. 2, éd. J. Biard, p. 5-6: «je dis que les sons vocaux sont des signes subordonnés aux concepts ou intentions de l'âme, non pas parce que ces sons signifieraient de manière propre et première ces concepts de l'âme, mais parce que les mots sont créés par imposition pour signifier les choses mêmes qui sont signifiées par les concepts de l'esprit: de sorte que le concept signifie d'abord quelque chose naturellement et que le son vocal signifie cette même chose de façon seconde»).

le concept et médiatement la chose⁴⁴). C'est avec la signification de la chose que l'imposition (qui use de l'établissement d'un son pour signifier un concept) remplit sa finalité, car c'est avec elle qu'un nom est le nom d'une chose, le nom mis sur une chose par les hommes. L'on ne peut pleinement restituer la première imposition de noms (l'imposition de noms aux choses perçues) qu'à la condition de reconstituer la transi-tivité de la signification.

En toute rigueur, la sémantique porphyrienne, saisie *in nucleo*, implique donc que la relation de signification se termine toujours à la chose: la chose est toujours le signifié visé par le signe, elle est le corrélat de tout signe conceptuel ou verbal (corrélat soit direct, soit ultime). Qu'il soit un élément du discours intérieur de l'âme, ou du discours verbal, le signe renvoie toujours à la chose dans le monde sensible. Aussi Ockham peut-il établir pour sens fondamental du "*significare*", le fait de supposer pour «quelque chose», *aliquid*: un nom doit être dit signifier une chose, du moment qu'il peut être prédiqué par la copule d'un pronom démonstratif désignant cette chose (*e.g.*, quand la proposition "celui-ci est blanc", prononcée en montrant Socrate, est vraie)⁴⁵. De même Buridan souligne-t-il, à propos de l'institution des mots, que «tout ce qui reçoit une imposition pour signifier reçoit une imposition pour signifier *quelque chose*»⁴⁶. C'est le fait de renvoyer à la chose, ou référence, qui accomplit la signification: le rapport sémantique fondamental est celui qui unit les termes (conceptuels ou verbaux) aux objets du monde sensible. La fameuse définition de la signification extraite du commentaire boécien du *Peri Hermeneias* (signifier, c'est *constituere*

44. On peut rappeler ici Boèce, *In librum De interpretatione*, Editio secunda, Liber Primus, ed. Meiser, p. 7.15-16 (Patrologia Latina 64, 395 B): «vox per intellectuum medietatem subiectas intellectui res demonstrat» (voir aussi p. 7-8 [395 C]). Voir, sur l'opposition de la signification immédiate et de la signification médiate, Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre I, Sixième Sophisme, Huitième conclusion et Chapitre II, Sixième sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 64 et p. 82. J. Biard souligne dans l'Introduction à son édition des *Sophismes* (p. 19) que cette signification médiate est pour Buridan la «signification *ultime*, extra-mentale».

45. Voir Karger 1991: 168, qui définit la signification selon Ockham (cf. *Somme de Logique* I, c. 33, éd. Biard, p. 99) comme «une relation unissant un terme aux objets auxquels ce terme s'applique, ou ... à ceux ... qui sont tels que, si l'un quelconque d'entre eux était désigné en conjonction avec l'emploi d'un pronom démonstratif, la proposition qui serait formée de ce pronom comme sujet, de la copule "*est*", et de ce terme comme prédicat, serait vraie».

46. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre I, Quatrième sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 51 (nous soulignons).

intellectum)⁴⁷ ne s'en trouve nullement mise à mal, comme le prouve ce passage de Buridan, qui entend le *constituere intellectum*, marque du *sêmeinein ti* (*signifier quelque chose*) accompli par le locuteur, comme un *constituere intellectum rei*: «Puisque l'on décrit ce que veut dire signifier en disant que c'est constituer l'intellection d'une chose, un son vocal est dit signifier cela même dont il suscite en nous l'intellection. Par conséquent, si signifier revient toujours à constituer l'intellection d'une chose, signifier c'est toujours signifier une chose, c'est donc signifier quelque chose puisque "chose" et "quelque chose" sont équivalents» (*omne significare est rem significare, ergo est aliquid significare, quia "res" et "aliquid" convertibiliter se habent*)⁴⁸.

3. Hobbes réfractaire au modèle sémantique de la logique terministe

La rupture de Hobbes avec un tel modèle sémantique se marque d'abord par la thèse de l'unicité de la signification (nonobstant, bien sûr, la distinction établie plus haut entre la signification des noms au sens large et la signification pour autrui). Unicité, car il devient impossible de diviser et hiérarchiser la signification en signification première et signification secondaire, ou en signification immédiate et signification médiante. Les noms se bornent à signifier les pensées que nous avons de la nature des choses, leur signification ne va pas au-delà, et ne fait pas retrouver les choses conçues elles-mêmes⁴⁹: pour Hobbes, la possibilité même de faire de la chose le signifié ultime du mot, par la médiation du concept, s'évanouit. De même, disparaît avec lui la ques-

47. Boèce, *In librum De interpretatione*, Editio secunda, Liber Primus, cap. 3, ed. Meiser, p. 71-72 (Patrologia Latina 64, 430 A), à propos de *Peri Hermeneias*, 16 b21.

48. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre premier, Quatrième sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 52. Le texte latin est cité par Biard 1989: 180.

49. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 5, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 21-22. Voir aussi *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, c. XXX, § 21, éd. J. Jacquot-H.W. Jones, p. 358. Ce refus pour les mots d'une signification médiante des choses, via la signification immédiate des idées, oblige à rechercher, en ce qui concerne Hobbes, un autre mode de relation à la logique scolastique que celui étudié par Ashworth 1981b et 1984 et par Panaccio (2003) à propos de la thèse – si controversée – de Locke (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, III, II, 2): 'Words in their primary or immediate signification stand for nothing but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them'.

tion de savoir si un nom imposé à une chose existante (autrement dit, un nom concret, puisque celui-ci est défini dans le *De Corpore* comme le nom d'une chose dont on suppose qu'elle existe⁵⁰) signifie premièrement une substance et secondairement un accident dont cette substance est le sujet, ou à l'inverse signifie premièrement un accident, et secondairement une substance sujet de cet accident. Les épineux problèmes relatifs à ces significations duelles (et tout particulièrement le problème fondamental du choix à opérer quant à la priorité qu'il convient d'accorder à l'une de ces significations par rapport à l'autre) n'ont plus lieu de se poser dans la logique du *De Corpore*, qui refuse que la relation sémantique puisse être aussi une relation aux choses elles-mêmes.

La rupture que représente cette logique par rapport au modèle sémantique à l'oeuvre chez Buridan se marque ensuite au fait qu'il devient inutile, pour fonder la doctrine de la proposition vraie, d'introduire une nouvelle propriété des termes, au-delà de la propriété de signification qui leur revient tant en dehors qu'à l'intérieur de la proposition: autrement dit, une propriété qui cette fois ne leur appartienne que dans la proposition. Quand la relation de signification associe les signes aux choses individuelles dans le monde (causes de concepts dans l'esprit et référents des mots), il faut encore que cette relation valant pour les termes considérés en eux-mêmes se redouble, pour les termes considérés dans la proposition, d'une autre modalité de la désignation des choses ou référence. Buridan soutient bien dans les *Sophismata* qu'une proposition ne signifie elle-même les choses que parce que celles-ci sont déjà signifiées par les termes qui la composent: «ce n'est pas une proposition dans sa totalité qui reçoit par imposition, d'un seul coup, une signification, mais ses termes séparément, que l'intellect compose comme il le veut pour affirmer ou pour nier»⁵¹. Mais la dépendance de la signification des énoncés à l'égard de la signification des termes ne suffit pas à décider de la vérité des propositions, et le maître de Béthune poursuit: «il me semble que pour assigner les causes de vérité et de faus-

50. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 33.

51. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre II, Sixième sophisme, Cinquième conclusion, éd. J. Biard, p. 87. On peut utiliser à propos de Buridan l'explication fournie par Panaccio 1991: 31 à propos d'Ockham: «La signification directe et stricte des concepts élémentaires doit être considérée comme primitive par rapport aux propriétés sémantiques des propositions».

seté des propositions, il ne suffit pas de considérer la signification des termes mais qu'il faut se tourner vers la supposition»⁵². La supposition, la *positio pro alio*, c'est-à-dire cette propriété qui, selon Ockham, «ne convient au terme qu'au sein d'une proposition»⁵³. Lorsqu'on soutient que le signe peut être utilisé pour tenir lieu de (*stare pro*) la chose qu'il signifie, on doit se demander en effet si les termes d'une proposition se prennent ou non pour une chose (ou des choses) au nombre des choses signifiées par eux. Mais pour Hobbes, qui récuse le modèle de la signification des choses par les noms, il n'y a plus à ajouter, à la relation qu'un nom pris isolément (*secundum se* ou *per se*⁵⁴) entretient avec toutes les choses qu'il signifie, la considération de sa capacité, dans la proposition où il se trouve combiné avec un autre terme, à être «pris pour quelque chose», ou «interprétable pour quelque chose» – le problème étant dans ce cas de savoir pour quelle(s) chose(s) le terme est pris ou suppose⁵⁵. Pour la *Computatio sive Logica* de Hobbes, l'articulation, dans un nom, entre la propriété de désignation ou dénotation de la chose et la propriété de signification d'une conception de cette chose, est auto-suffisante pour fonder la vérité d'une proposition où ce nom figure en position de sujet ou de prédicat: la vérité de la proposition "*homo est animal*" ne fait qu'un avec la vérité de la conséquence "si cette chose a pour nom *homo*, cette même chose a aussi pour nom *ani-*

52. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre II, Sixième sophisme, Huitième conclusion, éd. J. Biard, p. 89. Voir aussi le § 5 de Moody 1976: 18-23 (qui s'achève en citant en note ce passage de Buridan). Ici encore, on peut reprendre pour Buridan une formule utilisée par Panaccio 1991: 35 au sujet d'Ockham: «La supposition constitue un intermédiaire indispensable entre la signification du terme isolé et la valeur de vérité de la proposition».

53. Guillaume d'Ockham, *Somme de Logique*, Première Partie, chapitre 63, éd. J. Biard, p. 199.

54. Boèce emploie indifféremment les deux expressions, Hobbes ne retient que la seconde.

55. Voir Moody 1976: 20. D'après Moody, comme il le dit plus loin (23): «la propriété de supposition est fondée, non pas dans la relation sémantique de désignation, mais dans la relation logique ou syntaxique de prédication». Du fait de la prédication, un terme pose certaines valeurs dans l'extension d'un autre terme, et l'on doit donc déterminer les conditions de vérité et fausseté des propositions en regardant les suppositions de leurs termes (on peut citer encore Moody, 38: «bien que les termes aient des significations ou intensions, ce n'est pas parce qu'ils ont des significations, que les propositions dans lesquelles ils apparaissent sont vraies et non fausses ; c'est plutôt le fait qu'il y a (ou qu'il peut y avoir) quelque chose pour quoi les termes, dans leurs significations, sont *utilisés*, qui détermine la vérité des phrases dans lesquelles les termes apparaissent comme sujet et prédicat»).

mal”, c’est-à-dire de la conséquence “s’il y a une raison conceptuelle pour nommer cette chose *homo*, il y a aussi une raison conceptuelle pour nommer cette même chose *animal*”⁵⁶. On pourrait cependant arguer que cette rupture avec la sémantique de la logique terministe au XIV^{ème} siècle n’empêche pas de trouver une connivence entre la théorie de la vérité chez Hobbes et celle défendue par Ockham et Buridan – connivence signalée, on l’a vu, par Gabriel Nuchelmans. Que l’on allègue ou non une propriété sémantique supplémentaire (advenant aux termes dans la proposition), il demeure que l’on s’accorde pour soutenir que les deux termes de la proposition, le terme-sujet et le terme-prédictat, sont homogènes, étant caractérisés par une même propriété sémantique: que la désignation de l’objet du discours soit fondée dans la seule signification (Hobbes), ou qu’elle soit assurée par la supposition (Ockham et Buridan), peu importe, du moment que l’on communie dans la thèse d’une stricte symétrie entre les deux éléments composant la proposition. C’est ainsi (le fait est bien connu) que la doctrine selon laquelle le sujet et le prédicat de la proposition ne sont que deux noms d’étendue inégale mais égaux pour ce qui est de la désignation d’une seule et même chose individuelle, au lieu d’être, l’un le terme (un nom) désignant la chose sur laquelle porte l’affirmation ou négation de quelque chose, l’autre le terme (un verbe) par lequel quelque chose se trouve affirmé ou nié de cette chose, a suscité une attaque du logicien Peter Geach, qui déplore que Hobbes confère trop d’importance aux noms, au détriment de toute autre catégorie logique: pour Geach, Hobbes est en cela un nouveau tenant de la «théorie des deux noms» déjà prônée par Ockham et Buridan, il participe, au même titre que ces deux auteurs, d’une logique fautive et corrompue, entachée par un véritable péché originel commis par Aristote dans les *Analytica Priora* – qui représentent la chute de la logique dans la «théorie des deux termes», origine de toutes les dégénérescences ultérieures⁵⁷. Mais Cyrille Michon a pu montrer que la «théorie des deux noms» honnie par Geach ne doit pas être tenue chez Ockham pour aussi coupable qu’il y paraît⁵⁸:

56. Pour la doctrine des causes conceptuelles de l’imposition des noms, voir *int. al. De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32-33.

57. Voir Geach 1981: 44-67 et aussi Geach 1968: 34-36.

58. Elle a pu aussi être jugée coupable de commettre un cercle vicieux en définissant d’une part la vérité de la proposition par la supposition identique des deux termes, et d’autre part la supposition pour une chose par la capacité qu’a un terme d’être vérifié de cette chose au moyen d’une prédication ayant pour sujet un démonstratif désignant cette chose (voir Michon 1994: 192-95).

l'asymétrie du sujet et du prédicat (ou asymétrie de la fonction référentielle et de la fonction attributive) n'est pas perdue, mais déplacée, reportée à un niveau atomique, toute proposition "S est P" s'analysant en "ceci est S et ceci est P" (où "ceci" désigne la même chose)⁵⁹. Or, le même constat semble valoir pour Hobbes: s'il met bien fin à l'hétérogénéité sémantique entre le prédicat et le sujet de la proposition (le prédicat n'étant qu'un autre nom pour une chose déjà nommée par le sujet), il justifie par ailleurs ce redoublement de la fonction de référence à l'intérieur d'une proposition catégorique simple au moyen d'une anatomie de la proposition faisant apparaître que tant son sujet que son prédicat assurent une fonction d'attribution. La proposition "S est P" se résout ainsi en deux propositions élémentaires, l'une qui attribue le nom "S" à un "*illud*"⁶⁰ désignant un sujet extra-propositionnel, l'autre qui lui attribue pareillement le nom "P". Deux 'attributs' distincts, pour deux manières différentes de concevoir la même chose⁶¹, voilà ce que sont en définitive les deux noms que la proposition unit. Cependant, Hobbes opère en tout cela une rupture avec la sémantique dont se réclament Ockham et Buridan, et la «brèche dans la théorie des deux noms»⁶² n'a pas chez lui le même sens que chez Ockham ou Buridan: car il ne s'agit jamais pour lui que de faire apparaître l'inséparabilité, dans un nom, entre sa fonction de désignation d'une chose et sa fonction conceptuelle de signification; autrement dit, l'analyse de la proposition catégorique en deux propositions atomiques permet de prouver que chaque nom dans la proposition, qu'il soit sujet ou prédicat, est à la fois nom d'une chose et signe d'une pensée distincte quant à la nature de cette chose. L'asymétrie entre le sujet pronominal et le prédicat de chaque proposition atomique sert à fonder une absolue égalité entre les noms liés dans la proposition catégorique simple: tous deux désignent le même sujet extra-propositionnel, et tous deux signifient une considération distincte prise sur l'idée de cette chose individuelle – seul le contenu de cette

59. Voir Michon 1994: 286-96.

60. Pour l'usage par Hobbes de ce démonstratif ("*illud ... idem illud*"), voir *De Corpore*, I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 38. Voir Pécharman 1995: 106-10.

61. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, I, c. V, § 5, ed. F. Tönnies, p. 19: «Seeing there be many conceptions of one and the same thing, and for every several conception we give it a several name ; it followeth that for one and the same thing, we have many names or attributes».

62. L'expression est de Michon 1994: 294.

considération varie⁶³. L'ostension assurée par le pronom démonstratif dans chacune des deux propositions a pour fonction, non pas de disjoindre la référence et la prédication – toute attribution présupposant la possibilité d'une référence déictique –, mais de déterminer l'identité et la permanence du sujet, sous les considérations qui lui font attribuer successivement différents noms, pour différentes raisons conceptuelles. Le procédé utilisé par Ockham et Buridan⁶⁴ pour vérifier la supposition des termes d'une proposition, et donc pour mettre en évidence que le sujet et le prédicat d'une proposition ont une propriété introuvable en dehors de cette appartenance propositionnelle, est au contraire employé par Hobbes pour vérifier le maintien et l'efficace, dans la proposition, des deux propriétés du nom en tant que tel: il n'est besoin, pour être certain de la vérité d'une proposition, que du critère fourni par le rapport de dépendance entre les deux propriétés du nom, sa propriété de désignation d'une chose et sa propriété de signification d'une pensée relative à cette chose. Rien de plus n'est requis.

Qu'advient-il, enfin – et ce sera la dernière rupture envisagée –, de l'allégation de Norman Kretzmann⁶⁵ selon laquelle Hobbes aurait essayé dans le *De Corpore* d'appliquer la doctrine de la supposition, mais au prix d'impardonnables maladresses? Dans le passage incriminé (II, 11)⁶⁶, Hobbes procède à une division entre les noms, selon que leur signification est certaine/déterminée (noms propres et noms communs précédés d'un mot exprimant l'universalité, “*vox universalitatis*”, e.g. l'adjectif *omnis*), ou à l'inverse indéterminée/indéfinie (noms communs précédés d'un mot exprimant la particularité, “*vox particularitatis*”, e.g. *aliquis* ou *quidam* et noms communs dépourvus de toute marque d'universalité ou de particularité). Pour Kretzmann, pareille division ne peut que constituer un écho déformé de la distinction opérée par la logique terministe du XIV^{ème} siècle entre la supposition déterminée et la suppo-

63. Pour la composition/décomposition de l'idée d'une chose individuelle par variation des considérations auxquelles cette idée est soumise, voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. I, § 3 et c. IV, § 8, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 12-13 et p. 45-46. Voir Pécharman 1988a: 185-88.

64. Voir par exemple Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre Trois, Cinquième Sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 104 (à propos de cette “vérification” par “monstration”, J. Biard parle dans sa note 3 d'un «ancrage originaire de la référence dans la deixis»)

65. Kretzmann 1967: 377 b.

66. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 24-25.

sition confuse, qui partagent la supposition personnelle commune⁶⁷. La subdivision de la supposition d'un terme général pour ses signifiés (en quoi consiste la supposition personnelle commune) selon l'opposition de la détermination et de l'indétermination dépend en effet pour cette logique de la possibilité ou non de descendre *ad singularia* (c'est-à-dire aux singuliers contenus sous ce terme général) par une proposition disjonctive et d'inférer l'énoncé initial à partir de n'importe lequel de ces *singularia*. La conséquence est bonne, quand on dit *homo currit, igitur iste homo currit, vel ille, vel....*, et l'on doit parler de "supposition déterminée" du terme *homo*, car il suffit que l'énoncé soit vérifié par l'une quelconque de ces propositions singulières et par elle seule (sans qu'aucune autre soit requise), pour que l'on puisse inférer *iste homo currit, igitur homo currit*. De même pour *aliquis homo currit*: le sujet suppose de manière déterminée. En revanche, dans la proposition *omnis homo est animal*, la supposition du sujet se fait sur un mode confus, car la descente *ad singularia* ne procède pas par disjonction mais par conjonction: la bonne conséquence étant *omnis homo est animal, igitur iste homo est animal et ille homo est animal et...*, il est alors impossible d'inférer *iste homo est animal, igitur omnis homo est animal*. Ainsi, alors que le sujet de la proposition *omnis homo est animal* se voit attribuer une signification confuse ou indéterminée parce qu'il est entièrement distribué par un signe d'universalité (ce qui interdit de retrouver cette proposition à partir de n'importe quelle proposition singulière correspondante), le sujet d'une proposition indéfinie (*homo est animal*) et le sujet d'une proposition particulière (*aliquis homo currit*) sont dotés d'une signification déterminée, l'absence d'un signe d'universalité et la présence d'un signe de particularité ayant au contraire pour effet commun d'autoriser l'inférence de la proposition concernée en remontant à partir de n'importe lequel des singuliers contenus sous son sujet⁶⁸. Mais au lieu d'appliquer ce critère (Ockham parle d'une *regula certa*⁶⁹), Hobbes pervertit l'application du couple déterminé/indéterminé en attribuant, tant à un nom commun *nude positum* (e.g. le "nom indéfini" *homo*) qu'à un "nom particulier" tel que *quidam homo*, une signification indéterminée (ou indéfinie, ou incertaine), le nom

67. Pour un rappel très succinct de cette distinction, voir Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre Trois, Solution du Cinquième Sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 109.

68. Pour l'exposé complet de cette doctrine, voir Guillaume d'Ockham, *Somme de Logique*, Première Partie, chapitre 70 et chapitre 71, éd. J. Biard, p. 214-19.

69. Voir Guillaume d'Ockham, *Somme de Logique*, Première Partie, chapitre 70, éd. J. Biard, p. 215.

commun précédé d'un signe d'universalité se voyant au contraire crédité d'une signification déterminée et certaine. L'auteur de la *Computatio sive Logica* aurait-il donc particulièrement mal maîtrisé ce que Theodore Kermitt Scott, le traducteur des *Sophismata* de Jean Buridan en langue anglaise – et à sa suite Paul Vincent Spade – a caractérisé comme la “doctrine des modes de supposition” formant, au sein de la théorie de la supposition ressuscitée par Ockham et Buridan, une partie distincte de la “doctrine de la supposition propre” ou doctrine de la référence au fondement de la théorie de la vérité⁷⁰? De fait, la question de savoir “ce pour quoi un terme suppose” dans une proposition étant réglée par la théorie de la référence, il revient à la doctrine des “modes de supposition” de s'intéresser, parmi les subdivisions de la supposition propre, à la seule supposition personnelle, qu'elle divise en plusieurs genres: au-delà de la division entre la supposition commune des termes généraux et la supposition discrète des noms propres ou des locutions démonstratives, c'est cette doctrine qui assigne ainsi pour principe aux différentes espèces de la supposition commune une distinction entre la détermination et la confusion régie par le *descensus ad singularia*. Incapable d'assimiler pareils développements de la théorie de la supposition, Hobbes n'aurait réussi pour finir qu'à maltraiter les rapports que cette théorie entretient avec la quantification, au point de soutenir que les signes de quantité n'ont d'utilité qu'à des fins conversationnelles (*colloquii causa*) et non pas computationnelles (pour le raisonnement lui-même)⁷¹. Mais ne pourrait-on essayer, dans le *De Corpore*, d'entendre l'opposition du déterminé et de l'indéterminé, et la doctrine subséquente des signes de quantité, non pas à partir de la sémantique aboutissant à la théorie de la supposition, mais à partir de la doctrine de la signification soutenue par Hobbes en toute indépendance à l'égard de la logique terministe? Pourquoi, par exemple, un “nom particulier” ne se voit-il reconnaître qu'une signification indéterminée? Parce que, ne permettant pas de susciter dans l'esprit de l'*audiens* une conception semblable à celle du *loquens*, un nom de ce genre ne parvient pas à unifier en une même signification ce que le locuteur a conçu et ce que l'auditeur doit concevoir: le nom “*quidam homo*” s'analyse par la circonlocution “*homo ille, quem loquens animo jam concepit*”⁷², car la signifi-

70. Nous empruntons à Spade 1988: 189 cette citation extraite de Scott 1966: 30.

71. Kretzmann 1967: 377b parle à ce propos d'une «confusion encore pire».

72. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 25.

cation s'arrête à la conception du locuteur, sans s'étendre à la conception qui devrait lui correspondre chez l'auditeur. Et pourquoi les signes de quantité n'ont-ils de fonction que limitée à l'usage du discours propositionnel pour autrui? Parce qu'il n'est pas besoin de déterminer davantage ce qui est déjà déterminé dans le raisonnement que l'on conduit pour soi-même, *propter se*: chacun ayant à part soi une pensée déterminée de la chose conçue, quel pourrait bien être l'usage des signes de quantité? Ils ne sont requis que pour introduire quelque détermination ou certitude là où règnerait sinon l'indétermination, à savoir dans la communication: distinguer des signes d'universalité et des signes de particularité, c'est faire en sorte qu'une partie au moins des pensées que le locuteur veut signifier à un autre soient assurées de trouver une correspondance dans l'esprit de cet autre, et que celles pour lesquelles cette correspondance reste incertaine soient néanmoins capables d'autoriser la poursuite du dialogue. Un signe d'universalité est la garantie que la proposition entendue aura sur l'esprit d'autrui un effet analogue à celui que produirait une proposition singulière, autrement dit, qu'il y aura similitude entre la conception qui va se former dans l'esprit de l'auditeur et la conception que le locuteur a voulu signifier. En marquant qu'un nom commun se trouve totalement distribué, le signe d'universalité fait de ce nom un nom dénotant séparément chacun des multiples individus auxquels il est commun⁷³; or, un nom est commun à plusieurs individus parce qu'il est imposé à chacun d'eux pour signifier une pensée semblable (pensée dont il est la cause dans tout esprit): le signe de quantité associé à un nom pour marquer son universalité, *ie* son entière distribution, fait ainsi retrouver la cause conceptuelle constante de la communauté de ce nom, il ne peut que ramener dans l'esprit d'autrui la pensée déterminée en raison de laquelle ce nom a été imposé⁷⁴. Que, pour le sujet de la proposition *omnis homo est animal*, l'auditeur forme l'image de Platon comme d'un *habens rationalitatem*, alors que le locuteur a formé pour sa part l'image de Socrate pour la même propriété, n'importe pas, du moment que la pensée suscitée est celle d'un corps individuel considéré en tant qu'il est le sujet de l'accident *rationalitas*, qui ne saurait être inhérent à un corps si ce corps

73. Pour la définition par Hobbes de l'universalité, voir *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 9 et § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 23-24. Voir aussi *Critique du De Mundo de Thomas White*, c. XXX, § 16, éd. J. Jacquot et H.W. Jones, p. 356.

74. Voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32-34.

n'avait pas aussi la propriété d'*animalitas* dont la conception est signifiée par le prédicat. Il est donc légitime, pour Hobbes, d'analyser le nom "*omnis homo*" par la circonlocution "*homo ille, quem audiens animo concipiet*"⁷⁵. En revanche, lorsque l'extension du nom commun se trouve restreinte, par exemple dans le sujet de la proposition *quidam homo est doctus*⁷⁶, le signe de particularité constitue pour autrui l'indice seulement qu'il y a eu dans l'esprit du locuteur une pensée déterminée, la pensée d'un certain homme, susceptible en tant qu'homme de la propriété signifiée par le prédicat; mais l'effet de ce signe de particularité ne va pas au-delà, il ne peut donner à l'*audiens* la certitude que l'individu humain dont il forme de son côté une conception elle aussi nécessairement déterminée soit susceptible de la propriété que le *loquens* attribue à l'homme dénoté par le sujet de la proposition. L'individu conçu par l'auditeur n'est peut-être pas celui dont le locuteur a voulu susciter en lui l'idée; autrement dit, l'indétermination et l'incertitude portent sur la seule correspondance des idées (en elles-mêmes nécessairement déterminées), d'un esprit à un autre: le schéma inférentiel de la communication ne parvient pas alors à fonctionner, l'auditeur ne pouvant pas inférer, à partir du signe utilisé, quelle est la pensée déterminée présente à l'esprit du locuteur. La signification pour autrui de la pensée du locuteur n'est donc pas parfaite, sans que cela affecte pourtant la vérité de la proposition: il suffit en effet, pour cette dernière, que le nom "*homo*", par l'addition d'un signe de particularité, soit utilisé comme le nom d'un individu vague. La signification pour un autre esprit reste sans doute en défaut par rapport à l'intention de signification, si l'on entend par celle-ci l'intention de susciter l'idée de telle chose déterminée; mais l'auditeur a au moins la certitude que le locuteur a voulu rendre son discours intelligible et n'a pas trahi ce qui est la fin de toute proposition, à savoir, signifier que l'on conçoit que le second nom dans l'énoncé est le nom d'une même chose que le premier nom (à cet égard, l'intention de signification ne se laisse pas prendre en faute).

75. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. II, § 11, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 25.

76. Pour cet exemple, voir Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 5, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 35.

4. Conclusion: une parenté néanmoins entre la logique de Hobbes et la logique terministe

Peut-il être encore envisageable, à l'issue de cet examen de quelques-unes des formes de rupture que la théorie de la proposition chez Hobbes introduit avec la logique d'Ockham et de Buridan, de prétendre intégrer en quelque façon l'auteur de la *Computatio sive Logica* à la "tradition terministe"? Revenons, pour en décider, au modèle sémantique dont le contenu a été évoqué plus haut. L'institution humaine des premiers mots a pour fin, selon ce modèle, de signifier les choses mêmes du monde sensible; c'est dire que, dès son état natif, le langage dont conviennent les hommes pour signifier les choses dont ils ont les concepts, conduit tout naturellement à vérifier la manière dont la catégorisation du réel s'ordonne selon Aristote à partir de la perception des substances individuelles: les différents genres de catégories ou «prédicaments» sont en effet autant de genres de mots «de première nécessité» et «de première imposition»⁷⁷, autant de genres de mots signifiant les choses⁷⁸. «Tout ce qui signifie se dit de la chose qu'il signifie»⁷⁹, si bien que le petit nombre de «mots simples» qui sont comme des irréductibles par rapport à la profusion infinie des mots signifiant les choses sensibles infinies, suffisent à distribuer tous les modes de l'attribution de noms aux choses (selon la substance, selon la quantité, selon la qualité, etc.). Or, comme l'a montré clairement Boèce au début de son commentaire du traité aristotélicien des *Catégories*, il reste alors aux instituteurs du langage à franchir encore une dernière étape, au-delà de l'imposition qui englobe tous les genres de noms donnés aux choses; sans quoi, la genèse du langage humain ne serait pas complète. La division des mots imposés *secundum significationem* étant achevée, le moment est venu de considérer les mots à leur tour et de procéder à une «seconde imposition», afin de désigner les noms eux-mêmes par d'autres noms⁸⁰. C'est là,

77. Voir Ebbesen 1990: 156. Pour la conception des catégories dans la logique de Hobbes, voir Pécharman 1995.

78. Voir Boèce, *In Categorias Aristotelis Libri Quatuor*, Liber Primus, Patrologia Latina 64, 159 A- 163 C.

79. Boèce, *In Categorias Aristotelis Libri Quatuor*, Liber Primus, Patrologia Latina 64, 162 D.

80. Boèce, *In Categorias Aristotelis Libri Quatuor*, Liber Primus, Patrologia Latina 64, 159 C: «est prima positio, ut nomina rebus imponerentur, secunda vero ut aliis nominibus ipsa nomina designarentur».

comme l'a écrit Sten Ebbesen, «l'invention du métalangage»⁸¹. Le modèle fondé sur la théorie de la première et de la seconde impositions des noms va rendre de la sorte possible la réduction critique de tous les discours confondant en un seul les deux plans distincts du langage-objet et du métalangage. Mais, dans la logique terministe, l'application de ce modèle à la résolution des énoncés fallacieux requiert que l'on passe de la considération de la seule signification des mots, à la considération de leur supposition dans les énoncés où ils figurent: comme on l'a vu, étant donné que, comme signe, le terme peut être utilisé afin de supposer pour la chose qu'il signifie, il convient toujours de rechercher si les termes d'une proposition donnée sont pris ou non pour une ou des choses qu'ils signifient. Or, il apparaît ainsi qu'un même terme (*e.g.* "homme") peut supposer de deux manières distinctes, soit pour l'un ou plusieurs de ses signifiés, soit pour lui-même⁸². On comprend dès lors qu'il importe surtout de ne pas passer subrepticement de la seconde de ces suppositions, qui est purement autoréférentielle (la supposition dite matérielle), à la première, qui seule renvoie à des choses signifiées (la supposition dite personnelle): pareil passage aurait tôt fait de peupler le monde d'une multitude d'êtres fictifs.

Mais comment Hobbes, dont la logique ne reconduit pas la théorie de la supposition, peut-il espérer parvenir à contrôler l'usage du discours de façon à interdire ce genre de confusion? Sa doctrine de la signification, en rupture avec la sémantique de la logique terministe, permet-elle de proscrire de tels abus de langage? Si elle le peut, c'est paradoxalement en mettant en oeuvre cela même qui la sépare radicalement de la doctrine d'Ockham ou de Buridan, à savoir, un critère sémantique en rupture avec la thèse de la signification des choses elles-mêmes par les noms (qu'ils remplissent cet office directement ou indirectement). En effet, la règle commandant, pour toute attribution d'un nom à une chose existante, qu'il y ait une conception déterminée de cette chose au fondement de sa désignation, est solidaire pour Hobbes d'une limitation de la signification aux pensées que nous avons des choses, et d'un refus d'étendre le *significandum* aux choses elles-mêmes. Or, quand elle est ainsi réglée par une pure nécessité cognitive, l'imposition des noms ne s'arrête pas – et ne peut pas s'arrêter – à la seule dénotation des choses dans le monde: il n'est pas besoin, pour cette augmentation du langage par multiplication des noms au-delà des noms des existants, de suppo-

81. Ebbesen 1990: 161.

82. Voir Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre III, Cinquième sophisme, éd. J. Biard, p. 105.

ser d'autres conceptions, qui seraient d'un rang différent; il suffit de considérer séparément ce qui, dans une chose perçue, peut être la cause ou raison, non seulement de la conception déterminée que sa perception produit en nous, mais aussi, transitivement, du nom imposé pour signifier cette conception. Au principe de l'imposition des différents noms concrets, ou noms de choses dont on suppose qu'elles existent (des noms comme «corpus, mobile, motum, figuratum, cubitale, calidum, frigidum, simile, aequale, Appius, Lentulus» d'après le chapitre III du *De Corpore*⁸³), on découvre ainsi chaque fois un «accidens ... quod subjectum suum denominat»⁸⁴. Pour Hobbes, cette raison ultime de l'imposition d'un nom tel que "album" n'est pas elle-même signifiée par ce nom concret: celui-ci signifie seulement la conception dont l'*accidens* est la cause dans l'esprit, et la doctrine de la proposition du *De Corpore* récuserait la notion buridanienne d'*appellatio*, elle n'admettrait pas cette propriété que les *Sophismata* reconnaissent à un terme comme "album", lorsqu'il suppose dans une proposition pour quelque chose (par exemple pour un homme), de signifier autre chose (la blancheur) que ce pour quoi il suppose⁸⁵. Autre est alors ce pour quoi "album" suppose (une chose blanche) et autre ce qu'il "appelle" (la blancheur): le destin de l'appellation est lié dans la proposition à celui de la supposition, car elle assure la représentation mentale d'une part de signification que la supposition n'enveloppe pas, le signifié secondaire ou formel d'un terme étant "appelé" au moment même où il se trouve exclu par la supposition de ce terme (laquelle se borne au signifié premier ou matériel)⁸⁶. Il n'en va pas de même chez Hobbes, pour qui la raison ultime d'un nom concret ne devient signifiable à son tour qu'en faisant l'objet d'une considération séparée, au moyen d'une nominalisation de la prédication où figure ce nom concret. En effet, la pensée ne se contente pas de former telle conception déterminée, qui est signifiée par un nom concret dans la proposition, elle s'interroge encore sur la raison pour laquelle elle a formé précisément cette conception déterminée de la chose nommée par ce nom concret, plutôt que d'autres différentes: l'union de deux noms concrets dans une proposition la pousse inévita-

83. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* I, *Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 33. Voir aussi *Leviathan*, c. IV, ed. C.B. Macpherson, p. 106-108.

84. Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore* II, *Philosophia Prima*, c. VIII, § 23, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 92.

85. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre IV, éd. J. Biard, p. 122. Pour l'histoire de la notion d'appellation, voir l'Introduction de J. Biard, p. 23-24.

86. Voir de Rijk 1976 et Maierù 1976.

blement à s'enquérir de la cause pour laquelle son propre mode de conception de la chose individuelle désignée par ces deux noms est tantôt ainsi, tantôt autrement, et dans chaque cas différent d'autres manières de concevoir, que signifieraient d'autres noms. Or, cette recherche n'est pas seulement pour Hobbes à l'origine de la formation des noms abstraits, qui servent à isoler la considération des différences (inhérentes à la chose elle-même) expliquant que cette chose reçoive des noms que toutes les choses ne reçoivent pas (le nom absolument universel "corps" étant toujours sous-entendu, quelle que soit la diversité des noms concrets attribués à cette chose)⁸⁷; elle est aussi à l'origine de la constitution d'une véritable nomenclature des mots propres, ou mots correctement imposés, dont Hobbes décrit l'engendrement dans le *Leviathan* (chapitre IV)⁸⁸. A partir de ce *subject to names* originaire que constitue un corps individuel du fait qu'il est perçu et que sa perception cause dans l'esprit une certaine conception, d'autres types de noms que les noms concrets peuvent être distingués et ordonnés. La typologie ainsi engendrée repose donc tout entière sur le fait que les noms imposés aux choses individuelles perçues ont une signification et que cette signification consiste toujours en un mode déterminé de la conception causée par la perception d'un individu sensible: car sur ce fondement, il reste à introduire de nouveaux noms pour désigner d'une part les causes des diverses manières de concevoir (noms des accidents inhérents aux choses perçues), d'autre part ces modes mêmes de la conception (noms des phantasmes causés dans les esprits par les accidents des choses). On épuise de la sorte tous les types de noms régis par le principe de la signification des pensées: noms des corps conçus, noms des raisons des différentes conceptions des corps et noms des différentes conceptions des corps. Enfin, tous les noms distribués dans ces trois genres de noms pouvant être considérés quant à leur nature même de noms, plutôt que quant à ce qu'ils nomment, la nomenclature des mots propres s'achève par la classe des noms permettant de parler, à leur tour, des noms: la classe des noms de noms ou noms donnés à des noms pris en tant que noms, marque nécessairement la complétude de la typologie élaborée par Hobbes, puisqu'il ne peut plus rien y avoir au-delà du genre des noms dont les objets sont déjà eux-mêmes des noms,

87. Voir *Leviathan*, c. IV, ed. C.B. Macpherson, p. 107 ; *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. III, § 3, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 32-33.

88. Voir *Leviathan*, c. IV, ed. C.B. Macpherson, p. 106-108.

épuisant à eux tous la totalité du nommable *in re* et *in mente*. Il n'y a rien à ajouter à la classification des noms, quand la relation de nomination se terminant aux choses, ou à leurs accidents, ou aux diverses façons de les concevoir, cède la place à une relation de nomination se terminant aux noms eux-mêmes, qu'ils soient noms de corps, noms d'accidents ou noms de phantasmes. Le système des mots propres trouve sa clôture dans la dualité du langage-objet et du métalangage: dès que s'opère le dédoublement entre les noms-objets et les noms des noms-objets (les méta-noms), la division des classes de noms s'arrête. L'articulation nécessaire chez Hobbes entre la fonction dénotative d'un nom concret et sa fonction conceptuelle, permet donc d'éviter une inflation des existants, en fondant et réglant le processus de multiplication des noms, au-delà des noms des choses corporelles. Sans avoir à changer la formule définitionnelle de la proposition vraie (est vraie la proposition qui unit deux noms d'une même chose), on dispose ainsi du moyen d'élargir son application à la combinaison entre des noms appartenant à une classe homogène, ou noms d'un même genre de *res nominatae*⁸⁹. Nantie du système nécessaire et achevé formé par les quatre genres auxquels se ramènent tous les noms, la logique du *De Corpore* est en mesure de rendre raison des énoncés légitimes et d'assigner les causes de la fausseté: il y aura autant de formes légitimes de la prédication, que de classes de noms, et, corrélativement, autant de formes propositionnelles fausses, que de modes possibles de combinaison entre des noms pris dans des classes hétérogènes, c'est-à-dire entre des "*nomina incohaerentia*"⁹⁰. Les principales figures possibles de la fausseté se prêtent à un dénombrement qui n'a rien d'une suite désordonnée et inachevable, le faux est pour Hobbes réductible à une véritable législation, il se laisse délimiter et parcourir comme un territoire conquis, dont le paysage multiforme ne recèle rien d'inattendu, puisque tout ce qui s'y rencontre dépend de la répétition quasi-machinale du lien prédicatif entre des noms détachés de leurs classes d'appartenance. Le système des mots propres, qui a son origine dans l'imposition de noms à des choses individuelles perçues et sa fin dans l'imposition de noms à des noms, détermine lui-même les seules voies possibles de sa déstructuration, et pour ainsi dire enfante à lui seul le système parasitaire de toutes ses incohérences, privant par là la production du faux d'une véri-

89. Voir *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. V, § 2, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 51.

90. Outre *De Corpore I, Computatio sive Logica*, c. V, § 2-9, éd. K. Schuhmann, p. 51-54, voir *Leviathan*, c. V, ed. C.B. Macpherson, p. 114-15.

table autonomie – car il ne s’agit jamais que d’une autonomisation illusoire des noms, comme si leur diversité, leur variété, n’étaient pas déjà réduites.

Par des chemins bien détournés, Hobbes ne reste-t-il pas, du fait d’une telle exigence de contrôle de la formation des discours, dans la lignée de la logique terministe? La fin qu’il poursuit est-elle absolument éloignée de celle visée par Buridan, pour qui la doctrine de la supposition constitue une arme critique indispensable afin de reconnaître toutes les faussetés produites lorsque l’on passe abusivement, dans une même argumentation, de l’un à l’autre de ces deux genres de supposition que sont la supposition matérielle (quand un terme est pris pour lui-même) et la supposition personnelle (quand un terme est pris pour ses signifiés)⁹¹? Dans son article «Note sulla logica di Hobbes», Mario Dal Pra n’a pas hésité à suggérer que la doctrine de l’erreur exposée dans le *De Corpore* pourrait être tenue pour le pur produit d’un terminisme très rigoureux⁹². Sans aller jusque là, sans doute est-on en droit d’avancer que, à défaut d’être présent chez Hobbes comme une doctrine reconnue et avouée, le terminisme y fonctionne au moins en tant que «tradition»: tradition militante, qui se révèle toujours vivace dans la lutte que mène la philosophie de Hobbes contre toutes les formes de fausseté engendrées dans le discours par la confusion entre des noms de rang différent.

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91. Jean Buridan, *Sophismes*, Chapitre III, éd. J. Biard, p. 105-106.

92. Voir Dal Pra 1962: 426.

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Mental Language and Mental Representation in Late Scholastic Logic

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Summary: Traditionally the two main paradigms for describing and explaining processes of thought and mental representation have been thought as image and thought as language. Whereas in present-day debates these paradigms are treated as mutually exclusive, in scholastic theories of cognition and mental language they were often amalgamated in various ways. By tracing pertinent discussions from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, the article points to some consequences of this amalgamation both for the notions of image and of likeness and for approaches to thought as language.

To begin with: a terminological remark with real consequences. For some years now the idea seems to have been gaining ground that “the ‘Middle Ages’ is a historiographic fiction of doubtful utility for the history of language as for all other kinds of history.”¹ Even if – as I concede – we can hardly at present avoid using the term ‘medieval’ (be it for reasons of terminological convenience or of indolence), we should nevertheless use it with care. In the present context, then, we will make use of the helpful term ‘late scholastic’, which, it should be noted, must not be misread as ‘late medieval’ – as it in fact has often been and is still. This misreading has had the unfortunate consequence that the “really late” scholastic tradition of the later sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the early eighteenth centuries – falling outside the domains of not only Medieval and Renaissance but also Early Modern studies – is still a historiographically underdeveloped area of the great Latin philosophical tradition. This is unfortunate, in my opinion, for we may find in this later period of scholasticism the revival and continuation – and the development and modification – of many, if not most, of the logical, theological, and metaphysical discussions of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The following notes on some late-scholastic debates concerning mental language and mental representation may serve as an illustration of this.

1. Ebbesen 1995: xi.

1. The Present-Day Setting of the Problem

A look at the modern debates on mental representation shows the intellectual battlefield divided mainly into two camps – leaving aside the so-called “connectionist” theories that attempt to substitute the activity of neuronal networks for the notion of mental representation. On the one hand, there are the so-called “descriptivist” or “propositionalist” theories (e.g. Fodor, Katz, Pylyshyn) whose analysis of thought emphasizes the importance of linguistic structures and linguistic elements. Essentially, these theories are based on the following two ideas: 1) we should characterize mental processes (and particularly thought processes) as forms of “inner speech” rather than ways of using mental images; 2) all theories operating with the existence of pictorial representations can be reduced to theories assuming solely the existence of propositional mental representations. On the other hand, we have the so-called “pictorialist” or “imagist” theories (e.g. Paivio, Kosslyn) claiming that, besides other types of mental representations, recourse to pictorial representations is necessary for a sufficient explanation of at least some cognitive processes. These debates between the modern propositionalist and pictorialist account of mental representation as well as some of the arguments advanced by the two sides are part of a long, though mostly unstudied, tradition, some aspects of which will be at issue in what follows.

The back and forth of the present-day debate over the nature of mental representation gives abundant evidence of the many problems that are implicit in each of these main accounts of mental representation. And these problems even seem to multiply when the pictorial and the propositional paradigm are not taken as *alternative* forms of representation but rather are *fused* together so that one and the same mental representation, concept, or *verbum mentis* is taken as both a similitude or image of a thing (*similitudo vel imago rei*) and an element of mental language or inner speech. The following remarks will focus on some of the problems resulting from the tension between these two approaches.

2. Some Historical Notes on the Concept of Internal Language²

The practice of describing thought processes in linguistic terms has a long tradition going back at least to Plato's characterization of thought (διάνοια) as an "internal dialogue of the soul with itself" (ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὐτὴν διάλογος).³ Aristotle, seeing mental concepts as ὁμοιώματα, is not only the main source for the medieval view of concepts as images or likenesses of things, he also distinguishes between an external *logos* and an internal discourse in the soul (ἔσω λόγος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ),⁴ and this can be seen as the historical background of the influential, presumably Stoic, distinction between interior discourse (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος) and spoken discourse (λόγος προφορικός).⁵ Extended to a tripartite distinction of written, spoken, and mental speech it entered the late antique commentaries on the Aristotelian *Organon*,⁶ from where the idea of a "triplex oratio" was taken over by Boethius,⁷ who in turn transmitted it to the scholastic tradition.

Yet another view of pivotal importance in the history of mental language is Augustine's doctrine of the *verbum mentis* (also known as *verbum cordis* or *verbum interius*), distinguishing the mental words or "locutiones cordis"⁸ from the external word of sound (*verbum quod foris sonat*)⁹ as well as from the imaginative representations of the spoken words, the "imagines sonorum". The way in which Augustine char-

2. A comprehensive examination of the history of this notion is now to be found in the brilliant Panaccio 1999a.

3. *Soph.* 263 e 2-4.

4. *Anal. post.* A 76b24; *Categ.* 4b34.

5. See Mühl 1962. In fact, it is not quite certain whether this particular distinction is Stoic in origin. The oldest testimony for this terminology is in Philo of Alexandria. Sextus Empiricus mentions it as a distinction used by the dogmatic philosophers. It appears that Porphyry was the first to explicitly ascribe it to the Stoa. See Hülser 1987-1988: 582sqq.

6. Cf. Porphyrius, *In Cat.*: 64, 28-30; Ammonius, *In de Int.*: 22, 13-21; 23, 12-15.

7. A.M.S. Boethius, *In de int. sec. ed.*: 29, 17-21: "... Peripatetici rectissime posuerunt tres esse orationes, unam quae scribi possit elementis, alteram quae voce proferri, tertiam quae cogitatione connecti unamque intellectibus, alteram voce, tertiam litteris contineri." Ibid. 36, 10sqq.: "Porphyrius ... tres posuit orationes, unam quae litteris contineretur, secundam quae verbis ac nominibus personaret, tertiam quae mentis evolveret intellectus." Cf. *ibid.*, 42, 15sq.

8. Augustine, *De trin.* XV, 10, 18, 36 (p. 484).

9. *Ibid.* XV, 11, 20, 1 (p. 486).

acterizes the inner word differs sharply from any ordinary use of the term ‘word’. The inner word or speech (*locutio interior*) is described by Augustine interchangeably as “cogitatio”, “visio”, and “auditio”, because speaking, thinking, hearing, and seeing are, according to Augustine, one and the same thing in the sphere of the mind.¹⁰ Thoughts (*cogitationes*) are performed in mental words. The *verbum mentis*, corresponding to what later was called the *conceptus mentis* or *intellectus*, is by no means a “linguistic” entity in the proper sense, for it is “nullius linguae”, which means that it does not belong to any particular spoken language like Latin or Greek.¹¹ So we are confronted with the paradoxical situation that linguistic terminology (e.g. *verbum*, *locutio*, *oratio*, *dicere*, etc.) is used to describe a phenomenon whose independence from any language is strongly emphasized at the same time.

Of particular importance for later interpretations of the *verbum mentis* was the way in which Anselm of Canterbury revived the Augustinian doctrine, combining it with the Aristotelian view on mental concepts outlined in the opening chapter of *Peri hermeneias*. Thus, the two aspects of the mental word – which are found more or less implicitly in Augustine’s work already – became explicit in Anselm. First: mental words are natural words and thus identical for all human beings (they are “*verba ... naturalia ... et apud omnes gentes eadem*”);¹² and second: they are similitudes and mental images of things (*similitudines et imagines rerum*).¹³

From this point on, the *verbum mentis*, functioning as a key notion in medieval theories of mental representation, was both word and image, and thus amalgamated precisely the two aspects that in the present-day discussion mark the opposed approaches of the descriptivist and the pictorialist theories.

The account of thought as a kind of “non-linguistic”, or rather “trans-linguistic”, mental speech (termed *oratio* or *propositio mentalis*),¹⁴ or

10. Ibid. XV, 10, 18 (p. 485). For a similar view of Augustine’s theory of inner words, see Sirridge 1999.

11. Ibid. XV, 10, 19, 66sq. (p. 485): “... ad nullam pertinet linguam, earum scilicet quae linguae appellantur gentium...”

12. Anselm of Canterbury, *Monolog.*, p. 25.

13. Ibid. 48: “... omnia huiusmodi verba, quibus res quaslibet in mente dicimus, id est cogitamus, similitudines et imagines sunt rerum, quarum verba sunt.”

14. Cf. Roger Bacon, *Summa gram.*, p. 64: “... Intellectus ... simplices sunt dicciones et termini mentales, intellectus compositi sunt oraciones, propositiones et argumenta.”

*locutio in mente*¹⁵), can be found already in several passages in the works of Peter Abelard and Roger Bacon. But it was William of Ockham who developed a comprehensive theory of mental language governed by a “transidiomatic” mental grammar transposing the theorems of terminist logic to a theory of thought processes.¹⁶ But, of course, there were – as there still are – people who saw quite a few problems inherent in such a notion of a natural mental language. A number of well known late-medieval discussions, involving, among others, Hugh of Lawton, William Crathorn, and John Buridan bear witness to this.

3. Propositions out of Images?

A frequently recurring issue in these medieval discussions of mental representation and mental language concerns the compatibility of the two aspects of *verbum mentis* as *imago rerum* and *locutio mentis*. How could any language be build up out of elements that were to be seen as *similitudines* or *imagines rerum*? Even if Nelson Goodman is right to stress the importance of a syntactic approach to the issue of pictorial representation, it is quite clear that images are not appropriate for modelling the grammatical or syntactic features of spoken language. Thus, if concepts were at once mental images of external objects and elements of mental propositions, questions like the following might arise: what does an image of a donkey in the genitive case look like? Or to put it in another way and more generally: how can propositions be made up out of images? The saying goes: “a picture’s worth a thousand words” – nevertheless it is clear that from a logical point of view the opposite is true: a sentence says more than a thousand images, because it is only through a sentence that a statement can be made. A sequence of images will at best make up a movie, never a proposition in the proper sense.

The arguments of Hugh of Lawton and William Crathorn against Ockham’s notion of an *oratio mentalis* followed roughly this line of reasoning. No similitude subjectively existing in the mind, Lawton argued, could ever exercise logical functions like suppositing for some

15. Peter Abelard spoke (*Theol. christ.*, lib. I, 20, ed. Buytaert, p. 79, 235-36; *Patrologia Latina* 178, col. 1130A [= lib. I, cap. 4]) of “quaedam intelligentiae locutio quae in mente formatur”.

16. Cf. Panaccio 1992b: 67.

thing (*supponere pro aliqua re*).¹⁷ Crathorn's main objection to Ockham's view of natural mental propositions was also based on the thesis that the *verbum mentis* in the sense of *similitudo rei* could neither constitute nor be a part of any proposition ("nulla propositio mentalis ... fit ex terminis mentalibus, quae sunt similitudines rerum").¹⁸ Thus, in Crathorn's view, Ockham had misinterpreted all the passages in which Augustine wrote of *verba nullius linguae*. This formula was not meant, Crathorn maintained, to be an affirmation of the "transidiomatic" nature of mental words but rather as an overall denial of their linguistic character.¹⁹

At least as far as general cognition is concerned, Crathorn was advocating some sort of extreme descriptivism, or – and this is much the same – a vocalist version of nominalism. The notion of "similitudo rei", though central to his theory of sensory perception, has not the least explanatory value regarding general or abstract cognition. For, taking a general concept, e.g. the concept of color, to be a "similitudo rei" would result in the seemingly absurd consequence that one and the same concept would have to be a likeness not only of different but even of opposite things, for example the colors black and white.²⁰

Whereas the mental representation of concrete colors like black and white, according to Crathorn, is performed by mental words that are *similitudines rerum* but as such cannot be elements of any kind of language, the mental representation of color as such can only be performed by a kind of mental word that is not a *similitudo rei* but rather a similitude of the spoken or written term 'color'. Thus, for Crathorn, all general cognition is fundamentally based on the use of conventional language. But the nature of similitude was not the only object of ardent debates concerning the *verbum mentis*.

17. Hugh of Lawton in William Crathorn, *Quäst. zum ersten Sent.*, p. 174: "Nulla similitudo, quae est subiective in anima, potest supponere pro aliqua re. Igitur nulla talis similitudo potest esse pars propositionis." See Gelber 1984.

18. William Crathorn, *Quäst. zum ersten Sent.*, p. 158; see also 201: "Igitur verbum mentis, quod est similitudo rei, quae non est propositio nec pars propositionis, sed id de quo propositio formatur, non est propositio mentalis nec pars eius."

19. *Ibid.* p. 171.

20. *Ibid.* p. 169.

4. The Structure of the *verbum mentis*

Introducing his idea of *oratio mentalis*, Ockham explicitly referred to Augustine's *verbum mentis*: "isti termini concepti et propositiones ex eis compositae sunt illa verba mentalia quae beatus Augustinus ... dicit nullius esse linguae."²¹ By identifying Augustine's *verbum mentis* with the basic units of mental language (the *termini concepti*), Ockham was working into his theory of mental language a cognitive element that had already been the subject of long debates centering on the internal structure of mental representation. In this context, the main question had been what function the *verbum mentis* had within the process of intellectual cognition.

In Thomas Aquinas' view the *verbum mentis* or the *intentio*, *notitia*, or *conceptio* – he employed these terms interchangeably – is the term and product of an intellectual act or operation ("conceptio consideratur ut terminus actionis, et quasi quoddam per ipsam constitutum"),²² functioning both as the primary object of intellectual cognition and as that "in which" ("in quo") the mind grasps the external object.²³ Thus, the *conceptio* or *verbum mentis* is different both from the *species intelligibilis (impressa)* that marks the starting point of the intellect's action ("principium actionis intellectus") and from the intellectual act itself.²⁴

Whereas the thesis of a real distinction between the *verbum mentis* and the intellectual act was supported by Thomistic authors like John of Paris, Thomas of Sutton, Giles of Rome, and Hervaeus Natalis, a group of mainly Franciscan authors – for instance Peter of John Olivi, Henry of Ghent, William of Ware, and John Duns Scotus – denied that it was a *medium in quo* and conceived the *verbum mentis* not as product and object of the intellectual act but rather as the intellectual act itself.²⁵

This medieval discussion was continued in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century post-Tridentine philosophy. Here, the Thomists still saw

21. William Ockham, *Summa Logicae* (hereafter: *SL*) I, 1, OP I, p. 7.

22. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaest. disp. de pot.*, q. 8, a. 1 c, p. 215.

23. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evang. S. Joannis, lect. I*, 1, p. 8a; cf. Müller 1968: 56.

24. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaest. disp. de pot.* q. 8, a. 1 c, p. 215: "conceptio a tribus ... differt. A re intellecta, quia res est interdum extra intellectum; conceptio autem intellectus non est nisi in intellectu. ... a specie intelligibili: nam species intelligibilis ... consideratur ut principium actionis intellectus ... ab actione intellectus: quia ... conceptio consideratur ut terminus actionis, et quasi quoddam per ipsam constitutum. ... Haec autem conceptio intellectus in nobis proprie verbum dicitur."

25. Cf. Panaccio 1992a; Meier-Oeser 2001.

the *verbum mentis* as the ultimate product of the intellect and as a *medium in quo*,²⁶ i.e. as a medium that, by being itself the immediate object of intellection, provides the means of mentally representing the external thing. In contrast, the Scotists and the majority of the Jesuits advocated identifying the *verbum mentis* with the intellectual act. In their view the mental concept functioned neither as a “medium in which” (*medium in quo*) the object was known nor as a substitute for the object (“dicendum ... non esse id, in quo fit cognitio, aut supplere vicem objecti”);²⁷ rather it was the act itself, “through which” the mind cognizes its object (“id, quo ipsum objectum cognoscitur”);²⁸ “Conceptus formalis dicitur actus ipse, seu (quod idem est) verbum quo intellectus rem aliquam seu communem rationem concipit ...”²⁹ Thus, e.g. Suárez claimed that there can be at most a *modal* distinction³⁰ between the *verbum mentis* as the fully executed act of cognition (“actus cognoscendi in facto esse”) and the ongoing process of cognition (“actio cognoscendi in fieri”);³¹ this stood in stark contrast to the Thomistic doctrine of a *real* distinction between them.

What does this have to do with the conflict between the two approaches to mental representation, the imagist and the descriptivist? As I see it, the quarrel about the correct interpretation of the *verbum mentis* was at least partially the result of thinkers emphasizing one approach to the *verbum mentis* or the other, i.e. either the *verbum mentis* as an *imago rei* or the *verbum mentis* as an act of mental speaking. Whereas the Thomistic account of the *verbum mentis* generally followed the paradigm of image cognition or of seeing an object in a picture, the Jesuits mainly took the act of saying as the model for explaining the structure of the *verbum mentis*. So it is not by chance, I take it, that for instance Gabriel a Sancto Vincentio, a seventeenth-century representative of the Thomistic position, when answering the question “quomodo verbum intelligatur, aut terminet intellectionem, ut quo tantum, an etiam ut quod”, referred to the example of the two ways in which the image of Caesar (“imago Caesaris”) is perceived: in one way

26. E.g. Francisco de Araújo, *Comment. in univ. Arist. Met.*: 364a.

27. E.g. Franciscus Suárez, *Tract. de anima*, in *Op. omn.* 3, 633.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Franciscus Suárez, *Disp. met.* 2,1,1, *Op. Omn.* 25, 64b.

30. Franciscus Suárez, *Tract. de anima*, in *Op. omn.* 3, 632.

31. *Ibid.*

as a certain thing with a particular figure and disposition of colors (*ut quod*), in the other way as showing Caesar (*ut quo*).³²

In contrast, the Jesuit Petrus Hurtado de Mendoza (1592-1651) denied that the *verbum mentis* that I say is distinct from my complete act of saying it, thus going even farther than, e.g., Suárez' claim that they are modally distinct. Hurtado claimed that "the word is that through which we say something; but we speak only (*praecise*) by our act (*actionem*) and its term; and thus the word is nothing other than the act (*actionem*) and its term."³³

The point of contention in this debate over the correct interpretation of the *verbum mentis* was the internal structure of mental representation on the level of the individual mental concept, i.e. on the level of the first operation of the intellect (*prima operatio intellectus*) or the *simplex apprehensio*. Somewhat different were the issues that appeared on the level of the second operation of the intellect (*secunda operatio intellectus*), where mental concepts are considered to be elements in mental propositions or judgments. Nevertheless, a closer look may show that there is a remarkable parallelism in the way in which our authors dealt with the formal structure of, on the one hand, the *verbum mentis* and, on

32. Gabriel a Sancto Vincentio, *In lib. de an.*: 444a: "Sed quaeres ... quomodo verbum intelligatur, aut terminet intellectionem, ut quo tantum, an etiam ut quod? ... dicendum est quod verbum potest cognosci ut quo et ut quod, ut enim habet propriam immaterialitatem, et cognoscibilitatem, cognoscitur ut quod, ut autem est forma intentionalis, et imago obiecti cognoscitur ut quo, cum hoc modo sit id quo obiectum cognoscitur. Exemplum habemus in imagine Caesaris, quae potest duobus modis cognosci ut quod quatenus est quaedam res, composita ex tali figura, et tali colorum dispositione, et varietate ut sit se ipsa visibilis, quo modo videtur ab illis qui nesciunt esse imaginem Caesaris. Et cognoscitur ut quo, quatenus cognoscitur ut imago Caesaris, tunc enim idem est motus in imaginem et in id cuius est imago. Idem dicas de verbo quod scilicet cognoscitur ut quod est quaedam res immaterialis, cognoscibilis, etc. et ut quo, ut est imago, seu prout exercet officium imaginis, tunc enim cognoscitur ut quo."

33. Petrus Hurtado de Mendoza, *Disp. de universa philos.*: 792: "Dico primo, quando intellectus verbum efformat, illud est idem cum specie expressa producta per actionem intelligendi: est communissima sententia P. Suarez ... probatur primo a priori, verbum est, quo aliquid loquimur: sed praecise per actionem, et eius terminum loquimur: ergo verbum nihil est praeter actionem, et eius terminum: minor probatur, loqui nihil est aliud, quam potentiae intellectivae rem proponere, et indicare, ut patet in locutione vocali, quae nihil est praeter manifestationem conceptuum: sed actio intellectiva cum suo termino rem intellectui manifestat: ergo per illam loquitur intellectus."

the other, mental propositions (I shall return to this point in § 6, below). When focusing on the structure of mental propositions, controversies were not limited to the prominent question of just how similar or dissimilar the grammar of mental language was to the grammars of spoken languages. Here I will concentrate on a more fundamental metaphysical question that was raised in the context of these discussions: can the essentially composite structure of spoken and written language serve at all as a model for mental propositions or thought processes? In other words: can there be a structural similitude or an isomorphism between spoken and mental propositions?

5. Is the Composite Structure of Spoken Language Applicable to Mental Propositions?

Even if Ockham precisely differentiated between the grammatical structures of mental as opposed to spoken language, he was nevertheless advocating – at least in the *Summa logicae* – a strict analogy between the structure of mental and spoken propositions. This is because, according to Ockham, a mental proposition is composed out of intentions or cognitive acts in just the same way that the corresponding spoken proposition is made up out of spoken words.³⁴ Buridan and many fourteenth-century authors shared this view with Ockham. But, of course, not all did so. The main opponent of this compositional or complex account of mental propositions was Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358),

34. This is at least the position Ockham advocates in *SL* I, 12, *OP* I, pp. 41sq.: “Illud autem existens in anima, quod est signum rei, ex quo propositio mentalis componitur ad modum quo propositio vocalis componitur ex vocibus, aliquando vocatur intentio animae, aliquando conceptus animae, aliquando passio animae, aliquando similitudo rei ...” Cf. *Quodl.* III, q. 12, *OT* IX, pp. 247sq.: “... sicut oratio in scripto componitur ex dictionibus scriptis et propositio in voce componitur ex vocibus, ita propositio in mente componitur ex intellectibus ...” Cf. Walter Chatton, *Rep. et Lect. super Sent.*, prol., q. 1 art. 1, p. 22: “... suppono ... quod propositio in mente componatur ex intentionibus sicut propositio in voce ex vocibus, sicut alias ostendetur. Suppono etiam, quod eodem ordine, quo proferuntur in voce voces illae, quae sunt partes propositionis in voce, una vox post aliam successive, quod eo ordine et successive potest intellectus formare suos conceptus correspondentes, qui componunt suam propositionem.” For an alternative account of the formal structure of mental propositions according to Ockham, see n. 37 below.

who claimed that the composite structure of propositions, as this structure appeared in spoken language, was incompatible with the ontological simplicity of the indivisible mind. In the prologue to his *Commentary on the Sentence*, Gregory poses the question whether a mental proposition is essentially composed out of various simple acts of knowing, one of which was subject, one predicate, and one copula, or whether the mental proposition is rather a single act, not made up out of any parts.³⁵ Rimini opted for the second alternative, arguing that if the mental proposition were merely constructed out of its component concepts, absurd consequences would result, e.g. the very same elements could constitute propositions with different modal states and opposite truth values. As an example, widely known later on, Rimini took the two propositions, ‘omne album est ens’ and ‘omne ens est album’. Whereas the former proposition is a contingent truth, the latter is necessarily false.

According to Rimini, the description of a mental proposition as a mere *compositum* or aggregate of its component concepts would entail that the same elements always compose the very same mental proposition. This is because, whereas within spoken language the linear structure of speech provides the possibility of differentiating propositions with identical constituents on the basis of varying word orders, such a syntactic device must be precluded from mental language because of the alleged simplicity and non-linear structure of the mind and its operations. In Rimini’s view, the only alternative that remained was to conceive the whole mental proposition as a “simplex qualitas”, and this thesis became the object of a great deal of attention in later discussions of mental language.

The vast and extremely subtle early sixteenth-century debate on this topic is well documented and precisely described in Gabriel Nuchelmans’ and, particularly, in Jennifer Ashworth’s studies on late-medieval theories of the proposition. For detailed analysis, I refer to these works.³⁶ They show that, even if some authors like Pierre d’Ailly, Jerónimo Pardo, or Tiberius Bacilerius subscribed in one way or another to Gregory’s non-compositional theory of the mental proposi-

35. Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum*, prol., q. 1, art. 3 (1979-1984, I [1981], 33-35). For more on this point, see also Maierù’s contribution to this volume, at and around nn. 24-32.

36. See Nuchelmans 1980: esp. 94ff; Ashworth 1981, 1982.

tion, the compositional account was nonetheless the prevalent position in the early sixteenth century.³⁷

37. Cf. Johannes Dullaert, who, referring to Ockham, William Heytesbury, and Paul of Venice, reports (*Quaest. super Peri herm.*, f. 109vb): “opinio hoc tempore communis tenet quamlibet enunciationem mentalem ... compositam esse ex pluribus noticijs quarum una est subiectum alia copula alia praedicatum.” We find the same in Johann Eck, stating (*Arist. ... Dial.* I, f. 75rb sq.): “... est Vuilhelmi de Ocham, Marsilii et communis viae <opinio> quod sicut propositio vocalis est composita ex distinctis vocibus: ita propositio mentalis est composita ex distinctis noticiis quarum una est subiectum alia praedicatum” Eck’s own answer to that question, however, is slightly more differentiated when he claims: “propositionem mentalem esse compositam: quamvis eam esse simplicem non sit impossibile.” Moreover, he is right to appeal to Ockham in support of the second part of his thesis (“Secunda Pars <i.e. the possibility of simplicity> patet per Vuilhelmum Ocham qui xv secundi habitatus enim potest unico actu concipere hoc totum, deus est: et tunc illa actus simplex erit propositio aequivalenter: imo quod plus est in q. I dis. I primi sentit intellectum maxime habitatum posse unico actu intelligere totum syllogismum et demonstrationem”)

Ockham’s position on this issue is by no means unambiguous. Thus, even if it is historically correct to say that “all the subsequent discussions stemmed from Gregory’s analysis” (Ashworth 1981: 74), it should be noted that already Ockham seems to have clearly seen the problems involved in transposing the syntactical structures of spoken language to the sphere of the mind. Thus, it was in fact Ockham who – as far as I know – was the first to formulate the arguments that later became prominent under the name of Gregory of Rimini. Cf. Ockham, *Quaest. in lib. physic. Arist.* q. 6, OP VI, 407sqq.: “Si dicas quod actus sciendi propositionem non est aliquis unus actus simplex, sed actus compositus ex multis actibus, quia omnes actus faciunt unam propositionem; contra: tunc istae propositiones ‘omne animal est homo’ et ‘omnis homo est animal’ non distinguerentur in mente, quia non est aliquis actus particularis in una propositione [408] quin sit in alia, nec diversitas ordinis impedit sicut est in prolata et voce, igitur etc. ... dico primo quod propositio in mente est unum compositum ex multis actibus intelligendi ... *Aliter potest dici quod propositio in mente est unus actus aequivalens tribus talibus actibus simul existentibus in intellectu*, et secundum illum modum dicendi propositio non est aliquod compositum realiter sed tantum per aequivalentiam, quia aequivalet tali composito. [409] Sed tunc est dubium: *quomodo istae propositiones distinguantur in mente ‘omne animal est album’, ‘omne album est animal’, quia in mente non distinguantur propter diversum ordinem sicut in voce*, quia coniunctio signi cum una voce prolata vel cum alia redit manifeste propositionem diversam? Sed hoc non potest poni in mente, quia tales actus in mente simul sunt in eodem subiecto indivisibili, ideo non possunt habere talem ordinem diversum, nec potest idem actum intelligendi plus componi cum uno quam cum alio.” (Italics mine.) Cf. Normore 1990: 62sqq.

6. The Change of the *communis opinio* concerning the Ontological Structure of Mental Propositions

The question about the composite or non-composite structure of the mental proposition, or “enuntiatio mentalis” as it was mostly called later on, remained a standard topic even in seventeenth-century logical textbooks.

Post-Tridentine philosophy, however, saw a remarkable change of the *communis opinio* concerning this question. The *Summulae* of Domingo de Soto seems to have played a crucial role in bringing about this change. It is true that Soto correctly noted that the “*opinio communis est, propositionem in mente esse composita perinde atque in voce*”,³⁸ and conceded that the composite structure of the mental proposition was more intelligible or appropriate for the needs of beginners (“*ad usum summularum perspicatior*”).³⁹ Nevertheless, he acknowledged and strengthened the plausibility of Rimini’s main argument, based on the conviction that the syntactic feature of varied word ordering, essential as it is for spoken or written propositions, could not be transferred to mental propositions.⁴⁰ Thus, Soto judged Rimini’s *qualitas simplex* theory of propositions to be the “*probabilissima opinio*”⁴¹ – not without stating, however, that Thomas Aquinas had never explicitly decided in favour of one of the two positions, “no matter what the Thomists say” (“*quicquid dicant Thomistae*”).

In this way, Soto, followed on this point by Francisco Toletus,⁴²

38. Domingo de Soto, *Summulae* (1554), f. 26va.

39. Cf. *ibid.* f. 27rb: “*Sit ergo problema hoc: licet ad usum summularum perspicatior sit prima opinio, et ita loquendum est illius. S. Tho. neutram opinionem expresse determinat: quicquid dicant Thomistae.*”

40. Cf. *ibid.* f. 26vb. Already in the first edition of the *Summulae* (1529) he said: “*Multi opinati sunt et satis probabiliter propositionem mentalem esse simplicem noticiam.*” (f. 10va).

41. *Summulae* (1556), f. 27ra.

42. Franciscus Toletus, *Comment. in ... de anima*, in *Op. omnia*, t. 3, 161a: “*An compositio Intellectus sit unicus ipsius actus?... Haec autem difficultas est eadem cum illa: an propositio mentalis apprehensiva sit una simplex qualitas, scilicet unicus Intellectus actus...? [161b] Sit igitur prima Conclusio probabilis. Propositio apprehensiva est unicus actus simplex Intellectus: id est, cum Intellectus hanc propositionem [sc. ‘homo est animal’] apprehendit, unico actu totam apprehendit. Adverte vero, quod non nego, prius singulos actus habuisse singulorum terminorum et rerum significatarum: prius enim Intellectus Hominem, et Animal, et Est singulis conceptibus percipit: tamen nullo illorum, nec omnibus simul, rem totam seu propositionem, ut propositionem apprehendit, nisi unico alio actu superveniente.*”

paved the way for the success of the *qualitas simplex* theory of mental propositions, which seems to have been the prevailing opinion throughout the entire seventeenth century. Quite a number of explicit statements confirm this impression. Already at the beginning of the century the Jesuits of Coimbra say that this opinion is “a pluribus auctoribus hodie approbata”.⁴³ According to Juan Caramuel and John Punch (Poncius), both writing at mid-century, this is the common opinion (“sententia hoc aevo communis est”),⁴⁴ and towards the end of the century the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Battista de Benedetti reports that “pro simplici actu pugnant recentiores turmatim”.⁴⁵ So, the question arises: what are the reasons for the late success of Gregory of Rimini’s view? Why did so many seventeenth-century authors agree with Martin Smiglecius, who says: “Dico igitur sententiam Gregorij veram esse”?⁴⁶

One reason is to be seen in the success of another thesis, which in Gregory’s *Sentence* commentary was closely connected with his *simplex qualitas* account of mental propositions. Contrary to Ockham’s and Buridan’s insistence on a clear cut distinction between mental propositions and mental acts of assent or judgment,⁴⁷ Gregory advocated the view that mental propositions properly so called were identical to the acts of assenting or knowing.⁴⁸ As late as the early sixteenth century, Bartholomaeus Arnoldi of Usingen could truthfully report that this opinion “paucos habet imitatores”.⁴⁹ But simultaneously, and directly connected with the increasing acceptance of the non-composite

43. Conimbricenses, *In lib. Arist. de int.*, in *Commentarii*, t. 2, 143.

44. Joh. Caramuel de Lobkowitz, *Praec. log.*, 381; cf. Joh. Poncius, *Phil. ad mentem Scoti cursus integer*, 272a.

45. J. B. de Benedictis, *Philosophia peripatetica*, t. 1, 534.

46. Martin Smiglecius, *Logica ...*, 554.

47. Cf. Ockham, *Quodl.* V, q. 6, OT IX, pp. 501sq. It must be noted, however, that, according to Ockham, this distinction seems to be restricted to the area of scientific discourse. Thus, in *Quodl.* III, q. 8 a. 1 he concedes that the “laicus sciens, quod lapis non est asinus... [assentit et scit], quod sic est in re ... mediante propositione formata in intellectu ...”.

48. Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum*, prolog., q. 1, art. 3 (1979-1984, I [1981], pp. 27-30). Cf. Nuchelmans 1980: 93. Cf. Bartholomaeus Arnoldi of Usingen, *Parvulus philos. nat.*: f. 115rsqq: “Utrum noticia apprehensiva distinguatur realiter ab adhaesiva. De hoc dubio sunt due opiniones apud modernos. Opinio prima est Guilhelmi Ockam in quodlibeto: et communis vie moderne, quod noticia apprehensiva complexa propositionalis est realiter distincta ab adhaesiva. ... Opinio secunda est Grego[r]ii. Ary[minensis]. ... quod assensus sit ipsamet propositio mentalis.”

49. Bartholomaeus Arnoldi of Usingen, *Parvulus philos. naturalis*, f. 115v.

account of mental propositions, the *propositio* or *enuntiatio mentalis* began to be considered to be an act of mental judging or apprehending. In this way, the simplicity of the act of judging or assenting, which had been basically uncontroversial, was transferred to the *enuntiatio mentalis* itself. This phenomenon is already clearly witnessed in the way the Conimbricenses put the question: “Utrum mentalis enuntiatio, quam a iudicio non distinguimus, sit una simplex qualitas?” And it is not surprising that, given these circumstances, they – just like Vallius, Arriaga, Lynceus, Poncius, Frassen, and many others – favored the affirmative answer.⁵⁰

50. Cf. Conimbricenses, *In lib. Arist. de interpr.*, 138-43. Paulus Vallius, *Logica*, t.1, 657: “An enuntiatio mentalis sit una simplex qualitas, an vero aggregatum ex multis. Et quidem si enuntiatio haec sumatur pro illa apprehensione, vel iudicio intellectus, de illa non potest esse dubitatio; an sit una simplex qualitas; quia est unus simplex actus intellectus. ... aliqui quidem existimant non esse simplicem qualitatem ... Alij vero existimant enuntiationem mentalem esse simplicem qualitatem, quod habet Ariminenis ... Durandus ... Soncinas, Sotus, Toletus. [658a] ... videtur ... multo probabilior secunda sententia ... nulla est compositio conceptuum: quia quamvis apprehendamus simul praedicatum et subiectum, antequam iudicemus, illa tamen est unica apprehensio, et non multae ... [659b] ... apparet ... secundam operationem non solum ratione iudicij, sed etiam ratione apprehensionis non esse compositam ex pluribus conceptibus, sed esse quid simplex: ita ut unus sit conceptus, quo apprehendimus praedicatum et subiectum, cui accedat iudicium, quo iudicamus res compositas esse compositas...” – Richardus Lynceus, *Univ. philos. scholas.*, 335asq.: “An secunda operatio intellectus, sive iudicium sit simplex qualitas, vel potius ex pluribus apprehensionibus intrinsece componatur? ... [335b] ... existimo ..., iudicium nostri intellectus de facto semper esse simplicem, et indivisibilem qualitatem ... [336b] Fateor, propositionem externam esse speculum quoddam, et imaginem interioris, ut recte docet Plato in Theaeteto... Caeterum, cum non sit imago univoca illius, sed analogica; altera enim est spiritualis, altera materialis, una tonis, atque intervallis protracta, alia momento perfecta et successionis omnis expers; ideo non est quapropter altera simplex et indivisibilis esse nequeat, ut altera sit dividua et partibus cohaeret.” – Johannes Poncius, *Philos. ad mentem Scoti cursus integer*: 272a: “Utrum enunciatio sit una simplex qualitas. ... Non est dubium quin prius apprehendamus extrema, quorum unum praedicamus de altero, quam feramus iudicium de unione ipsorum ... Sed controversia est, utrum quando dicimus in mente ‘homo est albus’, iudicative, praeter simplices apprehensiones hominis et albedinis unionisque ipsorum, sive plures sint, sive una, inveniantur plures alij actus, ex quibus ipsum iudicium formaliter componatur et integretur, an vero solum requiratur, et sufficiat unus alius actus, praeter istas apprehensiones; si enim requirantur plures actus, tum enuntiatio non erit una simplex qualitas, sed una qualitas composita, si autem sufficiat unus, enuntiatio erit qualitas simplex. – Conclusio: Enunciatio est una simplex qualitas. Est communis. ... Probatur ... quia sine necessitate multiplicarentur actus, cum unus sufficeret; nec ullum est indicium sive rationis, sive experientiae, quo colligatur dari in iudicio plures actus: ergo fru-

Another reason for the success of the *qualitas simplex* thesis is to be seen in the fact, mentioned above (§ 4), that several authors took the Thomistic version of *verbum mentis* as a model for describing the structure of mental propositions. This becomes more evident when we contrast the sort of *qualitas simplex* theory advocated by John of St. Thomas (alias John Poinset) with the compositional account. John gives a list of four positions, each of which, in a manner of speaking, offers a different blueprint for the production of mental propositions:

- (1) Quidam ... existimant non requiri aliud ad formationem enuntiationis quam plures conceptus esse ordinatos inter se, sicut omnes fatentur in tertia operatione ... non dari aliquam qualitatem seu conceptum resultantem ex ordinatione propositionum... (Johannes a Sto. Thoma, *Cursus philos. thomist.* I, p. 151a)

The first position holds that nothing more is required for the formation of a mental proposition than the arrangement of its component concepts. Thus, a proposition is only the aggregate of its parts – just as Ockham had held that, e.g., “ordo sunt res ordinatae” (or, in a theologico-political context, “ordo sunt monachi”). Just as the non-Thomistic concept of the *verbum mentis* identified the mental word with the intellectual act, here a proposition is held to be identical with the complex formation of the proposition. Whereas this account represents the compositional approach to the mental proposition, the following three positions are but variants of the *qualitas simplex* theory:

- (2) Alii vero existimant formari enuntiationem per aliquem conceptum ordinantem conceptus simplices vel ex illis ordinatis resultantem. (ibid., p. 151a).

The second opinion holds that the mental enunciation essentially con-

stra, et sine necessitate multiplicarentur.” – Claudius Frassen, *Philos. Acad.*, t. 1: 349b: “Enuntiatio formaliter est una et simplex qualitas, et unicus intellectus actus. ... necessum est, ut iudicium consistat in simplici assensu, vel dissensu mentis expresso per has particulas ‘est’, ‘non est’”. – For this reason Arriaga even held that we can speak of “termini mentales” only in an extended sense; cf. Rodrigo de Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, 4: “... adverte, si propositio mentalis non sit composita ex triplici actu, sed indivisibilis omnino, (ut ... nos .. in libris de Anima, Disp. VIa num. 83 ostendemus) in mente, seu in propositione mentali non esse proprie terminos: quia res omnino indivisibilis non potest esse extremum sui ipsius. Improperie tamen dicuntur termini mentales, quatenus per unicum actum concipimus, quae per plures terminos vocales exprimimus.”

sists in some simple concept that either arranges the component concepts or else is the result of their having been arranged.⁵¹

51. Cf. Martin Smiglecius, who answers the question “in quo sit posita ratio formalis enunciationis?” by stating (*Log.*, 435): “Prius apprehenditur praedicatum et subiectum, tum accedit iudicium illa componens, quod iudicium et compositio significatur per verbum est: et in hac compositione consistit ratio formalis enunciationis. Dico ... <iudicium> non esse actum compositum, sed componentem praedicatum cum subiecto, ita ut compositio sit inter praedicatum et subiectum, seu inter conceptum praedicati et subiecti, actus autem ipse componens est in se simplex non compositus. Quare cum in iudicio enuntiativo concurrant tres actus, unus quo apprehenditur subiectum, alter quo apprehenditur praedicatum, tertius qui respondet copulae et est actus iudicii componentis praedicatum cum subiecto; ratio formalis secundae operationis non consistit in quacunq[ue] coniunctione primarum operationum, sed in ea coniunctione quae fit formaliter per iudicium compositivum”. According to Smiglecius, the *ratio formalis enuntiationis* is located in the non-composite but compositive mental act, vocally represented by the copula. – A more detailed account of that position is to be found in Francisco de Oviedo, who, later approved by Mastri and Bellutus (*Philos. ad mentem Scoti cursus integer*, 2), held the *propositio mentalis formalis* to consist in the “copula formalis intentionaliter annectens subiectum et praedicatum”. With regard to that formal proposition, Oviedo challenged, along the lines of Gregory’s argumentation, the adequacy of speaking of ‘mental terms’. Cf. Francisco de Oviedo, *Integer cursus philos.*, 4a-b: “Extrema mentalis propositionis proprie terminos appellat communis sententia, quod apud me difficultate non vacat ... Terminos propositionis est subiectum de quo aliquid dicitur, et praedicatum, quod dicitur de alio: sed in propositione mentali, quae proprie est formalis propositio, nihil est quod de alio dicitur, quia in conceptu interno respondente his vocibus ‘Petrus est animal’ non est una pars, quae de alia praedicetur, quia interna propositio partes non habet, sed est simplex qualitas ... Ergo propositio mentalis secundum se non includit intrinsece subiectum et praedicatum, sed ad haec terminatur: ergo secundum se et intrinsece non habet terminos. Duplex propositio distinguenda est: formalis, quae proprie et rigorose propositio: et propositio obiectiva, quae non est proprie et rigorose propositio, sed obiectum propositionis, et instituitur in esse propositionis obiectivae tanquam per formam extrinsecam. Ex his propositio obiectiva in se continet subiectum et praedicatum constituta in esse talium per propositionem formalem, et ob hanc rationem existimo in se includere extrema, quae proprie termini dicuntur, et terminos includere licet formaliter constitutos in rationes terminorum, sicuti in ratione subiecti et praedicati per formalem propositionem. Itaque cum ego dico ‘Petrus est albus’ interna et formalis propositio in se non continet subiectum et praedicatum, neque terminos; sed obiectiva, quae dicit intrinsece, et in se Petrum extrinsece constitutum in ratione subiecti, et in ratione termini per propositionem mentalem; et album seu eundem Petrum quatenus album eodem modo extrinsece constitutum per eandem formalem propositionem in ratione praedicati. ... Censeo ego propositionem ipsam formalem, non esse formam extrinsecam constituentem copulam se tenentem ex parte obiecti, sed esse ipsam formalem copulam annectentem intentionaliter et extrinsece in ordine ad nostrum intellectum subiectum et praedicatum, quem habent ratione

(3) ... aliqui existimant solum dari unicum actum, qui non solum dirigat et ordinet conceptus simplices, sed etiam qui repraesentet totam propositionem. (ibid., p. 151b)

The third position concurs with the second, but adds that this particular concept not only arranges the component concepts but also represents the whole proposition as some sort of an image.⁵²

(4) Alii vero ponunt quatuor actus, tres qui repraesentent subiectum, praedicatum et copulam secundum se, et quartum, qui illos conceptus dirigat et ordinet inter se; et in hoc solum formaliter consistit propositio, in aliis vero praesuppositive.

The fourth and last position, which John of St. Thomas himself adopts, maintains that there are four distinct acts, three of which represent the subject, predicate, and copula respectively, whereas the fourth act, the one the proposition essentially consists of, arranges the three others, which function only as prerequisites for the production of the proposition. In a structural analogy to the Thomistic real distinction between the mental act of cognition and the *verbum mentis* as the term and product of this act, the three concepts of subject, predicate, and copula are here considered to be only the preconditions for the subsequent production of the mental proposition as a simple act. Along these lines, Domingo de Soto had already claimed:

enunciationis, cum physice sint eadem entitas, quae secum ipsa nullam unionem habet, sed est simplex entitas ... Confirmatur eadem doctrina: Propositio formalis est forma constituens obiectum, quod respicit in ratione subiecti et praedicati: ergo est formalis copula illorum. Probo consequentiam: Subiectum formaliter constituitur in ratione subiecti, et praedicatum in ratione praedicati per illud, ex vi cuius annectuntur tanquam duo extrema; sed annectuntur per copulam: ergo constituuntur in ratione subiecti, et praedicati per copulam: Sed propositio mentalis est [4b] id, per quod annectuntur: Ergo propositio mentalis est illorum formalis copula." – Whereas the copula, according to Walter Burley and Buridan, was the 'forma' or the 'formale propositionis', it has now become the 'propositio formalis'. On Burley see Pinborg 1969 and Karger 1996.

52. Cf. Balthazar Tellez, *Summa univ. philos.*, 104sq: "Enuntiatio mentalis, seu iudicium est quaedam simplex qualitas, seu est unus actus, quo intellectus affirmat vel negat quae per simplices apprehensiones iam cognoverat. [105a] ... humanum iudicium, quamvis sit una simplex qualitas, praesupponit physice plures terminorum apprehensiones. ... Advertendum vero est, hanc simplicem qualitatem repraesentativam esse totius enuntiabilis, idest, praedicati, subiecti, et copulae, quia omnis terminus cognitionis, et omnis cognitio est imago repraesentativa sui obiecti ..."

... licet successive formemus plures conceptus cum audimus ‘homo est animal’: illi tamen plures non significant hominem esse animal unica significatione totali: sed in fine producitur una simplex qualitas quae hoc significat.⁵³

The simple quality that Soto mentions here is the mental proposition properly so called, by which (as John of St. Thomas said) the predicate, the subject, and the copula are represented “per modum identitatis et unitatis totius” just like “in specie montis aurei representatur mons et aurum, et in specie totius domus fenestrae et columnae etc.”⁵⁴

Considering these essentially psychological accounts of the mental proposition, one can see why in post-Tridentine logic theoretical considerations of the issue were drawn still farther away from Ockham’s logical approach to mental language and mental grammar.

7. Modifications of the Concept of *similitudo*

It is apparent that the meaning of “linguistic” vocabulary like *verbum*, *locutio*, *propositio*, *enuntiatio*, etc., changed as a result of its being used for the description of mental operations. Likewise the notions of ‘image’ and ‘similitude’ did not remain unaffected by their application to mental processes. Even if it is (and probably will continue to be) the case that authors can be found at all times who operate with rather naive or unconsidered notions of similitude or image, nevertheless we do have certain indications that the notions of *imago* and particularly of *similitudo* became increasingly refined in later medieval philosophy – resulting in understandings of cognitive similitude that form the basis of master arguments like those we have seen advanced by Lawton and Crathorn.

Already in Ockham ‘*similitudo*’ is not to be understood to be identical with pictorial representation. Even if in logical contexts the concepts of *significare* and *supponere* replace the notion of similitude, one should not conclude from this that these were mutually exclusive in the sense that describing the relation between concepts and things in terms of signification and supposition would imply that there could be no similitude. In fact, the contrary seems to be the case. As Ockham argues in *Quodlibet* IV, the logical functions of simple mental acts, like to sig-

53. Domingo de Soto, *Summulae* (1554), f. 27r.

54. Johannes a Sancto Thoma, *Cursus philos.*, p. 156b.

nify or to stand for an external thing, are based on the very fact that concepts are similitudes of things.⁵⁵

Perhaps the most radical response to the problems involved in the account of mental concepts as *similitudines rerum* was the denial that mental concepts were such similitudes at all. But this extreme position is seldom to be found. Besides Crathorn's above-mentioned replacement of the *similitudines rerum* by *similitudines vocum*, I know only of Johann Eck, who, pointing to the difficulty of explaining how cognition as a "merely immaterial thing" (*res mere immaterialis*) could be similar to any material, extended thing (*res materialis et extensa*), explicitly – and, it is to be noted, explicitly against Ockham – held that the signification of mental concepts was not based on natural similitude but rather on some sort of natural relation or respect (*conceptus significare ex naturali habitu, sed non ex naturali similitudine*).⁵⁶

The general way employed to deal with this objection, however, was not to dismiss but to modify or to differentiate what was meant by 'similitude'. Already in the fourteenth century, Andreas de Novocastro (fl. 1358) had made a distinction between a "similitudo secundum con-

55. William Ockham, *Quodl.* IV, q. 35, OT IX, 474: "eo quod actus est similitudo obiecti, potest significare et supponere pro rebus extra, potest esse subiectum et praedicatum in propositione, potest esse genus, species etc."

56. Johann Eck, *In Periherm.*, in *Aristot. ... Dial.* I, f. 71vb-72ra: "communis sententia est conceptum significare naturaliter ex naturali similitudine, ita quod conceptus est similis obiective secundum Scotum, vel subjective secundum Ocham, in repraesentando, sicut res est in essendo, unde analogiam sumere potes in speculo, in quo relucet rerum imagines: ita in speculo intellectus similitudines ac notiones contineantur; hinc appellantur species, ideae, simulachra etc. Invenies plurima apud Cameracen. tractatu de conceptibus et in tractatu de anima: apud Ocham in multis locis sed notabiliter q. xix quodli. quarti. Sed contra hoc opposui in parvis: quia si sic [71vb] sequens esset nullum conceptum esse singularem: sequelam probo quia omnis similitudo non plus repraesentat unum simillimum quam aliud ut cuique obvium et Ocham sponte fatetur dist. iii q. ix primi. Et Cardinalis Cameracen. q. iiii primi. Ergo illi conceptus si sunt similitudines non plus repraesentabunt unum simillimum quam aliud: et ergo non singulariter significat. Nec obstant quae ex Ocham in medium aduci possent ex q. xv secundi et q. xiii quodl. i. Nam esto quod non sint plura individua simillima: adhuc tamen termino (quia similitudo) non repugnat ex parte sui significare plura, sive repugnat ex parte rei sive non: Nec valet dicere quod singulariter significet illam rem a qua partialiter causetur: Quia causalitas non tribuit termino communitatem vel singularitatem: sed bene tribuit esse: unde si ratio causalitatis est ei ratio repraesentandi, iam non significabunt ratione similitudinis: quod est propositum: Placet ergo mihi notiones animi et conceptus significare ex naturali habitu, sed non ex naturali similitudine. [72ra] Difficile enim esset assignare quomodo res mere immaterialis sicut est cognitio esset similis rei materiali et extensae."

figurationem et convenientiam” and the particular form of mental similitude which allowed for one and the same concept to be – Crathorn held this to be impossible – “the similitude or the natural image of utterly dissimilar things” (*similitudo et imago naturalis rerum summe dissimilium*).⁵⁷

This way of differentiating several meanings of ‘similitude’ reappeared in the sixteenth century in the form of the terminological distinction between *similitudo linealis*, on the one hand, and *similitudo intentionalis* or *similitudo obiectiva*, on the other. This type of distinction is to be found, for instance, in William Manderston⁵⁸ and Domingo de Soto. This intentional similitude is marked by an inversion of the standard relation between *similitudo* and *repraesentatio*. For it is not the similitude that provides the basis for representation, rather mental concepts are said to be *similitudines rerum* on account of the fact that they are natural representations of things.⁵⁹ Thus, the reason why a particular concept is the natural cognitive similitude of a particular object

57. Andreas de Novocastro, *I Sent. d. 1 q. 1* (1514: f. 17va), cited after Hübener 1968: 609: “... cum dicitur quod rerum summe dissimilium non potest esse eadem similitudo et imago naturalis, verum est de similitudine secundum configurationem et convenientiam seu propinquitatem qualitatum, non autem de similitudine et imagine quae est per obiectivam repraesentationem et exhibitionem”

58. William Manderston, *Comp. Dial. Epitome*, f. B 7ra: “... potest uno modo dici quod totalis causa quare illa qualitas representat Sortem naturaliter proprie non est, quia est naturalis similitudo Sortis licet illa sit bene una partialis causa, sed causa precipua est, quia illa qualitas habet hoc ex sua propria natura ... Alio modo potest dici concedendo quod tota causa quare hec notitia est representativa Sortis naturaliter proprie est, quia est eius naturalis similitudo intentionalis, non autem linealis. Et quando infertur si a. est simile b. b. est simile a. distinguo consequentiam, si loquaris de similitudine intentionalis nego, si vero loquaris de similitudine lineali seu protractiva concedo consequentiam, unde esse naturalis similitudo intentionalis alicuius rei nil aliud est quam representare illam rem naturaliter proprie.”

59. Cf. Domingo de Soto, *Summulae* (1554), f. 5va: “... dicitur notitia similitudo obiecti, non quod habet similia lineamenta, sicut imago picta est simili regis: sed dicitur intentionaliter similis, propterea quod suapte natura repraesentat obiectum.”; Cf. F. Suárez, *De sanct. trin. myst.*, in *Opera* I, 744b: “Similitudo duplex intelligi potest. Una est per veram convenientiam, seu unitatem in forma, vel natura. Altera est similitudo tantum repraesentationis absque praedicta unitate. Prior reperitur in imagine naturali, ut est Filius respectu Patris, et aliquo modo in imagine artificiali, saltem quantum ad exteriorem formam, et figuram speciei maxime significativam ... Posterior similitudo attribui potest Verbo mentis nostrae, quod etiam solet imago obiecti appellari, cum quo tamen revera non habet formalem convenientiam in specifica forma, tamen quia repraesentat illud, dicitur imago illius, et idem potest considerari suo modo in phantasia, et visu, atque etiam in specie intelligibili, vel sensibili.”

is not the concept's qualitative or figural conformity with its object, nor is it because the concept has a direct causal dependence on its object. In other words, the concept is – to use modern semiotic terminology – neither an icon nor an index in its Peircean sense. It is rather to be characterized as *naturalis similitudo obiectiva* only because it is a natural form representing on its own account (*per se*) the object. And this in turn is based on particular nature of its being, which is produced by an intellect informed by a species. Similitude, according to this interpretation, is not a two-term relation but rather (at least) a triadic relation: a concept is the *similitudo obiectiva* of *x* because it has been produced by an intellect that itself is affected by *x* in a certain way.⁶⁰

Even if this might not provide a satisfactory answer to the question of the nature of mental representation, it makes evident that by no means all late-medieval authors advocated a naive theory on which cognitive similitude was some sort of pictorial likeness. Instead of trying to give a detailed explanation for mental representation, however, they rather took it to be axiomatic that mental concepts are natural similitudes. There is, as Pedro Sanchez Ciruelo claimed, no reason to be sought for the fact that “mental dictions” (*dictiones mentales*) are natural similitudes of things. On the contrary, they are the ultimate ground of all signification.⁶¹

8. The Influence of Conventional Language on Thought Processes

Looking back, we can say that Ockham's notion of *oratio mentalis* began a long process in which logical semantics and epistemology

60. Cf. Domingo de Soto, *Summulae* (1529), f. 8rb: “Similitudo namque obiectiva nec consistit in aliqua essentiali proprietate nec in lineatione aut alio reali accidente nec in hoc solum quod ab obiecto fuerit producta, sed certe conceptus ex eo solet vocari naturalis similitudo obiectiva quia est naturalis forma per se repraesentativa obiecti: quod habet ex natura rei, quia videlicet ab intellectu speciebus eius informato producitur.”

61. Petrus Sanchez Ciruelo, *Paradoxae quaestiones* (1538: f. 3r); cited after Muñoz Delgado 1966: 35: “Dictum est enim quod voces et scripture non significant ex sua natura sed ex voluntaria impositione auctorum atque ex voluntaria subordinatione earum ad dictiones mentales, et denique mentales dictiones non ex voluntate humana sed ex sua natura significant, quia sunt naturales similitudines rerum ab obiectis et a potentia causate. Et huius rei nulla est querenda ratio, sed in eis stat ultima resolutio et immediata ratio totius significationis totiusque veritatis aut falsitatis ...”

became increasingly closely connected or amalgamated. Particularly in the sixteenth century this process gained momentum – as Jennifer Ashworth has shown – through defining the term ‘*significare*’ as making known or representing to the cognitive faculty, so that, “when early sixteenth century logicians were discussing mental language they took it that they were concerned with philosophy of mind.”⁶² This tendency grew even stronger in the seventeenth century, when mental propositions were primarily conceived not as instantiations of a grammatically well-defined mental language but rather as simple acts of mental apprehension or judging, and thus became a simply psychological or epistemological issue. As a result of this, the topics of mental language and mental grammar gradually disappeared. The object of seventeenth-century reflections on language was not so much natural mental language and its relation to spoken language but rather – and increasingly so – the question of possible influences of conventional language on thought processes.

Already in the fourteenth century Pierre d’Ailly had maintained that there was a close habitual connection between conventional and mental language. In order to explain the process of understanding spoken or written words, he claimed that the habitual connection and concomitance between the concept of the thing and the concept of its verbal expression (“*colligantia seu mutua concomitantia inter conceptum naturalem ... et conceptum ... vocis*”) is so close that, by stimulating one of these concepts, the other is always immediately stimulated as well (“*uno conceptu moto per obiectum suum ... statim movetur alius conceptus*”).⁶³ According to this view, which already was anticipated in some way in the mid-thirteenth-century *Commentum super Priscianum maiorem* of Ps.-Robert Kilwardby,⁶⁴ the two levels of inner speech

62. Ashworth 1981: 95.

63. Pierre d’Ailly, *I Sent.*, q. 3, a. 1; cf. L. Kaczmarek 1988: 403sq.

64. Ps.-Robert Kilwardby, *Comment. sup. Prisc. ma.*, pp. 59sq (italics mine): “... patet quod apud animam est sermo intranee dispositus, quo quidem et ad cuius similitudinem fit prolatus. Apud animam igitur statim cum habet intentionem significabilem fit praeexcogitatio vocis, qua talem intentionem sive intelligentiam deceat vel oporteat significari, et illi intentioni vocis applicatur intentio significabilis sicut finis ei quod est ad finem. Consequenter quia ad hoc quod huiusmodi intellectus alii manifestetur exigitur aliquod signum sensibile, quia nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu, movet anima rationalis per appetitum et imaginationem membra deputata ad formationem vocis ... et formatur vox sensibilis iuxta intentionem vocis praecogitatae et praeconceptae apud animam proferentis eam, et fit sermo exterior idem continens et repraesentans quod per sermonem interiorem continebatur et repraesentatur. ... Et

appear to be strictly parallel, distinct from each other and without mutual interaction.

The seventeenth-century Jesuit logician Giovanni Battista Giattini (1601-1672) conceived the correlation of language and thought as slightly closer still. According to his account of language acquisition, upon hearing certain words frequently and in combination with the sensory perception of their significata, a “complex species” is generated, and this species comprises – just like the Saussurean sign – the sound-image as well as the concept of its correlate object (“... generantur ... species complexae talium vocum simul et talium obiectorum ex ipsa consuetudine”).⁶⁵

Such considerations seem to have paved the way for the idea that even the form of mental discourse itself might be influenced or affected by the structure of the spoken language we are accustomed to. Within the framework of scholastic logic the thesis that the structure of mental language may vary according to the different grammatical structures of the various national languages was already formulated in 1599 by Dominicus Bañez (1528-1604). According to him, whereas the simple

igitur vox exterior sensibilis habet quadruplicem comparationem: unam ad intentionem vocis interioris ad cuius similitudinem figuratur, aliam ad intellectum seu similitudinem rei, tertiam ad ipsum *sermonem interiorem complementem [complectentem?] tam speciem significabilem quam vocis intentionem*, quartam ad rem extra quae per vocem significatur intellectu movente. Respectu primi est signum naturale, quia omnis effectus naturaliter repraesentat illud cuius est effectus; sed respectu secundi, tertii et quarti est significativum ex institutione; sicut enim in voce interiori fit praecognitio vocis antequam fiat verbum mentale et deliberatur apud eam qua voce oporteat talem intellectum significari, ita vox exterior [60] sensibilis significabit illam speciem ex institutione facta apud animam deliberatione praecedente.” Cf. Meier-Oeser 1997: 71sq.; Panaccio 1999b; Panaccio 1999a: 170-76.

65. Johannes Baptista Giattini, *Logica*, p. 431: “advertendus est modus, quo pueri addiscunt primo voces tales cum existentia talium obiectorum, v.g. audiunt pueri primo vocem ‘mamma’ saepius cum ostensione Matris, et vocem ‘Tata’ cum ostensione Patris. Sic vocem pappae cum existentia talis cibi; hinc generantur in ipsi species complexae talium vocum simul et talium obiectorum ex ipsa consuetudine; unde existentibus talibus obiectis, ipsi etiam pueri incidunt movere labia, et instrumenta loquutionis, ad quam naturaliter inclinantur, et paulatim proferunt eas voces. Deinde ijdem pueri saepius experti sunt, ut cum audierint aliquam affirmationem, reperrint rem ita esse sicuti affirmabatur, v.g. matres dicentes ‘hoc est dulce’ et vere experti sunt dulcedinem, et sic de caeteris. Quare, paulatim ipsi assueverunt etiam affirmare quam cognoscebant, et iudicabant, hoc ita esse, et negare quam iudicabant non esse; et sic ex assidua consuetudine linguam discunt. Quare in pueris voces potius se habent, ut signa ex consuetudine, quam ut signa ad placitum; quia videlicet consuetudine experti sunt cum talibus vocibus stare tales conceptus.”

concepts that are the elements of mental language are the same for all men (*eidem apud omnes*), this does not hold in all cases on the level of mental compositions (*mentales compositiones*). For there is, as he claims using as an example the “lingua Vasconia” (Basque), a “mental phraseology” proper to each of the various languages and nations, and this results not only in different ways of speaking but also in different ways of conceiving the same truths.⁶⁶

Even if such explicit statements are rather rare, one is, I think, justified in saying that, in the seventeenth century, reflections on language become much less inclined towards developing speculative theories on “transidiomatic” mental language and its underlying grammatical rules than towards taking into account observations of the concrete use of conventional language.

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66. Cf. Dominicus Bañez, *Inst. min. dial.*, 25sq.: “... est observandum, easdem quidem res esse apud omnes, eosdemque rerum simplices conceptus, verumtamen non apud omnes nationes exercentur eodem modo compositiones mentales illorum conceptuum, sed sicut in vocibus differentia impositionis invenitur, sic etiam mentalium orationum compositio varia in diversis nationibus et linguis correspondet. Sunt enim propriae mentales phrases singulis nationibus et linguis, et differentes modi dicendi, et concipiendi easdem veritates. Haec doctrina hominibus in varijs linguis peritis facile persuadet. Imo et experientia constat ei qui in Vasconia lingua nutritus est in qua nullum verbum praeter sum, es, fui, et facio, facis invenitur declinabile: sed omnia alia verba sunt infinitivi modi. Unde quod nos latina phrasi dicimus ‘Petrus bene dormuit’, dicunt Vasconici in sua phrasi ‘Dormire bene fecit Petrus’. Hinc est ut difficillime aliarum linguarum phrases addiscant. Propter phrasim mentalium compositionum, quibus assueti sunt.”

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