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Scotus and the Scotist school

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1. Introduction

Medieval philosophy — I restrict myself here to the period from 1250 onward — was pre-eminently institutional in character. Philosophical reflection was carried out within the institutional framework of education at universities and monastic *studia*. The way in which the educational system was organized had a deep influence on the way philosophy was shaped. I want to mention two aspects here.¹ First, from the middle of the thirteenth century onward, medieval education was based largely on a relatively fixed corpus of texts, which in philosophy consisted mainly of Aristotle's works, and in theology of Lombard's *Sentences* and the Bible. Second, the works in this fixed corpus were read and discussed in terms of certain standard procedures and stock concepts, which most often derived from that same corpus or from a select group of acclaimed interpreters. The result was a profound uniformity in sources, procedures, and organization of the material, which shaped subsequent philosophical and theological traditions. The second point is of particular interest here.

In spite of this common background, these traditions differed in many respects: Each developed its own reading of the texts from the standard corpus. Similarly, the same

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¹ On these aspects see A. Kenny and J. Pinborg, 'Medieval Philosophical Literature', in N. Kretzmann a.o. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1982, 11-42, and M.J.F.M. Hoenen a.o. (eds.), *Philosophy and Learning. Universities in the Middle Ages*, Leiden 1995.

problems were treated in different ways and received different solutions. These differences articulated themselves in medieval thought in the form of philosophical schools, the best-known of which are Thomism, Scotism, Albertism, and nominalism. Each school had its characteristic way of analyzing and commenting on the fixed corpus of texts, based on the writings of its protagonist, on whose interpretation of the texts the school relied.²

Scotism claims a special place among medieval schools of philosophy, in that it was not a school in the normal sense of the word. Thomism, for example, originated from the desire to strengthen the coherence of the Dominican order, while Albertism in its later development was able to establish itself by virtue of its connection to education at the so-called *bursae*.³ Scotism, by contrast, emerged and established itself more or less spontaneously, having its origins in the efforts of individuals rather than in the promptings of ecclesiastical or educational institutions.⁴

As a result, the Scotist tradition was much less clearly monolithic in character than Thomism and Albertism. Among individual Scotists there were obvious similarities, but also significant differences. Unity and difference in the Scotist tradition is the focus of this paper. I shall consider both the rise of Scotism in the early fourteenth century, and Scotism as it figured in the debates between philosophical schools in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, addressing the following points: 1. the typical aspects of the school, 2. the differences between individual Scotists, 3. the school's self-image, and 4. the historical significance of Scotism.

2. *Typical aspects of Scotism*

Duns Scotus became the model for a number of thinkers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As was said above, this was not because the Franciscan order, to which he belonged, officially based its educational program on his views, as happened in other schools. The Dominicans, for example, were required to follow Thomas Aquinas in their

² On the medieval schools of thought, see W.J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England*, Princeton, N.J. 1987; Z. Kaluza, *Les querelles doctrinales à Paris. Nominalistes et realistes aux confins du XIVe et du XVe siècles*, Bergamo 1988, and M.J.F.M. Hoenen, 'Late Medieval Schools of Thought in the Mirror of University Textbooks. The *Promptuarium Argumentorum* (Cologne 1492)', in M.J.F.M. Hoenen a.o. (eds.), *Philosophy and Learning (...)*, 329-369.

³ The development of early Thomism is discussed in F.J. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School*, Dubuque, Iowa 1964. Information on Albertism and its connection to the *bursae* is given in G.-R. Tewes, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Cologne 1993.

⁴ C. Bérubé, 'La première école scotiste', in Z. Kaluza and P. Vignaux (eds.), *Preuve et raisons à l'université de Paris. Logique, ontologie et théologie au XIVe siècle*, Paris 1984, 9-24, and L. Honnefelder, 'Scotus und der Scotismus. Ein Beitrag zur Bedeutung der Schulbildung in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie', in M.J.F.M. Hoenen a.o. (eds.), *Philosophy and Learning (...)*, 249-262.

lectures, and the Austin friars were bound to base themselves on Giles of Rome.⁵ In the case of Scotus, it was rather the sheer conceptual force of his work that was responsible for the emergence of a school. But on what was this conceptual attraction based? To be more precise about this, I want to consider some of the earliest criticism directed against Scotus, and find out what his contemporaries perceived as his most characteristic traits.

The earliest reactions to Scotus have been preserved in a number of works, of which the most important are those of Thomas of Sutton and the anonymous *Liber propugnatorius*. As is clear from these works, Scotus's critics tended to concentrate on two issues, namely, his use of the formal distinction and his so-called doctrine of stages.

Scotus made frequent use of the formal distinction in his discussion of the divine attributes. The question for him was how attributes applied to God, such as 'knowledge', 'will', 'wisdom' and 'goodness', could exist in God independently of human thought and without impugning divine unity. Scotus offered the following solution: All perfections, therefore all the divine attributes, possess an irreducible quiddity of their own. The distinction between these quiddities is not caused by any intellect, but exists *ex natura rei*, which means that it follows from the nature of the quiddities themselves.⁶ The difference between the attributes leaves God's unity intact, for the attributes exist in God in an infinite manner and are therefore identical, as nothing infinite can contain any potentiality. For this reason 'wisdom' and 'goodness' can be predicated of one another, and thus can belong to the same thing even though they are formally distinct.⁷ With his notion of a formal distinction, Scotus tried to solve the puzzle of how in something that is really one, such as divine essence, we may distinguish aspects that are independent of the human intellect.⁸

The criticism raised by the Thomist Thomas of Sutton concentrated specifically on the claim that the attributes were distinct *ex natura rei*. Sutton admitted only two basic types of difference, namely, conceptual differences dependent on the human intellect, and real differences independent of man. All differences that are not made by the human intellect are real — hence they can never form a real unity. Scotus's claim that the distinction between the attributes in God was independent of human thought, therefore, implied that God was really composite.⁹ Similar criticism was raised in the *Liber propugnatorius*,

⁵ W.J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars* (...), 175-178. On the intellectual history of the Augustinian order, see A. Zumkeller, 'Die Augustinerschule des Mittelalters. Vertreter und philosophisch-theologische Lehre', *Analecta Augustiniana*, 27 (1964), 167-262.

⁶ John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1, dist. 8, 1, q. 4, n. 193 (ed. Vaticana IV, 262).

⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 215, 274f.

⁸ Classical studies on the formal distinction are M.J. Grajewski, *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus. A Study in Metaphysics*, Washington, D.C. 1944, and A.B. Wolter, 'The Formal Distinction', in J.K. Ryan and B.M. Bonansea (eds.), *John Duns Scotus. 1265-1965*, Washington, D.C. 1965, 45-60.

⁹ Thomas of Sutton, *Quodlibeta* III, q. 1 (ed. M. Schmaus and M. González-Haba, Munich 1969, 340). For a discussion of Thomas of Sutton's view on the formal distinction, see Thomas of Sutton, *Contra Quodlibet Iohannis Duns Scoti* (ed. J. Schneider, Munich 1978, 21-56, esp. 37 and 40).

a treatise whose author also belonged to the Thomist school: The formal distinction between the attributes contradicted God's unity. The basis for this distinction, so the author concluded, cannot possibly lie in God but must be derived from creation, from which it was attributed to God by man in the form of a conceptual distinction.¹⁰

Sutton's remark that there were only two basic types of difference, real and conceptual, was a point that was made time and again by Scotus's critics, not only by Thomists but also by William of Ockham and others: They all denied the possibility of a middle course between real and conceptual distinctions. According to them, the order of concepts in the mind was not the same as the order of things in reality. They charged that this was what, in effect, Scotus had claimed by introducing the formal distinction, positing a real foundation in God of the distinction between the concepts (quiddities) commonly used in speaking about God.¹¹

The second of Scotus's controversial claims, the so-called doctrine of stages, is related to the formal distinction and rests on the same assumption that the order of thought equals the order of things. One application of this doctrine was the proof of divine omnipotence. Here Scotus raised the question whether God's infinite power could be derived from God's nature. Scotus believed that this was indeed possible without violating divine unity. If God's nature and God's power really were distinct, so he argued, then they would be in a certain order, for God's nature was prior to his power. Now, this order always would remain and was duly to be observed by our knowledge, even if — as in the case of God — divine nature and divine power belonged to the same thing and therefore really coincided. Hence, divine omnipotence could be derived from something prior, that is to say, from divine nature.¹²

This second doctrine was criticized in the same way as was the formal distinction, namely, by pointing out that it threatened God's unity. Opponents argued that the order of concepts in thought had no intrinsic connection to the real order of things designated by these concepts. Thus Ockham, in his criticism of the theory of stages, pointed out that in

¹⁰ *Liber propugnatorius super primum Sententiarum contra Johannem Scotum* 1, dist. 8, q. 5, Venice 1523 (reprint Frankfurt am Main 1966), fols. 70vb-72vb. On the (unknown) author of this treatise, see the introduction to Thomas of Sutton, *Quaestiones ordinariae* (ed. J.H.J. Schneider, Munich 1977, 63*-66*).

¹¹ William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio* 1, dist. 2, q. 1 (*Opera Theologica* II, ed. S. Brown and G. Gál, 14-17), and q. 3 (*Opera Theologica* II, 75-79). Criticism of the formal distinction is also to be found in Adam Wodeham, *Lectura Oxoniensis* I, dist. 6, q. 1 (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine 915, fol. 72ra-rb; id., *Lectura secunda in librum primum Sententiarum* I, dist. 6, q. 1 (*Opera Theologica*, ed. G. Gál and R. Wood, II, 278-312), and Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum* 1, dist. 8, q. 1, a. 1 (ed. D. Trapp a.o., vol. 2, Berlin 1982, 29-41).

¹² Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, q. 7, n. 5, Paris 1895 (ed. L. Vivès XXV, 287a). See also id., *God and Creatures. The Quodlibetal Questions*, transl. F. Alluntis and A.B. Wolter, Princeton, N.J. 1975, q. 7, a. 2, n. 7.16, 164f.

reality man and whiteness were related as subject and accident, whereas the relation between the concepts 'man' and 'whiteness' in thought was quite different.¹³

Scotism thus touched on the age-old philosophical puzzle of the relation between being and thought. Another early-fourteenth-century example: In his commentary on the *Sentences*, the Franciscan Walter Chatton discussed Ockham's criticism of Scotus in a section on whether the actual order of distinct things was retained in the conceptual order if these things were considered as merely conceptually distinct.¹⁴

The above considerations give us reason to believe that the formal distinction and the theory of stages were seen as typical of Scotus by his contemporaries. They stirred the philosophical community as much as they did because they flew in the face of a widespread and fundamental belief, namely, that there is no necessary correspondence between the order of thought and the order of being.¹⁵

That these two points have indeed been responsible for determining the school's unity 'from within', may be gathered from a disputation between Francis of Mayronnes and Pierre Roger, which took place at the University of Paris in 1320-1321. In this dispute, Pierre Roger launched a harsh attack on the formal distinction and on the theory of stages. What is especially important about this debate is that the participants did not act as mere individuals but as representatives of schools (*scolae*), one affiliating himself with Thomas Aquinas (Pierre Roger), the other with Duns Scotus (Francis of Mayronnes).¹⁶

The discussion so far has been concerned with the Scotist school in the first half of the fourteenth century, that is, with the earliest stages in the development of Scotism. A prominent part was played by the formal distinction and by the doctrine of stages. Much the same is true of Scotism in its later stages. Two examples may illustrate this point.

In the work of John Gerson, especially in the *Notulae*, the author attacked the view of the so-called 'formalizantes', who contended that there were things in God of which one was not *ex parte rei* identical with the other. Gerson's criticism was aimed in particular at John of Ripa, who followed the Scotist line on this point. According to Gerson, the view

¹³ William of Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio 1, Prologus*, q. 2 (Opera theologica 1, ed. G. Gál and S. Brown, 121). The theory of stages was discussed in Oxford as early as 1314, see G.J. Etzkorn, 'Codex Merton 284: Evidence of Ockham's Early Influence in Oxford', in A. Hudson and M. Wilks (eds.), *From Ockham to Wyclif*, Oxford 1987, 32f.

¹⁴ Walter Chatton, *Reportatio et Lectura super Sententias: Collatio ad Librum Primum et Prologus* (ed. J.C. Wey, Toronto, Ontario 1989, 183-188): Secundus articulus principalis quaestionis huius est videre quomodo debeat intelligi illa propositio 'quemcumque ordinem realem habent aliqua ubi distinguuntur realiter, talem habent secundum rationem ubi distinguuntur ratione'.

¹⁵ This is also the believe of Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 3, ad 1, Rome 1888 (ed. Leonina IV, 40b): Quod ergo dicitur deitas vel vita, vel aliquid huiusmodi, esse in Deo, referendum est ad diversitatem quae est in acceptione intellectus nostri; et non ad aliquam diversitatem rei.

¹⁶ François de Meyronnes - Pierre Roger. *Disputatio (1320-1321)*, ed. J. Barbet, Paris 1961. On the debate between the schools see also J. Barbet, 'Un témoin de la discussion entre les écoles scotiste et thomiste selon François de Meyronnes', *De doctrina Iohannis Duns Scoti* (ed. Commissio Scotistica), Rome 1968, 21-33, and L. Honnefelder, 'Scotus und der Scotismus (...)', 252-255.

he criticized entailed that there were differences in God independent of human thought.¹⁷ Gerson thus effectively re-enacted the earlier objections raised against Scotus by Thomas of Sutton and the *Liber propugnatorius*.

Another witness to the fact that also in its later stages Scotism was marked by the same views is the Venetian printed edition of 1520 of the commentary on the *Sentences* by Francis of Mayronnes, which contains a large number of glosses from the hand of its editor, the Franciscan Mauritius de Hibernia. These glosses often indicate the points on which Mayronnes diverged from Scotus. Yet, in the discussion of divine knowledge, where Mayronnes applied Scotus's doctrine of stages, the editor noted that Mayronnes was following Scotus correctly. Here, in the margin he writes: 'scotizat recte'. Obviously, in early modern times, the doctrine of stages was still regarded as the distinguishing feature of a genuine Scotist view.¹⁸

The discussion so far has dealt only with issues that formed a kind of common ground in the Scotist school. As was said earlier, however, this common ground was expressed in different manners. In the following section I turn to the differences between Scotist philosophers. As will become clear, these differences also often originated from the work of Scotus himself.

3. Differences between Scotists

It has often been pointed out in the literature that Scotists never formed a homogeneous group, and that they tended to have disagreements among themselves. To explain this unusual fact it has been suggested that probably not all followers were able to recognize or grasp the new elements in Scotus's philosophy. This would help us understand, so it is claimed, why some of them fell back on earlier positions while others continued the line of Scotus.¹⁹ The problem with this explanation is that it assumes that Scotus introduced an irreversible development in philosophy, which his contemporaries were able to recognize as such and which could serve as a criterion for grouping his disciples. I want to suggest an alternative interpretation for the differences between Scotists, one that does not rely on a pre-conceived idea about the historical significance of Scotus. To do this properly, I must first say something about the role of Henry of Ghent in the work of Scotus.

¹⁷ The *Notulae* are edited in A. Combes, *Jean Gerson. Commentateur Dionysien. Pour l'histoire des courants doctrinaux à l'université de Paris à la fin du XIVe siècle*, Paris ²1973, 183-347, esp. 202f. and 305-311. For a discussion of these passages, see Z. Kaluza, *Les querelles doctrinales à Paris (...)*, 131-137.

¹⁸ Francis of Mayronnes, *In libros Sententiarum* I, dist. 38-39, q. 3, Venice 1520, fol. 114rbG. Cf. Scotus, *Ordinatio* 1, dist. 38, q. 2, and dist. 39, q. 1-5 (ed. Vaticana VI, 428f.).

¹⁹ Cf. L. Honnefelder, 'Scotus und der Scotismus (...)', 261f.

It is well-known that Henry of Ghent, as Scotus's main interlocutor, was important in the development of the latter's thought.²⁰ Yet it is difficult to pin-point the exact relationship between the two thinkers. It is true that Scotus criticized Henry on many points. Yet, closer inspection reveals that their positions were not always as far apart as would seem to be the case.²¹ What Scotus objected to in Henry of Ghent was not so much the content of his position, but rather the way in which he presented and proved it. This phenomenon is characteristic of philosophical debates at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the *Liber propugnatorius*, devoted entirely to criticism of Scotus, it was sometimes said that what Scotus maintains was true, but that his demonstration was faulty.²² One should bear in mind, then, that the relation between mutual critics, and its perception by contemporaries, is rather complex. It admits of a distinction between the content of a position and the way it is defended: Thinkers who agree on the first count can differ on the second.

If one considers the views of some of the early Scotists, it is remarkable to find that they often aligned themselves with the position of Henry of Ghent. This happens in particular on points where Scotus paraphrased Henry's position in his own words. An example of this is the explanation of God's knowledge of future contingents. In the *Lectura*, Scotus discussed the position of Henry of Ghent on this issue. Essentially, he adopted Henry's arguments as his own and restated them in his own terms.²³ Scotus agreed with Henry that God had knowledge of future events by knowing His own will, but he believed that the will could not directly influence God's thought, because God's thought could be determined only by God's essence. Therefore, God could know His acts of will only by intuiting His essence, which represents the future events determined by His will.²⁴

Placing Scotus's view in the context of the foreknowledge debate as it was carried on at that time, it is obvious that the basic problem was not with intricate questions of whether God knows the future through his will alone or mediated via his essence, but much more simply with whether or not God knows the future through his will. And that

²⁰ On the influence of Henry of Ghent in Oxford, where Duns Scotus started his intellectual career, see J.I. Catto, 'Theology and Theologians 1220-1320', in J.I. Catto (ed.), *The early Oxford Schools*, Oxford 1984, 471-517, esp. 504 f.

²¹ Cf. K. Bannach, *Die Lehre von der doppelten Macht Gottes bei Wilhelm von Ockham. Problemgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen und Bedeutung*, Wiesbaden 1975, 165, and K.H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham. Optics, Epistemology, and the Foundations of Semantics 1250-1345*, Leiden 1988, 56 (esp. note 4). See also recently, G.A. Wilson, 'The Presence of Henry of Ghent in Scotus's *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum*', in L. Honnefelder a.o. (eds.), *John Duns Scotus. Metaphysics and Ethics*, Leiden 1996, 107-124.

²² *Liber propugnatorius* I, dist. 2, q. 3, fol. 22va: (...) quamvis conclusiones sint verae omnes quas probat doctor iste (sc. Scotus), tamen in aliquibus insufficienter arguit et dicit.

²³ Johannes Duns Scotus, *Lectura* I, dist. 39, q. 1-5, n. 62-65 (ed. Vaticana XVII, 500-501). See also A. Vos a.o., *John Duns Scotus. Contingency and Freedom*, Dordrecht - Boston 1994.

²⁴ For a discussion, see M.J.F.M. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen. Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought*, Leiden 1993, 177f. (with references to further literature).

was the point on which Henry of Ghent and Scotus sided unanimously against Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, who tried to explain foreknowledge mainly in terms of divine ideas or divine eternity.²⁵ In the eyes of their contemporaries, Henry and Scotus therefore must have been much closer than they would seem to us now. Now, my suggestion is that this phenomenon is precisely what we see reflected in the early Scotist school, namely, that most Scotists associated themselves with the position of Henry of Ghent without taking too much notice of the restatements of Scotus. This does not mean that they were blind to Scotus's additional remarks — on the contrary. They just did not think that the essence of Scotism was in these corrections. What counted for them was the fact that God knows future contingents by knowing His acts of will, a view that Henry of Ghent had been the first to advance against the Thomist position, and that was also duly adopted by Scotus.²⁶ This means that in order to understand the seemingly careless or ignorant manner in which Scotists followed Scotus, one should take into account the historical and conceptual constellation in which Scotus's opinions were put forward originally.

There is a second factor to reckon with, namely, the fact that Scotus's work was left unfinished. Due to his early death there is no 'finished' version of his most important work, the *Ordinatio*. Also, in addition to the *Ordinatio*, there are several other versions of his commentary on the *Sentences*.²⁷ The views given in these works tend to differ from one another on some important points, which is a further complication for speaking of a single, definitively Scotist position.²⁸

The difficulty envisaged here may be illustrated in terms of the doctrine of the formal distinction, which underwent a certain development in the course of Scotus's career. Its development was not so much in the basic notion of the formal distinction *ex natura rei*,

²⁵ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in IV Libros Sententiarum* 1, dist. 35, a. 1, q. 1, c. (*Opera omnia* 1, Ad claras aquas 1882, 601); Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* 1, dist. 38, q. 1, a. 5, c. (ed. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, 910f.), and *Summa theologiae* I, q. 14, a. 13, c., Rome 1888 (ed. Leonina IV, 186b). For a discussion of the view of Thomas Aquinas, who in spite of his unambiguous stress on God's eternal mode of knowing also appeals to the divine will, see J.F. Wippel, 'Divine Knowledge, Divine Power and Human Freedom in Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent', in T. Rudavsky (ed.), *Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence in Medieval Philosophy. Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, Dordrecht 1985, 213-241, esp. 213-221. Scotus criticizes the position that knows the future by his ideas (Bonaventure) or by his eternal mode of knowing (Thomas) in *Lectura* 1, dist. 39, q. 1-5, n. 18-30 (ed. Vaticana, XVII, 484-488).

²⁶ Among the Scotists that followed Henry of Ghent, without taking over Scotus's corrections, were Francis of Mayronnes, Hugh of Novocastro, Landulp Caracciolo, and Peter of Aquila. James of Ascoli, on the other hand, accepts Scotus's criticism of Henry of Ghent. Further details in M.J.F.M. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen. Divine Knowledge(...)*, 178f.

²⁷ C. Balic, 'The Life and Works of John Duns Scotus', in J.K. Ryan and B.M. Bonansea (eds.), *John Duns Scotus. 1265-1965 (...)*, 1-27, esp. 16f. and 19-21.

²⁸ In the fourteenth century it was known that there existed different versions of Scotus's commentary on the *Sentences* and that his opinions were not always the same. For some examples, see C. Balic, 'The Nature and Value of a Critical Edition of the Complete Works of John Duns Scotus', *John Duns Scotus. 1265-1965 (...)*, 368-379, esp. 376, and K. Binder, 'Zum Einfluß des Duns Scotus auf Theologen der mittelalterlichen Universität Wien', *Deus et homo ad mentem Ioannis Duns Scoti*, Rome 1972, 749-760, esp. 754.

but rather in the emphasis given to the aspect of distinctness. The situation is roughly as follows. After emphasizing the notion of distinction in the *Lectura*, Scotus in his Parisian period tended to speak of a formal non-identity rather than of a formal difference or distinction. In the *Ordinatio*, however, he seems to have more or less returned to the *Lectura* line.²⁹ Now, we find Franciscan scholars at the beginning of the fourteenth century following either of these lines. Thus, the position of the *Lectura* and *Ordinatio* was followed by Francis of Mayronnes and Peter of Aquila, while the second, more cautious line of the Parisian period was adopted by William of Alnwick and Landulpus Caracciolo.³⁰ A central common element of the Scotist school, the notion of the formal distinction, was thus elaborated by different Scotists along different lines, each having its source in Scotus himself. This means that next to the historical and conceptual context in which Scotus put forward his ideas, also the state and development of his works are important for understanding the unity and differences in the Scotist school.

4. The Scotist self-image

I now turn to my third point, which concerns the self-image of Scotism, or the way in which Scotists presented themselves in their writings. The first thing to notice here is that Scotus is distinctly present in the works of his followers, both implicitly and explicitly: He often was mentioned by name and not just referred to as 'magister noster'.³¹ Johannes Canonicus, for example, spoke of 'opinio doctoris subtilis Scoti, cum qua me teneo', or 'dico aliter secundum mentem Scoti'.³² This does not mean that these writers followed Scotus on all points, however. They sometimes indicated where and when they diverged from his position, or (which is important for our understanding of developments within the school)

²⁹ F. Wetter, *Die Trinitätslehre des Johannes Duns Scotus*, Münster 1967, 67, 74, and 84f.; H. G. Gelber, *Logic and the Trinity. A Clash of Values in Scholastic Thought. 1300-1335*, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1981, 77 and 101, and M. McCord Adams, 'Ockham on Identity and Distinction', *Franciscan Studies*, 36 (1976), 5-74, esp. 26f.

³⁰ H.G. Gelber, *Logic and the Trinity* (...), 105 (Landulpus Caracciolo) and 154f. (Francis of Mayronnes); Peter of Aquila, *Quaestiones in IV libros Sententiarum* I, dist. 8, q. 4, col. 3 (Speyer 1480, repr. Frankfurt am Main 1967, not foliated); William of Alnwick, *Quaestiones disputatae de esse intelligibili et de quolibet*, Quodlibet q. 2 (ed. A. Ledoux, Florence 1937, 244).

³¹ For the meaning of the term 'magister noster', see W.J. Courtenay, 'Marsilius of Inghen as Theologian', in H.A.G. Braakhuis and M.J.F.M. Hoenen (eds.), *Marsilius of Inghen. Acts of the International Marsilius of Inghen Symposium*, Nijmegen 1992, 39-57, esp. 42-44.

³² Johannes Canonicus, *Quaestiones super VIII libros Physicorum Aristotelis* I, q. 1, fol. 1vb, and II, q. 3, fol. 30vb, Venice 1520. On Johannes Canonicus, see A. Maier, *Ausgehendes Mittelalter. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1, Rome 1964, 239-248; C. Bérubé, *La connaissance de l'individuel au Moyen Age*, Paris 1964, 257-259, and E. Mahoney, 'Aristotle as 'The Worst Natural Philosopher' (*pessimus naturalis*) and 'The Worst Metaphysician' (*pessimus metaphysicus*). His Reputation among Some Franciscan Philosophers', in O. Pluta (ed.), *Die Philosophie im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert. In memoriam Konstanty Michalski*, Amsterdam 1988, 261-273, esp. 265-268.

when they associated themselves with the view of other Scotist writers. Thus, Johannes Canonicus often followed Francis of Marchia, saying 'et ideo dico aliter sequendo opinionem Francisci de Marchia'.³³

A second point to notice, and one on which Scotism is indeed different from the other schools, is that Scotists made it very clear in their works that they disagreed among themselves. Not only do we find one Scotist criticizing the other, such as Johannes Canonicus disagreeing with Francis of Mayronnes: 'licet Franciscus de Mayronis dicat quod sic, non tamen potest stare'.³⁴ We also come across references to different tendencies and factions within the Scotist school. Thus, Petrus Tartaretus, in his discussion of the subject of physics (*philosophia naturalis*), distinguished a number of different opinions, two of which he identified as Scotistic. One is called the 'opinio Canonici et aliorum Scotizantium', the other the 'opinio aliquorum modernorum Scotizantium'.³⁵ From the same work it appears that there was at the time an ongoing discussion about the correct interpretation of Scotus, in particular with regard to the number of possible distinctions and the relations between them. Tartaretus mentioned the view of 'aliqui dicentes se insequi doctrinam Scoti', who claim that there are seven different distinctions. Tartaretus rejects this view as being false, adding that it also was not 'de mente Scoti'.³⁶ The reason for these differences of opinion within the Scotist school, each claiming to be 'de mente Scoti', may be the unfinished character of Scotus's works, as we have seen.

A third aspect that may help us understand the Scotist self-image is that of the procedures used, which as we know were of great importance for the existence of schools. Each school had its characteristic methods and procedures for analyzing the standard texts. In the later Middle Ages these procedures were generally called 'processus'. There was a 'processus Thomistarum' as well as a 'processus Albertistarum'.³⁷ Now, the Scotist school was exceptional in so far as the procedural aspect was not only implicitly present in

³³ *Ibid.*, I, q. 9, fol. 23rb. See also *ibid.*, I, q. 4, fol. 13ra: (...) et ideo dico aliter cum Francisco de Marchia (...).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, q. 2, fol. 27vb.

³⁵ Petrus Tartaretus, *Clarissima singularisque totius philosophiae necnon metaphysicae Aristoteles expositio*, sine loco, 1498, fol. 2vb: (...) Alia est opinio Canonici et aliorum Scotizantium ponentium substantiam finitam sub ratione naturalitatis esse subiectum philosophiae complete traditae; (...) alia est opinio aliquorum modernorum Scotizantium volentium quod corpus naturale sit subiectum totius philosophiae naturalis et dicunt quod mobile est propria passio convertibilis cum corpore (...).

³⁶ Petrus Tartaretus, *Expositio super textus logicales Aristotelis*, sine loco 1498, fol. 19vb-20ra: Dubitatur secundo utrum praeter distinctionem realem et rationis sit ponenda aliqua alia distinctio. Pro cuius solutione supponitur, quod aliqui dicentes se insequi doctrinam Scoti ponunt septem genera distinctionum et tot identitatum, scilicet distinctionem rationis, ex natura rei, formalem, realem, essentialem, se totis subiective, et se totis obiective, et dicunt quod istae distinctiones se invicem inferunt, nam dicunt quod distinctio se totis obiective infert omnes alias, et sic consequenter. Sed iste modus dicendi est falsus, neque est de mente Scoti, primo in hoc quod ipsi ponunt septem genera distinctionum, secundo in hoc quod ipsi ponunt istas distinctiones se invicem inferre.

³⁷ See my 'Late Medieval Schools of Thought (...)', 329-336.

Scotist writings, but also explicitly so in the form of so-called 'regulae'. An example here is the commentary on the *Sentences* by Francis of Mayronnes, which contains many of these 'regulae', ranging from the rule that no essential ordering of things can have an infinite series *a priori*, to the rule that every ordered whole must be defined by the parts that constitute the whole.³⁸

Also in the later stages of Scotism, the procedural aspect remained prominent. An interesting example is the printed edition of the commentary just mentioned, which contains not only a *Tabula quaestionum* and a *Tabula notabilium*, but also an elaborate *Tabula regularum*, listing no fewer than 139 rules with their proper places.³⁹ Similar 'regulae' also occur in the works of other Scotist writers such as Johannes Canonicus, who attributed some of them to Scotus.⁴⁰ As far as I know there are no 'regulae' of the sort described here in the works of the Thomists or the Albertists. If I am correct, we can assume that Scotists had an apparent notion of their identity as Scotists in terms of the use of typical standard procedures (*regulae*) for analyzing texts and problems.

5. The significance of the Scotist school

Turning to my final point, I want briefly to examine the historical significance of the Scotist school. It is always difficult to say anything definite about the significance of a philosophical school, as all depends on one's choice of criteria. Also, the historical impact made by schools of thought is rarely a matter of a single aspect. Most often different viewpoints may be taken into consideration. In answering the question of significance, then, it is important always to be explicit about the perspective from which that significance is assessed. I want to mention three points here.

In the first place, Scotism did not spring from external forces, but crystallized on a core of characteristic philosophical views, the most important of which were the formal distinction and the doctrine of stages. Also, later in the fifteenth century, Scotism never quite settled into the framework of late medieval *bursae*, or at least much less so than did

³⁸ Francis of Mayronnes, *In libros Sententiarum* (...) I, dist. 14-16, q. 1, fol. 66vaK: Tertia regula est quod in essentialiter ordinatis non potest esse processus in infinitum a priori (...). Si ergo versus prius esset processus in infinitum, tunc posito aliquo posteriori, necessario ibi essent actu infinita, and I, dist. 27, q. 2, fol. 84vaM: Quantum ad primum pono istam regulam generalem, quod omne constitutum diffinitur per principia constitutiva. Other rules at fol. 78rbH, fol. 81vbQ, fol. 100rbH.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Tabula regularum tertia*, fol. [7va]-[8va]. It needs to be noted, however, that not all the rules listed in the *Tabula* are indicated as 'regula' in the commentary itself.

⁴⁰ Johannes Canonicus, *Quaestiones super VIII libros Physicorum* (...) I, q. 4, fol. 13ra: Ad secundum pro cuius evidentia pono duas regulas uni aequivalentes. Prima est haec, quam ponit Scotus, quod quandoque aliquid est tale denominative et aliud formaliter tale, standum est in illo quod est formaliter tale. Secunda regula est ista, quae est eadem cum prima, sub aliis verbis tamen posita: quandocumque in aliquo est aliquod medium, in eodem non oportet tali medio assignare aliud medium, sed ipsum seipso in tali est medium et ratio.

Thomism, for example.⁴¹ With regard to its origin, Scotism resembled Albertism, which initially also arose mainly from internal forces.⁴² The absence of an external institutional framework accounts for the fact that the number of official Scotists has always been much smaller than that of other schools. From the records held by the fifteenth-century Dominican scholar Servatius Fanckel of the promotions and disputations at the university of Cologne in the period 1467-1488, we know that the majority consisted of Thomists, followed by Albertists, with Scotists as the smallest group.⁴³ This means that Scotism in the fifteenth century was only a small school that lacked the support of an external institute. It was supported rather by an internal institute, namely, that of method. From the perspective of the sociology of science this is a highly interesting fact: It was the method that created the school (Scotism), rather than the school that created the method (Thomism).⁴⁴

A second point, related to the first and also of sociological interest, is that the Scotist school was doxologically mixed and yet was generally seen from the outside as a unity. In fifteenth-century debates, for example, Scotism figured among other schools as a more or less delineate group.⁴⁵ This means that when we try to understand what determined the school's unity or internal coherence, we should be looking less for a clear-cut system of views derived from Scotus, and more for a unity at a deeper level, articulated in terms of such postulates as that of the formal distinction. Yet, as we have seen, even at this point Scotists differed among themselves. Therefore, the unity of Scotism cannot be understood in terms of the exact wording of such postulates (for example, whether there were a formal

⁴¹ For Cologne see Tewes, *Die Bursen der Kölner Artisten-Fakultät* (...). One of the reasons may be that the thinking of Scotus was considered to be too difficult for the young students, as is manifest from the *Manuale scholarium*, printed many times in the late fifteenth century and edited in F. Zarncke, *Die deutschen Universitäten im Mittelalter*, 1. Beitrag, Leipzig 1857, 1-48. See also A. Bömer, *Die lateinischen Schülergespräche der Humanisten, 1. Teil vom Manuale scholarium bis Hegendorffinus c. 1480-1520*, Berlin 1897, 12.

⁴² On the emergence of Albertism, see G. Meersseman, *Geschichte des Albertismus, Heft 1: Die Pariser Anfänge des Kölner Albertismus*, Paris 1933, and Z. Kaluza, 'Les débuts de l'Albertisme tardif', in M.J.F.M. Hoenen and A. de Libera (eds.), *Albertus Magnus und der Albertismus. Deutsche philosophische Kultur des Mittelalters*, Leiden 1995, 207-302.

⁴³ G.M. Löhr, *Die theologischen Disputationen an der Universität Köln im ausgehenden 15. Jahrhundert nach den Angaben des Servatius Fanckel OP*, Leipzig 1926, 15f.

⁴⁴ In the modern period, the situation becomes different. In the sixteenth century, the Franciscan order bounds itself to the teaching of Duns Scotus, and in the seventeenth century, the number of Scotists seems to be larger than that of the other schools of thought. This can be gathered from the sources quoted in Bérubé, 'La première école scotiste (...)', 14, and L. Honnefelder, 'Scotus und der Scotismus (...)', 250.

⁴⁵ In his student notebook, the dominican Georg Schwartz noted down the *quaestiones vacantes* he attended during his stay at the University of Cologne in the years 1465 and 1466. In several of these questions, the Scotists are mentioned as a unified group. See Eichstätt, Cod. st. 688, fol. 258r: 'Haec positio est secundum viam Scotistarum posita' and fol. 262r: 'Hanc positionem posuit Scotista et mirabiliter fuit confusa. On the notebook of Georg Schwartz and the Cologne *quaestiones vacantes*, see my 'Tradition and Renewal. The Philosophical Setting of 15th Century Christology. Heymericus de Campo, Nicolaus Cusanus, and the Cologne Quaestiones vacantes (1465)', in K. Emery and J. Wawrykow (eds.), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, Medieval Institute, University of Notre Dame (forthcoming).

distinction or a formal non-identity), but should be sought in the more basic philosophical outlook expressed by them — in particular, in the thought that between the real and the conceptual there is an intermediate level of formality, which is normative for our thinking about reality.⁴⁶

This brings me to a final point, namely, the philosophical significance of Scotism. With its notion of a formal distinction, Scotism touched on the age-old puzzle of the relation between being and thinking. Scotists, unlike defenders of nominalism, did not view thought as essentially a free creation of the human mind. They conceived of thought as being bound by the laws of the 'formalitates', which exist outside the human mind and which are independent of it. The 'formalitates' are like a bridge between real being and the human mind. They are the points of reference for adequate thought about reality. In that sense they resemble Platonic ideas, with which they were indeed compared by some medieval writers who associated the formalizantes with the *platonici*.⁴⁷

Closely connected with the foregoing was the influence of Scotism on metaphysics. According to Scotus and many of his followers, metaphysics was the science that studied being *formaliter ex se*, that is to say, the science that studied being as it appeared to all possible rational beings. This move made metaphysics a completely objective science, independent of the human mind — a view that was to be developed further by modern philosophers.⁴⁸

Another issue on which Scotism pointed the way to modern philosophy was its doctrine of individuality, a characteristic theme in Scotist philosophy that set it apart from all other schools. This issue was discussed at length in the work of Johannes Canonici and many other writers. The individual distinguished itself from the species not by the addition of matter (as Albertists claimed), nor by the addition of matter of a certain quantity (as Thomists claimed), but by a formal principle of its own, the so-called *dif-*

⁴⁶ I will elaborate on this point in my 'Thomismus, Skotismus und Albertismus. Das Entstehen und die Bedeutung von philosophischen Schulen im späten Mittelalter' (forthcoming).

⁴⁷ See Z. Kaluza, *Les querelles doctrinales à Paris* (...), 131-144.

⁴⁸ For the impact of Scotist thinking on modern philosophy, see L. Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit und Realität in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, Hamburg 1990.

ferentia individualis.⁴⁹ In the treatises on individuality by Suárez and Leibniz, the Scotist view was regarded as superior to that of Albertists and Thomists, although they did not adopt it themselves.⁵⁰ Scotism, as a philosophical school, thus distinguished itself not only by its exceptional form of development, but also by its historical impact and power.

⁴⁹ M.J.F.M. Hoenen, 'Aliter autem dicunt Thomistae. Das Prinzip der Individuation in der Auseinandersetzung zwischen den Albertisten, Thomisten und Scotisten des ausgehenden Mittelalters', in J.A. Aertsen and A. Speer (eds.), *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1996, 338-352.

⁵⁰ F. Suárez, *Über die Individualität und das Individuationsprinzip*, ed. R. Specht, Hamburg 1976, 9, and G.W. Leibniz, *De principio individui*, in *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 6/1, Darmstadt 1930, 11-19. See also J.J.E. Gracia, 'Francis Suárez', in J.J.E. Gracia (ed.), *Individuation in Scholasticism. The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation. 1150-1650*, Albany, N.Y. 1994, 475-510, and I. Angelelli, 'The Scholastic Background of Modern Philosophy: Entitas and Individuation in Leibniz', *ibid.*, 535-542.