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NOMINA ESSENTIANT RES

*в чест на проф. д.ф.н. Цочо Бояджиев
(по повод неговата 60-годишнина)*

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Сборникът се издава
с любезното спомоществование на

Фондация „Комунитас“
Философски факултет на СУ „Св. Климент Охридски“
Философска фондация „Минерва“
Фондация „Св. Дионисий Ареопагит“

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ISBN 978-954-321-905-6

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Предговор на съставителя

Детайлното проследяване на извършеното досега от Цочо Бояджиев в сферата на българската наука и култура изисква монографичен обем. Решилият да направи опит за кратко описание на стореното бива стъписан както от обема му, така и от неговата многоизмерност. Неговото говорене по необходимост ще остава фрагментарно.

Сред най-едрите фрагменти следва да се види академичното присъствие на професор Бояджиев. То започва да се забелязва осезателно в началото на 80-те години на миналия век и става незаобиколимо още с дебютната книга: *Неписаното учение на Платон* (1984). Тя веднага получава признание, но нейната продуктивност, струва ми се, остава недооценена и до днес. Книгата, от една страна, се вписва в една авторитетна традиция на интерпретиране на Платоновото учение, но дисидентствайки в самата тази парадигма. От друга страна, тя няма задача да даде „единственото меродавно тълкуване“ на Платоновата философия (каквото няма в природата), а да бъде „страна“ в една възможна „битка на интерпретациите“. Българската култура не прояви обаче потенциал за такава битка, а световното платонознание продължава да ѝ е известно най-вече по бледи слухове. Във всеки случай книгата си остава един от върховете на изследванията върху античната философия и култура в България.

Античната философия като феномен на културата (1990; второ изд. 1994; немско издание 1995), както и първата една трета от *Кръговрат на духа* (1998) свидетелстват за континуитета на този тип изследвания при Цочо Бояджиев. Един друг ранен текст обаче предметява за първи път онзи негов

ASSISTANCE, SERVICE AND
SUBALTERNATION: THEOLOGY,
PHILOSOPHY AND THE LIBERAL ARTS
IN THOMAS AQUINAS AND HENRY OF
GHENT

Pasquale Porro
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According to the well-known thesis suggested in different ways by Pierre Hadot, Juliusz Domański and Christoph Horn¹, philosophy, which was, in the Greek world, seen as a practice or a way of life, ceases to be such in the Middle Ages and becomes instead a theoretical discipline. Especially Hadot and Domański argue that such a transformation was produced mainly by the advent and spread of Christianity, which made philosophy superfluous as a source of happiness and means of earthly salvation, thus forcing it to become a mere discipline: in other words, a simple matter of

¹ See P. Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?*, Gallimard, Paris, 1995; Id., *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique*, nouv. éd., Albin Michel, Paris, 2002; J. Domański, *La philosophie, théorie ou manière de vivre? Les controverses de l'antiquité à la Renaissance* (Vestigia 18), avec une préface de Pierre Hadot, Éditions Universitaires, Fribourg / Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1996; C. Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst. Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern*, Beck, München, 1998.

study rather than an existential option. As a result of this transformation, philosophy assumed the same propaedeutic function with respect to the Christian faith that previously the liberal arts had with respect to philosophy. A Christian should be instructed in philosophy in order to be a good Christian (insofar as philosophy was intended as a tool for a deeper comprehension of the truths of faith, and not as a goal in itself), just as, in the pagan world, a philosopher should be instructed in the liberal arts in order to become a good philosopher. According to this reconstruction, the process would reach its climax in the Middle Ages, when philosophy was given a definitive ancillary role with respect to theology. Ever since then, philosophy has not changed its position, but only its master: today it is no longer theology, but, for instance, the so-called hard sciences, or technology.

Though it would be interesting to challenge this view as far as our time, and our academic role, are concerned, I shall confine myself to the Middle Ages, since this reconstruction, which undoubtedly offered a fresh interpretation of the meaning of philosophy in the ancient world, needs perhaps to be qualified with regard to medieval transformations. There is no doubt that, starting with the Church Fathers and during the Early Middle Ages, all secular knowledge was allocated in a subordinate and ancillary role with respect to theology, but the situation becomes much more complicated in the 13th century, when, after the (re-)introduction of Aristotle in the Latin West, theology began to be considered as a science, and as a science in the Aristotelian sense of the term, i.e. according to the criteria established by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics*. The phenomenon is of course well-known, and it has already been extensively investigated¹, yet it might be interesting to point out some aspects which are more directly related to our topic.

¹ See for instance M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie come science au XIII^e siècle*, Vrin, Paris, 1927, 1957; M. Olszewski (ed.), *What is Theology in the Middle Ages? Religious Cultures of Europe (11th–15th Centuries) as reflected in their Self-Understanding*, Aschendorff, Münster, 2007 (Archa verbi. Subsidia, 1); P. Porro, *La teologia a Parigi dopo Tommaso. Enrico di Gand, Egidio Romano, Goffredo di Fontaines*. – In: I. Biffi / O. Boulnois / J. Gayà Estelrich / R. Imbach / G. Laras / A. de Libera / P. Porro / F.-X. Putallaz, *Rinno-*

In the first place, it gradually becomes impossible to speak in a generic and indefinite way of a submission of secular or profane knowledge to Christian wisdom; rather, the Scholastic Masters are forced to interpret this kind of submission within the precise, technical framework of the relations between the sciences as elaborated by Aristotle. For example, can this kind of subordination be interpreted as a particular form of that 'subalternation' which Aristotle mentions in his *Posterior Analytics*? And if so, to what extent?

In the second place, after the reconstitution of a substantial philosophical library in the Latin West (thanks to the new translations from Arabic and Greek), secular knowledge ceases to be an undifferentiated corpus in itself. Philosophy, and in particular speculative philosophy, is increasingly recognized as something different from the liberal arts, and the well-known phenomenon of the transformation of the Faculty of Arts into a genuine Faculty of Philosophy (especially after the statutes of 1255, and independently of the persistence of the traditional name) bears witness to this tendency. Thus, we no longer have a two-terms relation (secular knowledge *vs.* Christian wisdom) but at least (and I stress: *at least*, and we'll see soon why) a three-terms relation: liberal arts – philosophy – Christian wisdom. Now, are the intrinsic relations between these terms somehow comparable? Can we say that the relation of the liberal arts to philosophy is identical to the relation of philosophy to Christian wisdom?

In the third and final place: insofar as theology constitutes itself as a new and independent science, the question can once again be posed, since we may ask whether theology, insofar as it is a human science, is in turn subordinated to prophetic revelation or, even more directly, to the science of God (and the Blessed). From a three-term relation, we pass now to a four-term relation. And once again, we could pose the same question: is this kind of subordination just a generic kind of submission, or a specific, technical, epistemological kind of subordination, that is, a kind of subalternation? Obviously, if we consider the latter issue, we are immediately induced to turn

vamento della „via antiqua“: La creatività tra il XIII e il XIV secolo, Jaca Book, Milano / Città Nuova, Roma, 2009 (Figure del pensiero medievale, 5), p. 165–262.

our attention to one of the most original, controversial (and perhaps bizarre), theses of Thomas Aquinas, i.e. that our theology is subalternated to the science of God and the Blessed. This peculiar debate on the status of our theology also casts some light on the first two issues mentioned above, that is, the specific way in which 13th century Masters of Theology consider the subordination of the liberal arts to philosophy, and of philosophy to theology. To keep together these three aspects, I shall refer here mainly to two of the most authoritative figures of the Parisian Faculty of Theology in the 13th century: Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent.

It is obvious that those who are interested in the history of the liberal arts in the 13th century usually pay particular attention to the transformations of the Parisian Faculty of Arts, and to the writings of the Masters of this Faculty. But some interesting material can also be found in the theological texts concerning the classification and division of the sciences. One such text is Aquinas' *Commentary* on Boethius' *De Trinitate*: a key-text, as is well-known, in understanding Aquinas' conception of first philosophy (or „philosophical theology“) and its distinction from Christian theology¹. But the same commentary, which deals extensively with the division of the

¹ Cf. M. Grabmann, *Die theologische Erkenntnis- und Einleitungslehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin auf Grund seiner Schrift «In Boethium De Trinitate»*, Paulusverlag, Freiburg, 1948, esp. pp. 14–15; S. Neumann, *Gegenstand und Methode der theoretischen Wissenschaften nach Thomas von Aquin auf Grund der Expositio super librum Boethii De Trinitate*, Aschendorff, Münster, 1965 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 41.2); L. Elders, *Faith and Science. An Introduction to St. Thomas' Aquinas Expositio in Boethii De Trinitate*, Herder, Roma, 1974; D.C. Hall, *The Trinity. An Analysis of St. Thomas Aquinas' Expositio of the De Trinitate of Boethius*, E.J. Brill, Leiden-New York-Köln, 1992 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 33); Tommaso d'Aquino, *Commenti a Boezio (Super Boetium De Trinitate. Expositio libri Boethii De ebdomadibus)*, introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di P. Porro, Bompiani, Milano, 2007 (cf. esp. the two appendices: 1. *Metafisica e teologia nella divisione delle scienze speculative del Super Boetium De Trinitate*, p. 467–526; 2. *Astrazione e separazione: Tommaso d'Aquino e la tradizione greco-araba*, p. 527–580).

theoretical sciences (qq. 5 and 6) also offers an important account of the 'theological', so to speak, interpretation of the relation between the liberal arts and philosophy. In art. 1 of q. 5, Aquinas considers whether the Boethian division of speculative science into natural, mathematical and divine is appropriate and exhaustive. The third initial opposing argument runs as follows:

Communiter diuiditur philosophia in septem artes liberales, inter quas neque naturalis neque diuina continetur, set sola rationalis et mathematica. Ergo naturalis et diuina non debuerunt poni partes speculatiue¹.

Aquinas' reply is unequivocal:

septem liberales artes non sufficienter diuidunt philosophiam theoreticam, set ideo, ut dicit Hugo de s. Victore in III sui Didascalicon, pretermisiss quibusdam aliis, septem connumerantur quia hiis primum erudiebantur qui philosophiam discere uolebant².

Thus, for Aquinas, there is no doubt that the liberal arts have only a propaedeutic role with respect to philosophy. Interestingly enough, Aquinas assumes that this view is shared both by philosophers, such as Aristotle himself and Averroes, and by Christian thinkers, such as Boethius and Hugh of St. Victor:

et ideo distinguntur in triuium et quadriuium, „eo quod hiis quasi quibusdam uis uia animus ad secreta philosophie introeat“. Et hoc etiam consonat uerbis Philosophi, qui dicit in II Metaphisice quod modus scientie debet queri ante scientias; et Commentator ibidem dicit quod logicam, que docet modum omnium scientiarum, debet quis addiscere ante omnes alias scientias, ad quam pertinet triuium; dicit etiam in VI Ethicorum quod mathematica potest sciri a pueris, non autem phisica, que experimentum requirit; et sic datur intelligi quod post logicam consequenter de-

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, cura et studio fratrum praedicatorum [= ed. leon.], Commissio Leonina, Roma / Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1992 (Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia, 50), q. 5, art. 1, p. 136, ll. 24–28.

² Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, art. 1, ad 3, ed. leon., p. 139, ll. 208–213.

bet mathematica addisci, ad quam pertinet quadriuium. Et ita his quasi quibusdam uis preparatur animus ad alias philosophicas disciplinas¹.

One might object that logic could be considered not only as a path to philosophy, but also as a part of philosophy, and not by chance logic was an essential part of the philosophical curriculum at the Faculty of Arts. Thomas had already answered this objection in his reply to the second initial opposing argument, by explicitly excluding logic from the sphere of the speculative sciences:

scientie speculatiue, ut patet in principio Metaphisice, sunt de illis quorum cognitio queritur propter se ipsa. Res autem de quibus est logica non queruntur ad cognoscendum propter se ipsas, set ut amminiculum quoddam ad alias scientias; et ideo logica non continetur sub speculatiua philosophia quasi principalis pars, set sicut quiddam reductum ad philosophiam speculatiuam prout ministrat speculationi sua instrumenta, scilicet sillogismos, et diffinitiones, et alia huiusmodi quibus in scientiis speculatiuis indigemus. Vnde secundum Boetium in Commento super Porphyrium, non tam est scientia quam scientie instrumentum².

Actually, one may cite other places in Aquinas' works where he calls logic a science, more than an art³, but, leaving aside this oscillation, it is important to note Aquinas' terminology in the passage quoted above: logic furnishes (*subministrat*) speculative thought with its instrument. In the successive classification proposed by Henry of Ghent, we should therefore consider logic as a science *instrumentaliter subministrativa*. We shall return to this point. But let us consider again, for the moment, Aquinas' reply to the third initial opposing argument, i.e. the justification he offers for excluding all liberal arts from the group of the speculative sciences. He adds another argument to this:

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, art. 1, ad 3, ed. leon., p. 139, ll. 213–229.

² Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, art. 1, ad 2, ed. leon., p. 139, ll. 193–207.

³ See for instance *In I Perih.*, lect. 1, n. 2; *In I Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, n. 2; *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 4, n. 576; 'art' is used in *In I Post. Anal.*, lect. 1, nn. 1–3.

Vel ideo hee inter ceteras scientias artes dicuntur, quia non solum habent cognitionem, set opus aliquod quod est immediate ipsius rationis, ut constructionem sillogismi uel orationem formare, numerare, mensurare, melodias formare et cursus siderum computare. Alie uero scientie uel non habent opus set cognitionem tantum, sicut scientia diuina et naturalis, unde nomen artis habere non possunt, cum ars dicatur ratio factiua, ut dicitur VI Metaphisice; uel habent opus corporale, sicut medicina, alchimia, et alie huiusmodi¹.

In this case, too, Aquinas' position is unequivocal: the liberal arts are halfway between the productive arts, which involve a bodily activity, and the pure theoretical sciences, which exclude any kind of work or result other than knowledge itself. That is, even though knowledge is the ultimate goal of the liberal arts, too, they always involve some kind of work, or production (rational work, or rational production, we might say) that does not occur in the pure speculative sciences.

Thus, according to Thomas, the liberal arts are inferior to the speculative sciences, i.e. to philosophy, because: a) they only have a propaedeutic function; b) they involve some kind of work or production (albeit aimed at knowledge). But is philosophy in itself, and above all first philosophy, the highest degree of human knowledge? The answer is obviously negative, and we find in the *Commentary* on Boethius' *De Trinitate* one of Aquinas' clearest discussions of this issue, that is, of the relation between first philosophy, or metaphysics, and Christian theology. Both sciences seem to deal with the same object, divine things. Nonetheless, they have a different approach, and they do not share the same position in the hierarchy of the sciences. In art. 2 of q. 2 – a text which parallels the famous text of *Summa contra gentiles*, I, c. 3 – Thomas states that:

diuinorum notitia dupliciter potest estimari: uno modo ex parte nostra, et sic nobis cognoscibilia non sunt nisi per res creatas, quarum cognitionem a sensu accipimus; alio modo ex natura ipsorum, et sic ipsa sunt ex se ipsis maxime cognoscibilia, et qua-

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5, art. 1, ad 3, ed. leon., p. 139–140, ll. 229–240.

muis secundum modum suum non cognoscantur a nobis, tamen a Deo cognoscuntur et a beatis secundum modum suum¹.

This leads to one of the most significant solutions adopted by Thomas in his *Commentary*, i.e. the duplication of divine science:

Et secundum hoc de diuinis duplex scientia habetur: una secundum modum nostrum, qui sensibilibus principia accipit ad notificandum diuina, et sic de diuinis philosophi scientiam tradiderunt, philosophiam primam scientiam diuinam dicentes; alia secundum modum ipsorum diuinorum, ut ipsa diuina secundum se ipsa capiantur².

The same duplication, as is well-known, is reaffirmed by Thomas in q. 5, art. 4 of his *Commentary*, where he states that there are two kinds of theology or divine science: one which deals with being *qua* being as its appropriate subject, and treats of divine things not as its subject, but as the principles of its subject (and this is the theology pursued by the philosophers, which is also called metaphysics); and one which investigates divine things for their own sake as its subject. Now, if we return to the above-mentioned passage, we cannot avoid noticing that the second way, i.e. the way of Christian theology, raises a problem: the nature of a science consists in this, that some conclusions are necessarily deduced from some principles, which should of course be already known, or at least more evident than the conclusions themselves. But this seems not to be the case with divine things. As a matter of fact, we do not possess a clear or perfect knowledge of the divine in itself in the present life. How then can theology, or Christian wisdom, claim to be a true science? Aquinas' solution is well-known: it is true that we have no access to the divine in itself, and to the way in which God knows himself, yet we participate somehow in this knowledge insofar as, through faith, we are able to grasp (or even *firmly* grasp) the divine Truth in itself, and for its own sake. Thus, faith becomes the necessary presupposition to make theology a true science: from the things we accept by

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 2, art. 2, ed. leon., p. 95, ll. 58–65.

² Ibid., 65–72.

faith we come to know other things, just as in every other science we draw conclusions from certain given principles. And Thomas concludes:

sic ipsa que fide tenemus sint nobis quasi principia in hac scientia, et alia quasi conclusiones. Ex quo patet quod hec scientia est altior illa scientia diuina quam philosophi tradiderunt, cum ex altioribus procedat principiis¹.

This conclusion appeals to the fact that the evidence of a science – as Thomas himself concedes – is always the result of the evidence of its principles. But can we really speak of evidence with respect to principles that are known not by understanding, or rational investigation, but only by faith? In fact, this objection is explicitly raised in the 7th of the initial opposing arguments:

Cuiuslibet scientie principium est intellectus, quia ex intellectu principiorum uenitur in scientiam conclusionum. Set in his que sunt fidei intellectus non est principium set finis, quia ut dicitur Ys. VII, „Nisi credideritis non intelligetis“. Ergo de diuinis que fidei sunt non potest esse scientia².

In his reply, Aquinas turns to the above-mentioned doctrine of subalternation³:

cuiuslibet scientie principium est intellectus semper quidem primum, set non semper proximum; immo aliquando est fides principium proximum scientie, sicut patet in scientiis subalternatis: quia earum conclusiones sicut ex proximo principio procedunt ex fide eorum que supponuntur a superiori scientia, set sicut a principio primo ab intellectu superioris scientis, qui de his creditis certitudinem per intellectum habet. Et similiter huius scientie principium proximum est fides, set primum est intellectus diuinus cui nos credimus; set finis fidei est nobis ut perueniamus ad

¹ Ibid., 83–88.

² Ibid., 34–40.

³ The doctrine of subalternation was already elaborated (and re-elaborated) by Aquinas in his *Commentary on the Sentences*; cf. A. Oliva, *Les débuts de l'enseignement de Thomas d'Aquin et sa conception de la sacra doctrina*, Vrin, Paris, 2006, esp. p. 139–158.

intelligendum que credimus, sicut si inferior sciens addiscat superioris scientis scientiam, et tunc fiet ei intellecta uel scita que prius erant tantummodo credita¹.

Christian theology is thus established as the highest science. In the following art. 3, Aquinas concedes that sacred doctrine, or the science of faith, may make use of philosophical reasonings and authorities in three different ways:

- first, in order to demonstrate the preambles of faith, i.e. all the truths about God which can be proved by means of natural reason;
- second, by throwing light on the contents of faith by analogies;
- third, in order to refute assertions contrary to faith, showing either that they are false or that they are not necessary².

This is a standard position in Aquinas, and it is not at all surprising. However, it gives rise to another epistemological problem, which is again expressed in one of the initial arguments: a science whatsoever does not proceed correctly, if it takes the principles of another, because, as Aristotle teaches, each science must proceed from its own principles. Now, if theology makes use of the teachings of philosophy, it seems to infringe upon this basic epistemological criterion. Aquinas' reply is once again particularly interesting:

scientie que habent ordinem ad inuicem hoc modo se habent quod una potest uti principiis alterius, sicut scientie posteriores

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 2, art. 2, ad 7, ed. leon., pp. 96–97, ll. 163–179.

² Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 2, art. 3, ed. leon., p. 99, ll. 148–161: „Sic ergo in sacra doctrina philosophia possumus tripliciter uti: primo ad demonstrandum ea que sunt preambula fidei, que necesse est in fide scire, ut ea que naturalibus rationibus de Deo probantur, ut Deum esse, Deum esse unum, et alia huiusmodi uel de Deo uel de creaturis in philosophia probata, que fides supponit; secundo ad notificandum per aliquas similitudines ea que sunt fidei, sicut Agustinus in libro De Trinitate utitur multis similitudinibus ex doctrinis philosophicis sumptis ad manifestandum trinitatem; tertio ad resistendum his que contra fidem dicuntur, siue ostendendo ea esse falsa, siue ostendendo ea non esse necessaria“.

utuntur principiis scientiarum priorum, siue sint superiores siue inferiores; unde metaphisica, que est omnibus superior, utitur his que in aliis scientiis sunt probata. Et similiter theologia, *cum omnes alie scientie sint huic quasi famulantes et preambule* in uia generationis quamuis dignitate posteriores, potest uti principiis omnium aliarum scientiarum [*emphasis added*]¹.

There at least two things to note in this passage. First, the case of theology is explained on the basis of the relation between metaphysics and the other philosophical disciplines: metaphysics precedes all other philosophical sciences, and yet is apprehended by us after all other disciplines. This seems to lead to a kind of vicious circle: metaphysics, or first philosophy, presupposes conclusions proved in other sciences, while the principles of the latter are proved by metaphysics itself. Thomas is well aware of this possible objection, which he rejects, with the help of Avicenna, in his reply to the arguments of q. 5, art. 1²: the principles that another science (such as natural philosophy) derives from metaphysics are not used to prove the conclusions which metaphysics takes from that science, and which are proved, in the latter, through other and self-evident principles. Analogously, metaphysics does not prove the principles it gives the other sciences by means of the conclusions it receives from these, but by other self-evident principles. Moreover, all the other sciences inferior to metaphysics prove their conclusions by means of demonstrations *quia*, i.e. based on effects; metaphysics, on the contrary, proves the same conclusions by means of demonstrations *propter quid*, i.e. on the basis of first causes. In this way, all the other sciences can contribute something to first philosophy, while the latter proves and explains their principles.

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 2, art. 3, ad 7, ed. leon., p. 100, ll. 223–233.

² Cf. J. F. Wippel, „Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna on the Relationship between First Philosophy and the Other Theoretical Sciences: A Note on Thomas's Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate, Q. 5, art. 1, ad 9“. In: *The Thomist*, 37 (1973), p. 133–154; then also in Id., *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, D.C., 1984 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 10), p. 37–53.

The second thing to note is the occurrence, in the above-mentioned passage, of the word *famulantes*. Steve Brown has already offered a short but extremely useful reconstruction of the use of the word *famulatus* (and its related forms) to indicate, in the Christian tradition, the ancillary role that philosophy should play with respect to Christian wisdom¹. This particular use was consecrated, so to speak, by Pope Gregory IX in his letter *Ab Egyptiis argentea vasa*, addressed to the Masters of the Parisian Faculty of Theology on 7 July 1228². The Pope accuses the Masters of being distracted by diverse and strange teachings, of putting the head where the tail should be and vice versa, and of obliging the queen to serve her handmaid (*ancille cogunt famulari reginam*), attributing to nature what should rather be attributed to grace.

By using the same verb *famulari*, Thomas thus complies with the standard position on the dominant role of theology. So, we find in Aquinas the quadripartite division mentioned above:

- at a first level, we find the liberal arts, which are propaedeutic to philosophy, and this applies in particular to logic, which – as we have seen – furnishes (*subministrat*) speculative thought with its instrument;
- at a second level, we find philosophy itself (and particularly first philosophy or metaphysics, which is the highest philosophical discipline): in its turn, philosophy must always be in the service of sacred doctrine, or theology;

¹ Cf. S. Brown, *Key Terms in Medieval Theological Vocabulary*. In: O. Weijers (éd.), *Méthodes et instruments du travail intellectuel au moyen âge. Études sur le vocabulaire*, Brepols, Turnhout, 1990 (Civica. Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du moyen âge, 3), pp. 82–96, esp. 93–96.

² Cf. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis [= CUP]*, ed. H. Denifle / É. Châtelain, Delalain, Paris, 1889–1897, repr. Culture et Civilisation, Bruxelles 1964, I (1889), n. 59, p. 114–116; esp. p. 115: „Cum enim theologiam secundum approbatas traditiones sanctorum exponere debeant, et non carnalibus armis, set Deo potentibus destruere omnem altitudinem extollentem se adversus scientiam Dei et captivum in obsequium Christi omnem reducere intellectum, ipsi doctrinis variis et peregrinis abducti redigunt caput in caudam et ancille cogunt famulari reginam, videlicet documentis terrenis celeste, quod est gratie tribuendo nature“.

- at a third level, we find our theology, i.e. our understanding of divine things in the present life, through the principles grasped by faith;
- finally, our theology is subalternated to the real highest science, i.e. the science of God and the Blessed, where the same principles are known in full evidence.

We could, of course, say that each of these levels, or steps, is somehow propaedeutic and subordinate to the next, yet this three-fold relation of subordination is expressed, in the three cases, with three different words: administering or assistance (*subministratio*), service (*famulatio*), subalternation (*subalternatio*). Do all these terms mean exactly the same thing? Does, for instance, the typically Christian and theological expression *famulatio* coincide exactly with the Aristotelian meaning of subalternation? Aquinas does not seem to deal explicitly with such a question. But some Thomists do. John of Paris, for instance, in the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Sentences* states explicitly that *famulatio* and *subalternatio* are one and the same:

Et si dicatur, quod verum est, quod istae scientiae [scil. frenifactiva, equestris, militaris] sibi invicem famulantur, ut ibidem [scil. *I^o Ethicorum*] dicit Philosophus, dico quod pro eodem habeo, quia non intelligo per istum famulatum aliquid aliud quam rationem subalternantis et subalternati¹.

On the other hand, other authoritative Masters hold the contrary. This is, for instance, the case of Robert Kilwardby², and above all, Henry of Ghent, who not by chance is the direct target of John of Paris' criticism. Let's then move on to consider Henry's position.

¹ Ioannes Parisiensis [Quidort], *In I Sent. (Reportatio)*, q. 3 (*Utrum ista scientia sit subalternata scientiae beatorum et Dei*), ed. J.-P. Müller, Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, Roma / Herder, Roma, 1961 (*Studia Anselmiana*, 47), p. 12, ll. 38–41.

² Cf. Robertus Kilwardby, *In I Sent.*, q. 14 (*de comparatione huius scientiae ad alias, an contineatur in illis, aut sit continens eas, aut neutro modo*), ed. J. Schneider, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München, 1986, p. 35, ll. 12–13: „Non est hic continentia subalternationis, sed continentia principalitatis et famulatus est hic“.

In q. 1 of art. 7 of his *Summa*¹, Henry expounds a detailed classification of the sciences, grounded on a twofold criterion:

identity or diversity of the subject (*de eodem / non de eodem*);

identity or diversity of the way of consideration (*eodem modo / non eodem modo*)².

Two sciences do not concern the same subject (*non de eodem*), either because they possess two completely distinct subjects, or because they share only in part the same subject. In the first of these two cases, the two subjects may not only be distinct, but also completely devoid of any reciprocal connection: we thus have two completely different and separate (*diversae*) sciences, such as mathematics (which deals with universal, immobile and abstract things) and moral science (which deals with particular and mobile things, insofar as they are operable by man). However, though possessing a distinct subject, two sciences can still have some form of connection, either because one provides the other with what it determines, or because one receives from the other what is determined by the latter (or even begs for – *mendicat* – what is determined by the other).

The first type of connection is that which ties, in Henry's words, a *scientia subministrativa* to a *scientia usualis*. The first prearranges some elements which are then used by the latter, and these elements may consist either in matter or in specific tools. Accordingly, Henry distinguishes between *scientiae materialiter subministrativae* and

¹ Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa (Quaestiones ordinariae)*, art. 7, q. 1 (*Utrum theologia sit scientia distincta ab aliis scientiis*), ed. Parisiis 1520, 2 voll. [= Badius]; repr. The Franciscan Institute-St. Bonaventure, N.Y. / E. Nauwelaerts-Louvain / F. Schöningh-Paderborn, 1953, ff. 47rA–48vH.

² Cf. F. Brandariz, „La teología en relación con la demás ciencias según Enrique de Gante“, in *Miscelanea Comillas*, 19, 1953, p. 165–204; S.F. Brown, „Henry of Ghent's 'De reductione artium ad theologiam'“, in D.M. Gallagher (ed.), *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 1994 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 28), p. 194–206; P. Porro, *La teologia a Parigi dopo Tommaso. Enrico di Gand, Egidio Romano, Goffredo di Fontaines* cit. (p. 260, note 1), esp. p. 214–217.

scientiae instrumentaliter subministrativae. Examples of the first type are the *ars filitiva* (the art of preparing yarns) with respect to the art of weaving, and the *ars aeris malleativa* (the art of working copper or bronze) with the respect to the art of the blacksmith. *Instrumentaliter subministrativae* are, on the other hand, the art of making reeds with respect to the art of weaving, and the art of building ships with respect to nautical art, or navigation. If we consider the relation between theology and all the other sciences from this point of view, we have to say that theology always plays the role of *scientia usualis*, while all other sciences (or arts) serve as *scientiae subministrativae*, either in an instrumental sense (as in the case of the *scientiae rationales*), or in a material sense (as in the case of the *scientiae reales*).

The second form of connection is what we have when one science begs for what is determined by another science, in order to legitimate its own principles and conclusions. This is, for instance, what happens between geometry and arithmetic: the first, which concerns what is less simple and certain, must necessarily appeal to the principles and conclusions of the second (which concerns what is more simple and certain) in order to prove and legitimate its conclusions.

Two sciences can have only a partially distinct subject (*partim de eodem, partim de diverso*), when one science possesses the same subject as the other, but with some determination which contracts or limits it. If this determination is essential, it gives rise either to the relation between one total science and more partial sciences, or to the relation between one universal science and more particular sciences. These two different kinds of relation must not be confused. *Scientia totalis* is that which, though possessing a proper subject, results only from the composition of a plurality of partial sciences, without having a specific *modus considerandi*. An example is offered by natural science, the subject of which is represented by the mobile body (*simpliciter*); however, natural science, as such, does not possess a way of considering which is independent of that of the different partial sciences (physics, cosmology, etc.) of which it is composed. All these partial sciences concern the same subject as the total science, that is, the mobile body, but under a given determination. Universal science is, on the other hand, that which concerns a

general subject, and investigates it independently of the particular sciences, i.e. leaving aside the different determinations under which each particular science considers the same subject. For example, metaphysics concerns, in an autonomous way, being *qua* being and all the properties which belong to it, while the other philosophical disciplines only deal with being as determined or qualified in a given way.

The determination, or contraction, which limits the subject of an inferior science may not be essential, but accidental. But here it is necessary to make another distinction, because the inferior science can consider the subject of the superior science *ratione ipsius determinationis* or *ratione eius cui additur determinatio*. In the first case, two or more sciences are coordinated (*coordinatae*) when the determination is caused by the subject itself, though in an indirect or improper way. This kind of relation exists between natural science and medicine: they are in actual fact different sciences, but they are somehow coordinated because the mobile body as such (*simpliciter*) is the cause of the mobile body as healthy. If, on the contrary, the subject is not the cause of the accidental determination, the sciences are, according to Henry's terminology, disparate (*disparatae*). The example adduced by Henry is rather abstract: *scientiae disparatae* are, for instance, the science which considers a surface as such and the science which considers a surface insofar as it is white (if such a science ever existed!). The surface in itself is in no way the cause or principle of the whiteness. If the accidental determination depends on the subject itself (*ratione eius cui additur determinatio* – the second of the two cases mentioned above), two sciences coincide with respect to the subject, but differ (and therefore, according to Henry's classification, are *alterae*) on the basis of the additional determination, which introduces a form of subalternation between them.

Let's now consider the second main ramification of the whole classification proposed by Henry (*eodem modo / non eodem modo*). Here again we can make an initial distinction between those sciences which have a completely different *modus considerandi*, and those sciences which possess a way of considering which is partly identical and partly different. If the difference in the way of considering is caused by the things themselves, then the sciences are com-

pletely different (*diversae*), such as the moral sciences with respect to all the other sciences. But if we pay attention only to the way of considering, we can point out three main aspects:

- *ad aliud*;
- *per aliud*;
- *secundum aliud*.

In the first of these three cases (*ad aliud*), the difference concerns the goal or aim: for example, both the geometrician and the carpenter deal with the right angle, but for a completely different aim. In the second case (*per aliud*), the difference is caused by the principles used in the demonstrations: for example, both natural science and geometry prove that the earth is a sphere, but on the basis of totally different principles. In the third case (*secundum aliud*), two sciences consider the same thing under different aspects: for example, metaphysics considers being *qua* being, and natural science being *qua* mobile.

If, finally, the way of considering is partly identical, partly different, we have one of the four kinds of subalternation, which we shall consider shortly.

But let's first summarize the sense of this detailed (perhaps too detailed!) classification. We must remember that Henry's aim, in this context, is to establish the relation of theology to all the other sciences. Now, if we consider the first main ramification of the division (that concerning the identity or diversity of the subject), we can say, in the affirmative, that theology is a *scientia usualis* (while all the other sciences refer to it as *scientiae subministrativae*), a *scientia universalis*, and a *scientia subalternans*, while in the negative we can say that theology is neither a *scientia totalis*, nor a *scientia disparata*, nor a *scientia coordinata*. If, on the contrary, we focus our attention on the second ramification (that concerning the *modus considerandi*), we can say that theology differs from every other science in its aim (unlike the other sciences, theology does not consider things with respect to their quiddity, but with respect to the Divine Being on which they depend), in its principles (while all philosophical disciplines consider proximate causes and principles, only theology considers the First Cause) and in the aspect under which it considers its subject (while philosophy considers God

beginning from His creatures, theology considers God beginning from His personal properties).

We have thus seen that theology is, in certain respects, a subalternating science. We may now ask two different questions:

what kind of subalternation is here at stake?

and is theology in turn subalternated to a superior science (the science of God and the Blessed), as suggested by Thomas Aquinas?

To try to answer these two questions let's consider briefly the main features of Henry's doctrine of subalternation¹.

Subalternare means for Henry *sub se alterum tenere*; *subalternatio* can consequently be paraphrased as *unius sub altero detentio*. In order to have a true relation of subalternation, two sciences must have the same subject (at least partly) yet a different way of considering. This difference consists, more precisely, in the distinction between *quia*-knowledge and *propter quid*-knowledge: in the latter, we know something through its causes, and we know it *a priori*, while in the former something is presupposed insofar as it is known through its causes by another science, or is known only *a posteriori* through its effects. The identity of the subject is here crucial: in other words, if *quia*- and *propter quid*-knowledge do not concern one and the same thing, we cannot not really speak of subalternation. The identity of the subject is thus the material principle of every relation of subalternation, while the different ways of considering represent its formal principles. Now, according to Henry, there are four, and only four, kinds of subalternation, which he derives from the examples adduced by Aristotle in his *Posterior Analytics*. The first two occur when two sciences consider one and the same subject: the difference between them then depends either on the fact that the first knows through reasoning and causes (*per rationem et causam*) what the second knows only through the senses and ex-

perience (*per sensum et experientiam*), or on the fact that the first knows in a speculative way what the second knows in an operative way. An example of the first of these two cases is represented by the relation between astrology and the art of navigation (which Henry calls here, following the *Aristoteles Latinus*, *apparentia*): both sciences take into consideration the same thing, i.e. the conjunctions of the stars as signs of calm or future storms, yet the astrologer knows these conjunctions *a priori* and *per causas* (*propter quid*), the sailor through senses and experience (*quia*). The second type of subalternation is, for instance, that between stereometry (as a part of geometry) and the science or art of building: both know how to build a solid, the first by knowing the causes, the second only on the basis of working practice.

The other two kinds of subalternation occur when one science considers its subject in an absolute way, while the other considers the same subject under a given contraction or determination (always with respect to what is determined, and not to the determination itself, otherwise, as we have seen in the above classification, the two sciences would be completely different and separate). We can subdivide this ramification by considering a formal determination and a material determination. The third kind of subalternation is that between altimetry (that part of geometry which, according to Henry, deals with the line as such) and perspective or optics (the science of the visual line): the contraction of the subject (the line, in both cases) is here purely formal. The fourth kind is that between arithmetic (which deals with numbers as such) and music (which deals with numbers *qua* 'sonorous', i.e. with numbers existing in sounds, which thus represent the material *substratum* of numbers themselves). In both cases, the first science knows the *propter quid* of what the second knows only *quia*.

On the basis of this distinction, we are now in the position to indicate in what way theology is a subalternating science with respect to all the other sciences. We can immediately exclude the third and fourth kind: in both these cases, as we have seen, the subalternated science considers the same subject as the subalternating science, with the addition of a given extrinsic determination or contraction, whereas it is impossible for God to receive such a determination or contraction. What remains is that theology is a subalternating sci-

¹ Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa (Quaestiones ordinariae)*, art. 7, q. 5 (*Utrum [theologia] subalternetur alicui aliarum [scientiarum]*), ed. Badius, ff. 53rA–54vK; P. Porro, *La teologia a Parigi dopo Tommaso. Enrico di Gand, Egidio Romano, Goffredo di Fontaines* cit. (p. 260, note 1), esp. p. 217–222.

ence according to the first and second kind: since theology knows (*propter quid*) and teaches the causes and the goal of every existing being, it subalternates every speculative and operative science, in the same way that astrology subalternates the art of navigation. Analogously, theology subalternates to itself all practical and manual sciences in the same way that stereometry subalternates the art of building.

So far, we have answered the first of the two questions posed above: according to Henry, there is no doubt, as he clearly states in art. 7 of his *Summa*, that all the other sciences are in a relation of service and assistance to theology. But can we also say that all the other sciences are subalternated to theology? The answer is both yes and no, because it's necessary to specify which form of subalternation we are talking about. In other words, it is not true, for Henry, that all the other sciences are, in every respect, subalternated to theology. Rather, it is correct to say that they are subalternated only according the first and second mode, as distinguished by Aristotle. If we go back to Aquinas' *Commentary* on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, and to the *Summa theologiae*, we do not find such a distinction. On the contrary, Thomas seems to appeal to something which Henry explicitly excludes, that is, the fact that the

in scientiis subalternatis supponuntur et creduntur aliqua a scientiis superioribus, et illa non sunt per se nota nisi superioribus scientibus¹.

As a matter of fact, this is true only for the third and fourth mode of subalternation, i.e. for the two modes which Henry refuses to apply to the relation between theology and all the other sciences. If we consider the first two modes of subalternation – those admitted by Henry with respect to theology – then it's not necessary that the subalternated science use something that has been determined in the subalternating science. As we have seen, Henry unequivocally stresses, on the contrary, that the essential feature of each kind of subalternation is the fact that the subalternating science gives the

¹ Thomas de Aquino, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 2, art. 2, ad 5, ed. leon., p. 96, ll. 145–147.

'why' (*propter quid*) of that which the subalternated science gives the 'that' (*quia*).

And it is precisely this same characteristic that leads Henry to reject the other main thesis of Aquinas, i.e. that our theology is subalternated to the science of God (and here we come to the second of the questions posed above). In fact, if the science of God were a subalternating science, it would know its contents *propter quid*, i.e. through their causes. But this is impossible in the case of God, who is of course uncaused (not to mention the fact that a *propter quid* knowledge is a kind of discursive knowledge, and God's simplicity excludes, in and of itself, any kind of discursive knowledge). The fact that the science of God is much clearer and more evident than our theology does not suffice to make the latter a science which is subalternated to the former: the different degree of evidence concerning the same subject is not the criterion indicated by Aristotle to identify a relation of subalternation. The solution adopted by Thomas Aquinas and, after him, by Giles of Rome is thus, for Henry, the result of a complete misunderstanding of Aristotelian doctrine:

Ista positio ex simplicitate et ignorantia naturae subalternationis venit. In subalternatione enim, ut dictum est supra, hoc est per se et essenziale, quod scientia subalternans dicat *propter quid* de quo subalternata dicit *quia*. Nunc autem principia theologiae, cum sint de omnino et simpliciter primis, *propter quid* sciri non possunt in quacumque scientia, quia cognitio *propter quid* semper est per prius et notius. Licet ergo principia theologiae sciantur clarius in scientia superiori, *propter quid* tamen non plus sciuntur in illa scientia quam in ista, immo multo minus, quia scientia Dei et beatorum discursiva non est a primo in postremum per medium sicut est nostra [...]. Non est autem scientia *propter quid* nisi per medium discursus. Notum ergo et non notum non faciunt distinctionem scientiae a scientia, ut subalternantis a subalternata, sed quod id quod solum notum est *quia est* in una scientia, notum est *propter quid* in alia¹.

¹ Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa*, art. 7, q. 5, ed. Badius, I, f. 53vE.

„This position arises from a simplistic view and ignorance of the nature of subalternation“: though the immediate and direct target of this harsh judgement is very likely Giles of Rome¹, it also represents, without any doubt, one of the most severe attacks by Henry against Thomas Aquinas. Interestingly enough, Henry, who is usually considered an ‘Augustinian’ thinker, is not reproaching Aquinas for following Aristotle too closely, but for being unfaithful to, or even ‘ignorant’ of Aristotle. Undoubtedly, Henry claims to be, on this particular issue, much more Aristotelian than Thomas.

And this allows me to arrive at my brief conclusion. As mentioned at the beginning, there is no doubt that, in the Christian system of the sciences, philosophy is collocated in a subordinate role with respect to theology (and that the liberal arts are thereby allocated an even lower position). But the debate between Henry and Thomas which I have tried to sketch here shows something more: both Thomas and Henry, as we have seen, appeal to Aristotle in order to explain the scientific status of theology, and its relation to all the other sciences. Now, precisely the fact that Christian wisdom, or theology, in the process of its constitution as a science – and as the highest science – is forced to submit itself to the epistemological criteria established by Aristotle, paradoxically reveals a certain superiority of philosophy (as epistemology) with respect to theology. But this means that, contrary to the hypothesis maintained by Hadot and Domański, the claimed reduction of philosophy to a discipline or a science is not just an effect of the affirmation of theology, but is an epistemological process rooted in philosophy itself,

¹ Cf. P. Porro, *La teologia a Parigi dopo Tommaso. Enrico di Gand, Egidio Romano, Goffredo di Fontaines* cit. (p. 260, note 1), esp. p. 237–239; on the reaction of the early Thomistic school against Henry’s criticism see S.F. Brown, *Henry of Ghent’s Critique of Aquinas’ Subalternation Theory and the Early Thomistic Response*. – In: R. Työrinoja, A. Inkeri Lehtinen, D. Føllesdal (eds.), *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy*. Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Medieval Philosophy (S.I.E.P.M.), Helsinki, 24–29 August 1987, vol. iii, The Finnish Society for Missiology and Ecumenics, Helsinki, 1990 (Annals of the Finnish Society for Missiology and Ecumenics, 55), 337–345.

and even capable of transforming, in turn, the very same Christian wisdom into a real science¹.

¹ This contribution is the partial result of the research carried out in the project *Filosofia e teologia nel Medioevo: modelli epistemologici e implicazioni antropologiche* (Cofin/Prin 2009) and, as far as the travel costs are concerned, the InterLink Project *Soggetto e statuto della filosofia nel Medioevo. Nuove prospettive di ricerca nell’edizione critica dei testi e nelle metodologie di indagine storiografica* (MIUR – Programmi per l’incentivazione del processo di internazionalizzazione del sistema universitario, D.M. 5 agosto 2004 n. 262, art. 23; Bando InterLink 2004–2006). I take this opportunity to say that it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with Prof. Tzotcho Boiadjiev during the above-mentioned InterLink project, profiting from his knowledge, generosity and humanity. I am grateful to Lisa Adams for her revision and improvement of my English text.