

VIA ANTIQUA AND VIA MODERNA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: DOCTRINAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND CHURCH POLITICAL FACTORS IN THE *WEGESTREIT*

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INTRODUCTION: SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

In the years between 1475 and 1488 the German Dominican Servatius Fanckel attended the disputations held at the theological faculty of the University of Cologne and reported the debates in a notebook. This notebook has been preserved in the manuscript Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 1690. It gives an account of the questions and arguments put forward, mentioning the names of the proponents and opponents. Servatius Fanckel designed the manuscript so that it could be used as a source book for information on topics and persons. He made an extensive subject index and catalogued the members of the theological faculty who participated in the debate. The records of participants are highly interesting. Biographical notes are attached to the names and, most remarkably, they mention doctrinal affiliations. Seventy-nine of eighty-three theologians are registered as adherents of a school of thought: *thomista*, *albertista*, *scotista*, *egidianus*, or *modernus*.¹

A quotation from one of the lists mentioning the names illustrates the nature of the information provided by Servatius Fanckel, who refers to himself as *thomista*.²

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¹ On Servatius Fanckel and his notebook, see Löhr 1926. A similar notebook reporting disputations held at Cologne was kept by the Dominican, Georg Schwartz (Eichstätt, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. st 688). I discuss this notebook in Hoenen 1998b.

² Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 1690, f. 29r. Information on the theologians mentioned in the quotation is provided by Löhr 1926, 26-27. Servatius Fanckel calls himself *thomista* on f. 31v: "Frater Seruacius Fanckel, ordinis predicatorum. Thomista. Collector huius libelli."

Magister Andreas Westualus. Albertista.

Magister Jodocus de Augusta. Hunc uidi licenciatum. Thomista.

Frater et magister Richardus de Sittart, ordinis predicatorum. Thomista. Huius uidi aulam magistralem, respondi quoque de sacramento ordinis in eius uesperis anno 1480. Obiit 1483.

Magister Jacobus de Ammersfordia. Albertista. Hunc licenciatum uidi. Sub eo determinauit in quotlibetis anno 1479.

Servatius Fanckel mentions only one *modernus*: master Johannes Ryppe de Alen, who received his degree at the University of Erfurt and matriculated at the University of Cologne in 1465.³ In the summer of 1480 this single adherent of the *via moderna* defended a question on the unity of God.⁴ His colleagues at Cologne were disturbed by his assertions, however, and attacked him vigorously. Servatius Fanckel reports on that occasion: “magister Johannes Alen, modernus, qui posuit Colonie inconsueta, et bene scobatus fuit.” Evidently in Cologne the *via moderna* was the exception rather than the rule.⁵

Servatius Fanckel’s collection is restricted to debates among theologians.⁶ Other documents bear witness to similar disputes at the faculty of Arts. The manuscript München, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 482, contains late medieval and early modern records from the University of Ingolstadt.⁷ Among them is a list itemizing disagreements between realists and nominalists in logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. I quote the part dealing with the first book of the *De anima*. Two items may suffice. The debate about the nature of universals is among them:⁸

Discrepant Moderni a doctrina Aristotelis et Realium in libro De anima in multis conclusionibus.

³ Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 1690, f. 29r: “Magister Iohannes Alen, modernus”. For his matriculation at Cologne, see Keussen 1979, n. 306 (1465), 43, 732: “Joh. Ryppe de Aylen, magister artium Erfordiensis et pastor in Kerspe (...)”. In the fifteenth century, Erfurt was a stronghold of nominalism; cf. Märker 1993, 42-45 (with references to further literature on 94-96).

⁴ Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 1690, f. 86r: “Utrum in deo uno simplicissimo sit trium personarum realis distinctio”.

⁵ Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. 1690, f. 86r *in marg.* On philosophical schools at Cologne, see Meuthen 1988, 170-202, and Tewes 1993.

⁶ The disputed subjects are listed in Löhr 1926, 33f.

⁷ Unfortunately, the manuscript is now lost. A description of the manuscript with partial transcription of its content is published in Ehrle 1925, 326-42. Further documentation on the *Wegestreit* in Ingolstadt is provided by Prantl 1968, vol. II, and Seifert 1973, 45-48 (n. 7) and 67-70 (n. 10). In Ingolstadt both *viae* (*beder wegthalben*) were represented in separate colleges, although the *via moderna* predominated at the end of the fifteenth century.

⁸ Cf. Ehrle 1925, 336. The items in the list are arranged according to their place in the traditional order of the *corpus aristotelicum*.

<1.> Et primo circa modum investigandi quod quid est ipsius anime: utrum anima sit substantia et de genere substantie.

<2.> Item circa istam auctoritatem Aristotelis: "animal universale nihil est aut posterius suis singularibus", ubi valde diversimode sentiunt Reales et Moderni, quod universale posterius est suis singularibus, et si universale sit aliquid in rerum natura.

The anonymous compiler of this inventory claims that the realists were the only legitimate successors of the Aristotelian tradition: *Reales, sequentes dicta Aristotelis, discrepant a Modernis, qui plerumque ab Aristotele declinant*.⁹ The same type of claim can be found in the writings of Johannes de Nova Domo, Heymericus de Campo, and other contemporary authors. The significance of this contention, defended by realists but ridiculed by nominalists, will be discussed below.

As is clear from this evidence, the existence of philosophical and theological schools in the fifteenth century cannot be questioned. But the interpretation of the historical data is another matter. Research into the existence of schools originated in the beginning of the twentieth century. Scholars judged that nominalism destroyed the intellectual enterprise of Thomism and Albertism. It had questioned the harmony between philosophy and theology and denied the existence of universals outside the human mind, thus depriving physics and metaphysics of their ontological foundation.¹⁰

Further research showed that a number of doctrines which were considered to be typically "nominalist" were in fact widely held, being part of the doctrinal canon of late medieval scholastic thought, especially the emphasis on logic and the use of the notion of *potentia dei absoluta*.¹¹ Recent studies, therefore, investigate the issue from a broader perspective. They take doctrinal aspects into consideration, but also draw on institutional and prosopographical evidence. The main conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. The formation of schools was intimately connected with the reading of set texts at the universities and the *studia* of the religious orders. Debates between schools were chiefly concerned with interpretations of Aristotle. Each school had its preferred reading of the *corpus aristotelicum*. The stimulus for the establishment of philosophical schools, therefore, was the scholastic educational system.¹²

⁹ Ehrle 1925, 338. See also the opening of the passage quoted above: "discrepant Moderni a doctrina Aristotelis et Realium".

¹⁰ Highly influential studies were Ehrle 1925 and Ritter 1975. Erwin Iserloh delineated the "destruktive Wirkung" (his words) of nominalism in Iserloh 1956, esp. 283.

¹¹ Courtenay 1990. See also Courtenay 1991.

¹² Braakhuis 1989, and Hoenen 1993a.

2. The character of schools of thought had changed since the thirteenth century. These changes paralleled innovations in the different fields of intellectual endeavor; in some cases they were even caused by them. In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries the religious orders played an important role, whereas in the fifteenth century the *bursae* at the universities dominated the character of the schools.¹³

3. The unity of a school of thought did not consist in a fully developed doctrinal system, but in the use of a typical method or *processus*, which could be employed in various ways within a single school. Doctrinal differences within one school were not unusual and were even discussed in the commentaries on Aristotle. They were part of the historical reality of the medieval philosophical and theological schools.¹⁴

4. There is no necessary doctrinal continuity between the fifteenth century *via moderna* and fourteenth century "nominalism". The *via moderna* was a typical product of the fifteenth century, closely related to the proliferation of new universities in the German Empire and the dangers of Hussitism. Documents from the fourteenth century do not mention a *via moderna*, nor were philosophers and theologians called "nominalists" at that time. The rise of the *via moderna*, therefore, must be explained against the background of the institutional and doctrinal reality of the fifteenth century.¹⁵

5. The names of the schools of thought as they appear in the sources are directly related to aspects of the schools' educational procedures. The "Thomists" and "Albertists" were designated by the name of the *expositor* they followed in their reading of Aristotle: Thomas Aquinas for the Thomists and Albert the Great for the Albertists. The Scotists and the nominalists were identified by the methodology employed in their commentaries. The Scotists used the formal distinction and were labeled as *formalizantes*. The nominalists attributed definitions to terms, not to things, and were called *terministae* or *nominales*: *purus nominalis terminis accomodat diffinitiones datas et non rebus*.¹⁶

Naturally, these conclusions need further corroboration or emendation. There are many sources still to be examined, which may modify our understanding of the role played by doctrinal and institutional factors in the development of schools of thought. The picture is far from complete and more study is needed. In this essay I therefore will touch on three aspects which in my view are essential for a clear understanding of the *Wege* *streit*:

¹³ Courtenay 1987b, and Tewes 1993.

¹⁴ Kaluza 1988b, and Hoenen 1998a, 197-210.

¹⁵ Kaluza 1995a; Gabriel 1974; and Gilbert 1974.

¹⁶ Kaluza 1988b; Kaluza 1995b; Hoenen 1997. The quotation is taken from John Dullaert 1528a, f. 2^v.

(1) the meaning of the terms *via moderna*, *via antiqua*, *moderni*, and *nominales* as they were used in the late medieval period; (2) the remarkable phenomenon that fifteenth-century authors do not mention contemporaries but only fourteenth-century philosophers and theologians as their intellectual masters; (3) the intimate connection between the schools of thought and the battle against heresy.

1. THE MEANING OF TERMS

1.1 *Via Moderna* and *Via Antiqua*

In late medieval philosophical texts, the term *via* was used in two different but related ways. Taken in a restricted sense, *via* meant the special way in which a certain problem was solved. For example, discussing divine ideas Scotus distinguished between different approaches, which he called *viae*. Here the word had the same meaning as *modus exponendi* or as *positio* in compounds such as *positio Scoti*, *positio scotistarum*, and *positio nominalium* as they were used later on.¹⁷ It is important to keep in mind, however, that an author who at a certain point in his commentary adheres to the *via scoti* or *positio thomistarum*, is not necessarily a Scotist or a Thomist; dealing with other subjects he may have chosen a different approach.¹⁸

In a broad sense, however, the term *via* was used to denote a method of reading Aristotle that was typical of a school. The term, then, was identical with *processus* or *expositio*. It was used to indicate the works of reference that were used and quoted throughout the commentary, for example the

¹⁷ John Duns Scotus, *Reportatio Parisiensis*, lib. I, d. 36, q. 2, in John Duns Scotus 1969, n. 14, f. 202a: “(...) discordant [sc. doctores] in modo ponendi (...)”, and *ibid.*, n. 30, f. 205b: “(...) secundum hanc igitur viam videtur concedendum quod (...)”. The use of *via* to designate a particular approach was common. It appears in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, lib. 1, cap. 14: “Est autem via remotionis utendum, praecipue in consideratione divinae substantiae”, and in William of Ockham’s *Quaestiones in libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, q. 141 (William of Ockham 1984, 780): “(...) potissima via ad probandum calorem esse causam”. There is also evidence in the *Vulgata* (Is 10, 24): “(...) baculum suum levabit super te in via Aegypti”, and in the writings of classical authors. See *Oxford Latin Dictionary* 1968, s.v. ‘via’, n. 9 and n. 10.

¹⁸ The restricted meaning of *via* is clear from the reference in Hugolino of Orvieto’s *Commentarius in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, lib. I, d. 40, q. 4, art. 2, to Gerardus Novariensis, who in one of his treatises quoted Gregory of Rimini dealing with the issue of whether or not God can undo the past (Hugolino of Orvieto 1984, 357): “Ad veritatem quaestionis tenendam non valet alia via Gregorii quam ponit Gerardus Novariensis in Summa tractatu De locutione prophetarum capitulo septimo, scilicet quod deus non potest facere vel velle essentiam A non fuisse.” On the background of the issue at stake here, see Courtenay 1984b, VIIIa and VIIIb.

writings of Albert the Great or of Thomas Aquinas. In this case, the term *via* indicated the school of thought to which the author reckoned himself or was judged by others to belong. Examples of this use can be found in the early printed commentaries on Aristotle, wherein the writer or editor refers to the *via* or *processus* according to which the work has been compiled. Standard wordings of this use are *secundum processum thomistarum*, or *secundum viam nominalium*, or *secundum duplicem viam nominalium et realium*.¹⁹

1.2 *Modernus*

Until about 1310, the term *modernus* usually was used to denote contemporaries. This usage was ancient; it bore no relationship with the doctrinal views of the authors signified by the term. After 1310, however, the meaning changed. From that time onwards authors were not only called “modern” in the period that they were actually teaching but also afterwards. The meaning became broader and covered several generations of fourteenth-century philosophers and theologians. Eventually, in the early fifteenth century, the term took on a doctrinal connotation. It was used to refer to the defenders of a reading of Aristotle that followed in the footsteps of John Buridan and Marsilius of Inghen and deviated from the traditional interpretations of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great.²⁰

The first document to bear witness to this doctrinal meaning appears in 1414. It is a record of the Arts faculty of Cologne reacting against the introduction of a reading of Aristotle that was considered outdated and no longer accepted: *modus exponendi libros Aristotelis antiquus et abolutus*. The faculty decided to keep to the reading that had been followed from the early days of the University – as is clear from the first Statutes of the Arts faculty – namely the reading according to Buridan.²¹

In this document only the term *modus exponendi* is used and not *via*; nevertheless it is clear that as far as the reading of Aristotle was concerned there were two different methods, old and new. The different *modi* or *viae*

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. *Reparationes librorum totius naturalis philosophiae secundum processum Albertistarum et Thomistarum* (1494); *Quaestiones subtilissime Johannis Marcilii Inguen super octo libros Physicorum secundum nominalium viam* (Marsilius of Inghen 1964); *Quaestiones magistri Ioannis Dullaert a Gandavo in librum Predicabilium Porphyrii secundum duplicem viam nominalium et realium inter se bipartitorum* (...) (John Dullaert 1528b). In some cases, however, the term *processus* was also used in a restricted sense. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, lib. I, cap. 20: “(...) per processum praedictum non probatur quod non sit Deus coniunctus corpori”, and *ibid.*, cap. 33: “(...) aequivocatio nominis processum argumentationis impedit”.

²⁰ Gilbert 1974, 106-107; Courtenay 1987a; Gilbert 1987.

²¹ The document is edited in Weiler 1962, 57-58. The historical circumstances are discussed in Braakhuis 1989, 3-5, and Tewes 1993, 285-93 (with a reproduction of the original document on p. 869).

are not named in the document of 1414, but they appear in a document from the University of Cologne about ten years later in 1425. Here the reading of the *via sancti Thomae et Alberti Magni aut talium antiquorum* is opposed to the *via* of the *magistri moderniores Buridanus et Marsilius*.²² With the appearance of these names, the late medieval *Wegestreit* was baptized institutionally.

1.3 Peripatetic Tradition and Christian Faith

The terms *via antiqua* and *via moderna* were not merely concise, neutral ways of indicating the periods in which the different ways of explaining Aristotle originated: the thirteenth century of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, and the fourteenth century of Buridan and Marsilius. Things were more complicated and ideologically charged than that. In the minds of the Thomists and Albertists, the old way reflected the true meaning of Aristotle and thus was part of the genuine Peripatetic tradition. The new way, on the other hand, departed from that tradition and therefore could not appeal to the authority of Aristotle. It was even a threat to the Church, since the Church (*romana et universalis ecclesia*) had accepted the philosophy of Aristotle as a means of defending its faith.²³

The appeal to the Peripatetic tradition is manifest in the early fifteenth century writings of the Albertist Johannes de Nova Domo, who considered that Buridan and Marsilius were not *professores peripateticae veritatis* according to the true meaning of Aristotle. Rather, they were seduced by the condemned peevishness (*condempnata discolia*) of William of Ockham, who had departed from the Aristotelian tradition: *Occam Anglicus fuit emulator paternae traditionis et non insecutor Aristotelis*. The new way was a reprehensible innovation (*vituperabilis adinventio nova*) based on grave misconceptions. Only the old way guaranteed the true

²² On the document of 1425 (the response of the Cologne masters to the Prince Electors, who had written the City of Cologne about the University), see Tewes 1993, 367-75. The quotations are taken from the summary of the letter of the Prince Electors to the City of Cologne, which is put at the beginning of the response of the University. The document is published in Ehrle 1925, 281-90.

²³ In the document mentioned in and around n. 22 above, the University of Cologne referred to Thomas Aquinas and his use of Aristotelian philosophy in theology. The writings of Thomas Aquinas, the masters claimed, had been used by the Church. See Ehrle 1925, 284: "Doctor Sanctus in omnibus summis suis utitur eisdem principiis, quibus usus est libros Philosophi exponendo (...)", and *ibid.*, 284-85: "(...) Romana et universalis Ecclesia Doctores prenomatos (sc. sanctum Thomam et Albertum Magnum) facto et opere habet approbatos, eorum libris et scriptis utendo et allegando (...)". The history of the gradual acceptance of Aristotle by the Church is discussed in Bianchi 1999, 89-162. For the late medieval period, see Senger 1982, esp. 300-301.

Aristotelian tradition and the true foundation of the sciences, Johannes de Nova Domo argued.²⁴

The purpose behind the reference to Ockham was to show that the new way, in its departure from Aristotle, came close to heresy. Reading Ockham was prohibited at Paris (Johannes de Nova Domo referred to the Statute of 1339); thus, Johannes implies, the adherents of the new way follow a repudiated – probably heretical – tradition.²⁵

In the eyes of Johannes de Nova Domo the new way was a danger to the edifice of the Aristotelian sciences. This motif recurs often in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century sources. In the acts and records of the University of Ingolstadt (mentioned at the beginning of this article) it is emphasized that the *moderni* contradict Aristotle on many occasions: *in multis passibus omnino dictis Aristotelis contrariantur*. According to this document, the *antiqui* and *reales* were the defenders of the Aristotelian tradition and they were more in accord with faith and the Scriptures: *doctrina realium conformior est doctrinae fidei et sacrae scripturae quam doctrina aliorum*.²⁶ The proof that was given for this conformity to faith was that the theological doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Duns Scotus, and Giles of Rome were based on the philosophical teachings of Aristotle.²⁷

1.4 *Nominales*

For the realists, the term *via moderna* clearly had negative overtones. It was a form of modernism that deviated from the approved way. To be sure, the *moderni* in turn considered their reading of Aristotle to be the safeguard of genuine science and true Christian faith. The old way ended in disaster and bitter dispute (*magnum discidium*) and thus endangered academic unity, it was argued by the masters at Cologne in 1414.²⁸

The ideological connotations of the terms *via moderna* and *via antiqua* make it difficult to evaluate adequately the historical evidence. Here,

²⁴ Weiler 1968, esp. 131-32 and 137. A similar view was defended by fifteenth-century Thomists, as is testified by a statement in a treatise, compiled by the masters of the *bursa montana* at the University of Cologne, *Positiones circa libros Physicorum* (...) 1494, f. a4: "(...) liquet ergo quosdam modernos non fuisse Aristoteli conformes." The term *discolia* used by Johannes goes back to the *Topica* of Aristotle (160b11), where peevishness in argument (*duskollía*) means intended destruction of accepted reasoning. See also Gerald of Harderwijk 1488: "(...) cuius litis insecutor dicitur ab Aristotele octavo topicorum discholus dialectice artis", quoted in *Lexicon Latinitatis Nederlandicae Medii Aevi* 1986, s.v. *dyscolus*.

²⁵ For a discussion of Johannes de Nova Domo's attacks on the nominalists, see Kaluza 1986.

²⁶ Ehrle 1925, 335 and 338.

²⁷ Ehrle 1925, 334.

²⁸ Weiler 1962, 57.

institutional and doctrinal factors specific to the academic world overlap with ecclesio-political forces. This was also the case with the meaning of the term 'nominalist'.

In the fourteenth century, the term 'nominalist' was not used about contemporary thinkers.²⁹ Only at the beginning of the fifteenth century did the term receive its late medieval meaning to denote the adherents of the *via moderna*. Again, Johannes de Nova Domo is an important witness. He was one of the first authors who linked the meaning of the terms *moderni*, *nominales*, and *terministae*.³⁰

According to Johannes, the *nominales* rejected the existence of universals outside the human mind. Universals existed only in human thinking, human speech, or human writing. Aristotle, however, had demonstrated that the object of science is the universal. Thus, if the nominalists attributed only mental or linguistic existence to the universal, their science dealt with contingent and fictitious human speech.³¹

On this reading, the scientific approach of the *nominales* was ridiculed and its defenders stigmatized: the *nominales* were concerned with names and only with names. They supported a program that grounded universality in concepts and not in reality itself, which is unsound.³²

In line with the contemporary search for school tradition and intellectual heritage, Johannes de Nova Domo emphasized the ancient origins of this erroneous program, using as a source the works of Albert the Great with their abundant references to ancient thinkers. Nominalists like Buridan and Marsilius of Inghen were followers of Ockham and Epicurus, he pointed out.³³ Thus, for Johannes de Nova Domo nominalism was marred not

²⁹ Courtenay 1984a, esp. 146, n. 5 and n. 6.

³⁰ Weiler 1968, 132 (*terministae, moderni, nominales*) and 142 (*moderni, nominales*). The treatise *De universali reali* was probably composed between 1406 and 1418, although perhaps earlier; see Kaluza 1988b, 91.

³¹ Weiler 1968, 130-34, esp. 134: "Dicunt eciam (sc. nominales) solum terminos conceptus esse universalia et non res etc. (...) Iam patet, quomodo sibi ipsis clare contradicunt, et quia semper dicunt de terminis, qui pure ad placitum sunt secundum illud: sicut volo, sic iubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas, ideoque omnia sine ratione affirmant. Quapropter secundum Aristotilem, Octavo Phisicorum, merito <dicta> illa figmenta vel figmentis similia enuncupantur."

³² Weiler 1968, 137: "Si enim esset universale dumtaxat quid abstractum in anima, sicut quidam conceptus in anima et tenuis similitudo singularium, ut dicunt moderni, sequitur primo falsitas istius dicti Philosophi Primo Posteriorum dicentis, quod sciencia est universalium per se inherencium (...). Nulla enim sciencia sic esset realis, sed omnis sermocinalis (...)."

³³ Weiler 1968, 137: "(...) epicuri litterales sequentes condempnatam parisiis oceanicam discoliam cum collegiis suis, scilicet Biridani et Marsilii (...)." and Weiler 1968, 142: "(...) epicurii moderni sive nominales (...)."

merely by its mistaken philosophical methodology but also by its historical roots in and intellectual affinity to Epicurus and Ockham.³⁴

The reference to Epicurus as the spiritual father of nominalism was often repeated in the writings of late medieval realists. Besides Johannes de Nova Domo, the most important defender of this doxographical claim was Heymericus de Campo. He used it in his *Tractatus problematicus* (1424).³⁵ This treatise had a great impact on the debates between the schools. It was quoted in the *Promptuarium argumentorum* and the *Reparationes*, two texts that were designed for use in training students at the Arts faculty of Cologne. Moreover, Heymericus' *Tractatus* became the subject of a serious attack by Gerardus de Monte in 1456, which attests to its doctrinal significance.³⁶

Heraclitus' name also appears in this connection. Domingo de Soto argued that, like Heraclitus, the *nominales* denied the existence of universals outside the human mind: *opinio Nominalium incidit in opinionem Heracliti*. Thus, they denied the possibility of true science: *eo quo<d> illi negabant universalia in rebus, negabant subinde aliquam esse scientiam*. But Aristotle had refuted the position of Heraclitus and by the same token also nominalism. Aristotelian philosophy and nominalism were therefore incompatible.³⁷

2. THE RECOURSE TO EARLIER CENTURIES

2.1 Schools and Their Sources

It is a puzzling phenomenon that fifteenth-century sources mention only authors from the fourteenth century as protagonists of nominalism: William of Ockham, John Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen, Adam Wodeham, Robert Holcot, Gregory of Rimini. Names of contemporary authors scarcely ever occur in the documents.³⁸ This has led historians to assume a

³⁴ For further information on this issue and the references to Albert the Great, see Kaluza 1986, and Kaluza 1988b, 13-24.

³⁵ Heymericus de Campo 1496, f. aiii^v.

³⁶ On the impact of the *Tractatus*, see Hoenen 1993a, 337-43, and Hoenen 1995, esp. 338-39 and 348. The debate between Heymericus and Gerardus de Monte is discussed in Meersseman 1935, 67-128.

³⁷ Domingo de Soto 1967, 32G. Interestingly, Heymericus de Campo divided his *Tractatus problematicus* into two distinct parts. In the first part he attacked the nominalists. This section is called *Contra modernos*. In the second part, entitled *Problemata*, he delineates the debates between Albertists and Thomists. Only Albertists and Thomists are serious partners in philosophy. He calls them the "principales huius temporis philosophiae defensores" (Heymericus de Campo 1496, f. biii^v). For Heymericus, nominalists no longer merit consideration.

³⁸ See the documents in Ehrle 1925, 282 (Cologne 1425), 313 (Paris 1474), 329 and 335

doctrinal continuity between the fourteenth and fifteenth century, which in fact did not exist. What historians have considered to be a school in the fifteenth century did not yet have existence in the fourteenth. Adam Wodeham, Robert Holcot, Marsilius of Inghen, and John Buridan never considered themselves protagonists of a nominalist *traditio* or *processus*.³⁹

A similar orientation to the past can be observed in the texts of other schools. The realists looked at themselves as followers of a tradition which went even further back in time, rooted in the thinking of philosophers and theologians from the thirteenth century: Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, and Duns Scotus.⁴⁰

If this phenomenon is looked at more closely, it appears that the turning point for the fifteenth-century historiographical mind was John Duns Scotus. Adherents of thinkers who lived before or during the age of Scotus were considered to be realists or advocates of the *via antiqua*; those who were attached to thinkers from the later period were regarded as nominalists or defenders of the *via moderna*.⁴¹

This need to look at positions in the mirror of the foregoing centuries was not an isolated phenomenon. It was part of a general trend in intellectual life and began about 1370. In the commentaries on the *Sentences* from the last quarter of the fourteenth century discussion with contemporaries became rare and only seldom were contemporary works quoted. The discussion was with the great thinkers from the past: Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, Adam Wodeham, and Robert Holcot. The *Sentences* commentary of Marsilius of Inghen is a case in point, but he was not the only theologian who hardly entered into discussion with contemporaries; other well-known examples are John Capreolus and Dionysius the Carthusian.⁴²

Fifteenth-century theology was marked by an enormous desire to collect traditional opinions and bring them together within the framework of a commentary on the *Sentences* or some other systematic plan. The ideal was encyclopedic eclecticism. Theologians were not concerned with finding new solutions or new methodologies, but stayed within the limits of the *communis opinio*, which they tried to systematize and to classify into different traditions.⁴³

(Ingolstadt), and in Trapp 1956, esp. 183-84 n. 43 (*Annales*).

³⁹ Courtenay 1978; Courtenay 1983, esp. 164; and Hoenen 1993b.

⁴⁰ Johannes de Nova Domo, *Tractatus de esse et essentia*, in Meersseman 1933, 90-91, and Ehrle 1925, 283 (Cologne 1425), 313-14 (Paris 1474), 329 and 334 (Ingolstadt).

⁴¹ Cf. Courtenay 1987a, 4-6.

⁴² Hoenen 1993b, 21 (with reference to further sources). On Dionysius the Carthusian, see Emery 1992.

⁴³ I develop this point in Hoenen 2000. See also Emery 1992, esp. 333.

The same tendency can be observed in philosophy, although less clearly. In a letter to John Gerson from 1403, William of Euvry distinguished three different traditions within contemporary philosophy, noting that all three were rooted in ancient philosophy: Scotism went back to Plato and Augustine; nominalism to Epicurus; and peripateticism to Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Boethius.⁴⁴ Similar historical affiliations were expressed by Heymericus de Campo in his *Tractatus problematicus*.⁴⁵

The historical background of this traditionalist tendency is difficult to uncover. Perhaps the Great Schism absorbed much of the creative powers of intellectuals, so that in philosophy and theology they only discussed traditional subjects and traditional views. It might also be that this devotion to tradition was the symptom of the search for a new direction in doing philosophy and theology, a search that had not yet found its own way but looked to the past to define its position by referring to philosophical traditions from ancient times. Significantly, in the *Docta ignorantia* Nicholas of Cusa expressed his criticism of the Aristotelian tradition through his support for such ancient philosophers as Pythagoras and Plato.⁴⁶

2.2 Ockham and Wyclif: *causae certaminis*

As far as schools of thought are concerned, references to philosophers and theologians from the past give hardly any information about real historical dependencies or connections, but reveal the doctrinal orientation of the school. They were part of the intellectual image that was propagated by the school or attributed to others.

In this connection it is important to look carefully at the references to William of Ockham, who has traditionally been considered to be the originator of fifteenth-century nominalism. First, one should note that many sources considered John Buridan and Marsilius of Inghen as the most important exponents of nominalism, not William of Ockham.⁴⁷ This is not surprising, since the writings of Buridan and Marsilius, and *not* those of Ockham, were used as textbooks at many universities. The views expressed

⁴⁴ Kaluza 1988b, 15.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Heymericus de Campo 1496, f. dv^r-v and ni^r.

⁴⁶ Cf. Flasch 1998, esp. 120.

⁴⁷ In the *Magnum chronicon Bellicum* the *via moderna* was referred to as a creation of John Buridan, not of William of Ockham. See the edition in Pistorius 1653, 293: "Item. Astronomi hoc tempore [anno domini 1323] maximi fuerunt Parisiis, videlicet Iohannes de Ligneus, Iohannes de Saxonia, Ioannes de Muris et Buridanus, maximus Philosophus, qui invenit viam modernam."

by Buridan and Marsilius therefore could easily become the doctrinal paradigm of the *via nominalium* or the *via moderna*.⁴⁸

Ockham's name, however, functioned differently. He was not the author of the official textbooks, although it was clear to medieval thinkers that his views were generally in line with those of Buridan and Marsilius.⁴⁹ Ockham became rather the symbol of the dangers of nominalism. The reading of his work was prohibited at Paris (in 1339), and many Thomists and Albertists of the fifteenth century took this to be a condemnation of nominalism as a legitimate exposition of Aristotle.

We now know that in 1339 the reading of the works of Ockham was forbidden only until they were officially examined. None of his views were explicitly mentioned in the prohibition of 1339.⁵⁰ This was also known to fifteenth-century nominalists, who had to defend their position against the realists. For them, therefore, Ockham became the symbol of the unjust rejection of nominalism by the Thomists and Albertists.⁵¹

Just as Ockham was the focus of discord in the debate concerning nominalism, so Wyclif was in the discussion of realism. Realists portrayed nominalists as followers of an Ockham whose nominalist teachings had been prohibited in 1339. Nominalists reacted similarly. They portrayed the realists as defenders of John Wyclif, whose teachings had been condemned at Oxford, Prague, and at the Council of Constance.⁵² That these two Englishmen played parallel roles in this respect is illustrated in a document issued by the University of Louvain in 1447. According to this document, the University tried to keep the reading of Aristotle within the boundaries of faith and the traditional interpretations of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. It prohibited the interpretation of Aristotle (*expositio Aristotelis*) expressed by John Wyclif and William of Ockham: *non secundum expositionem Wycklef, Occam, suorumve sequatium*.⁵³

⁴⁸ On the influence of Buridan and Marsilius, see Michael 1985, and Hoenen 1993b, 10.

⁴⁹ See the text by Johannes de Nova Domo quoted in n. 33 and around n. 24 above.

⁵⁰ On the prohibition of 1339, see Kaluza 1988a and Bianchi 1999, 129-59.

⁵¹ See the famous defence of the Paris nominalists against the prohibition of 1474 in Ehrle 1925, 322-26, esp. 323: "(...) inter Nominales primus, qui legitur fuisse condemnatus fuit Guillelmus Okam. (...) Johannes XXII multa privilegia dedit Universitati Parisiensi, ut ipsam doctrinam Guillelmi Okam condemnaret. Dicta tamen Universitas noluit eam condemnare. Sed facultas artium, importunitate victa, fecit statutum, in quo cavetur, dictam doctrinam non esse dogmatizandam, quia nondum erat approbata et examinata." For a discussion, see Kaluza 1995a, 307-27.

⁵² The theological faculty of the University of Heidelberg, a stronghold of nominalism, prohibited the teachings of Wyclif (1412) referring to the condemnations of Oxford and Prague. See Winkelmann 1886, 106 n. 70: "(...) nullus magistrorum aut baccalarius dogmatiset aut dogmatizare presumat perversa condemnataque dogmata Wyckleff eciam universalia realia, verum pocius contraria."

⁵³ The Statute is edited in Baudry 1950, 67-68.

Ockham and Wyclif were the symbols of a reading of Aristotle that was banned in Louvain. In spite of all the doctrinal differences, they had this point in common, so that their teachings could not serve as models of how to comment on the texts of Aristotle. Yet, with Ockham there was an additional twist. On the one hand there was the prohibition of 1339; on the other hand, the prohibition did not mention any doctrine or philosophical methodology.⁵⁴ It was therefore not by chance that the Parisian nominalists in their famous defense of 1474 parried the prohibition by demonstrating that the “condemnation” of Ockham was void and that the motives behind it were strictly political. They argued that a closer look at the history behind the condemnation showed that Ockham asserted the tradition of the Church, since he attacked the heresies of John XXII. In order to get even with him, the Pope prohibited the reading of Ockham’s work.⁵⁵ The history of nominalism is complicated, indeed.

3. HERESY AND THE *WEGESTREIT*

The topic of heresy raises an important issue, namely the relationship between the *Wegestreit* and theology. At first sight, this relationship may not seem evident. Heresy is a theological category. Only theological views can be heretical.⁵⁶ The *Wegestreit*, however, was related to the educational program of the Arts faculty. The debate was about methods of reading the *corpus aristotelicum*. Doctrinally, these methods were connected with the interpretation of universals and therefore seemed to have only philosophical significance.

Yet the sources reveal a different picture. They show that the relationship between philosophy and theology was indeed at stake. In short, the teachings of John Wyclif, John Hus, and Jerome of Prague made the theory of universals a matter of theological importance. Originally, the discussion concerning universals was not burdened with notions of heresy and condemnation.⁵⁷ But by the time Wyclif wrote, the situation had changed. Taking a position on the nature of universals implied taking a position in a theological debate. Eventually, this debate materialized in the opposition between the *via moderna* and the *via antiqua* at the Arts faculty.

⁵⁴ The text is published in Denifle and Chatelain 1891, n. 1023.

⁵⁵ Ehrle 1925, 323, and Kaluza 1995a, 307-27.

⁵⁶ On the issue of heresy in the medieval period, see Grundmann 1978 (with many references to further literature). See also Bianchi 1999, and Boureau 1999.

⁵⁷ The history of the medieval debate on universals is delineated in de Libera 1996.

3.1 Logic and the Bible

As I see it, the story began in the second half of the fourteenth century with a discussion concerning the relationship between philosophy and theology. The question at stake was whether or not divinely inspired theology could make use of philosophy, which is based on human reason only. The issue came to the fore because of developments in the field of logic, and it became institutionally important after the promulgation of the so-called “nominalist” statute by the faculty of Arts at Paris in December 1340.⁵⁸

The statute of 1340 condemned a strictly logical interpretation of the texts of Aristotle and the Bible, which grounded the truth of propositions exclusively on the personal supposition of its terms. This reading of Aristotle and the Bible was condemned because it could lead to the conviction that these texts contained statements that were untrue. To avoid this absurdity, Aristotle and the Bible should be studied according to the intention of their authors, not by applying the rules of personal supposition, the statute argued. Authors adjust the meaning of their words to the subject (*materia subjecta*) that they treat. If this dependency on the subject matter is not taken into consideration, the door to heresy is wide open. True sentences will be considered as false and false sentences as true.⁵⁹

The intention of the Statute was clear: the methodology of explaining the set texts needs to be in accordance with the subject matter with which they deal. The rules of academic logic are not always applicable to Aristotle and the Bible. This message set the tone for the late medieval debate about the relationship between philosophy and theology. The key term is *materia subjecta*. This notion recurred later in the documents concerning the *Wege Streit*.⁶⁰

What was only implicitly stated in the 1340 was made explicit in an official document from 1388 written by Pierre d'Ailly on behalf of the University of Paris in the case against Johannes de Montesono.⁶¹ Pierre's main point was that if theologians adopt the language and demonstrational methods of philosophy, they will easily be drawn into heresies.

⁵⁸ Denifle and Chatelain 1891, n. 1042, 505-507. This statute has been the subject of much discussion. See Kaluza 1994, and Bianchi 1999, 129-62.

⁵⁹ Denifle and Chatelain 1891, 506-507.

⁶⁰ Kaluza 1994, 223-55, and the Statutes of the University of Louvain (1447) in Baudry 1950, 67: “(...) ex quo sermones exponendi sunt, ut philosophus dicit, secundum materiam subjectam, iudicetur in scholis philosophie possibile, impossibile, necessarium vel contingens secundum causas propinquas, nisi quatenus captivandus sit intellectus in obsequium fidei.” As to the notion of “captivandus sit intellectus in obsequium fidei” (II Cor 10, 5: “obsequium Christi”, and Phil. 2, 17: “obsequium fidei”), see Bianchi 1983.

⁶¹ Pierre d'Ailly, *Tractatus ex parte universitatis studii Parisiensis pro causa Fidei contra quemdam fratrem Johannem de Montesono*, in Plessis d'Argentré 1728, vol. 1/2, f. 75a-129a, esp. 125a-29a. In this document, the notion of *materia subiecta* is used as well. See Kaluza 1994, 230.

Jerome's arguments shocked the nominalists at Heidelberg. For this offense, he eventually paid with his life, burnt at the stake in Constance. Witnesses from Heidelberg testified against him.⁶⁷

3.4 Wyclif *condemnatus*

The realist Jerome of Prague considered the nominalists heretics. Soon the nominalists responded in kind by accusing the realists of heresy. By his frequent appeals to the teachings of Wyclif, Jerome indeed was an easy target for his critics. Already at the end of the fourteenth century, there were accusations that Wyclif's teachings were heretical. Twenty-four statements taken from the writings of Wyclif were condemned in London in 1382. They were mainly concerned with theories about the Eucharist and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This condemnation was confirmed and expanded by the University of Prague in 1403. Thereupon, the bishop of Prague prohibited the circulation of Wyclif's writings. Thus, Wyclif's writings on universals and divine ideas could no longer be quoted or referred to in public and all of his views were associated with the taint of heresy. Officially, however, his theory of universals was not directly implicated in the condemnation. The fatal blow was still to come. This took place at the Council of Constance with the condemnation of John Hus by Pierre d'Ailly.⁶⁸

3.5 The Council of Constance

The historical circumstances that led eventually to the condemnation of John Hus and his realism are complex and difficult to understand. One reason for the complexity was the growing threat posed by Bohemian nationalism, which manifested itself religiously in a theory of the Eucharist and a criticism of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In addition, the position of King Wencelaus played a significant role; in order to achieve his church-political aims he gave the Bohemian nation at the University of Prague as many votes as the three German nations combined. This caused a struggle for power between the Bohemian and German nations. The German nations left Prague and considered their departure as a flight from the Wyclifite heresy that was gradually spreading and had stigmatized itself by disloyalty to the principle of academic unity and the unity of the Church.⁶⁹

These intricacies generated great confusion. Contemporaries did not know exactly how different things were related to each other: how realism

⁶⁷ The acts of the trial against Jerome at Constance are edited in Mansi 1961, 842-64.

⁶⁸ The fate of Wyclif's teachings is discussed in Robson 1961, and Dahmus 1952, esp. 89-128. As to the condemnation in Prague, the relevant documents are collected in Palacky 1966.

⁶⁹ Seibt 1957, 63-80, and Smahel 1984.

was connected with the criticism of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; how the theory of universals was linked to the theory of the Eucharist; and how realism could cause academic disunity. The confusion was reinforced by expectations of a civil war in Bohemia, which broke out several years later with extreme violence.⁷⁰

This atmosphere of confusion and fear provoked the condemnation of John Hus at the Council of Constance. The significance of this event cannot be overestimated. The legal status of the Council made this condemnation a very effective weapon against realism.

The interrogation of Hus that preceded the condemnation testifies to the atmosphere of confusion. Hus was questioned by Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly about the relationship between his realism and his theory of the Eucharist. During the session, the Cardinal maintained that he was not sure about the relation, but he had heard that there might be one and he asked Hus for further clarification. Hus declared that there was no connection, whereupon several English masters entered the discussion and accused Hus of being a liar. The debate continued with arguments on both sides. One of the masters tried to stop the investigation. He thought that it was clear that there was no connection and that it made no sense to continue. But the interrogation continued and soon took a tragic turn. Pierre d'Ailly declared that Hus was guilty. "I cannot judge you by looking into your heart, but rather according to things here proved and deduced against you", he said. Hus might indeed claim, d'Ailly continued, that some testimony against him was unfair, "but I have to take it into account", since it makes good sense. John Hus was condemned to the stake.⁷¹ He died on 6 July 1415. Hussitism, however, did not die with him. The chaos and confusion remained, and indeed grew worse.

3.6 Universities

Already in the early fifteenth century, discussion of the dangers of the teachings of John Wyclif, Jerome of Prague, and John Hus found its way into academic institutions. It provoked a debate about the reading of Aristotle in the Arts faculty, which developed into the distinction between *via moderna* and *via antiqua*.

⁷⁰ See Smahel 1985. Further literature is listed in Zeman 1977.

⁷¹ *Mag. Petri de Mladenowic relatio de mag. Joannis Hus causa in constantiensi concilio acta*, in Palacky 1966, 235-324, esp. 276-78, at 278: "Card. Cameracensis dixit: Nos non possumus secundum tuam conscientiam judicare, sed secundum hic probata et deducta contra te et aliqua confessata; et vos forte omnes velletis vocare inimicos et adversarios vestros, qui contra vos scientes etiam deponunt, causas rationabiles scientiae allegantes; oportet nos illis credere." On the history of the report by Peter of Mladonowitz, see Bujnoch 1963, 31-35.

As mentioned above (at and around n. 21), in October 1414 the Arts faculty at Cologne tried to stop the introduction of the old way of reading Aristotle (*modus exponendi libros Aristotelis antiquus*) by arguing that it had caused serious trouble in Cologne and elsewhere (*unde repperit magnum discisium hic et alibi in universitatibus famosis*).⁷² The claim that realist theories were the seeds of academic dissension was the main argument. Obviously, this was a strong point, since it could be backed with historical evidence. The sad events at the University of Prague had demonstrated incontrovertibly that realism was a threat to academic unity.

Interestingly, four years earlier, the accusation that he had violated academic unity was among the official charges against Jerome of Prague at his trial in Vienna. It played an important role in the testimony of the witnesses. Transcriptions of the trial have survived and show that the issue was taken very seriously. Jerome had broken the solemn pledge of the academic master to respect academic unity and not to cause any strife or dissension.⁷³

Even more significant is a letter from the German Prince Electors to the City of Cologne, written in 1425. In this letter, the City is asked to urge the University – which in the meantime had become a bastion of Thomism and Albertism – to abandon the old way and return to the new way as in earlier days. The Electors were concerned about faith and considered realism a threat to faith. Realist theories, even those of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, were difficult to understand and barely comprehensible to young students (*juvenes*). The students might become confused and end up as heretics. Justifying their concern, they mentioned the realist heresies defended at the University of Prague. In itself there was nothing wrong with realism, they argued, but young students who adopt its vocabulary without understanding it could easily fall into error and become heretics: *incidunt in errores perniciosos aut hereses seu varias controversias – exemplum adest de Pragensesibus*. Therefore, the Prince Electors suggested, students should be trained according to the teachings of such *magistri moderniores* as John Buridan and Marsilius of Inghen. The style of these modern masters was more in accordance with the clarity and modesty of ordinary language (*stilus humilior*) and therefore less liable to

⁷² Weiler 1962, 57 (edition of the document), and Tewes 1993, 279-331 (discussion of the events at Cologne).

⁷³ See the testimony of Johannes Swab de Puczpach and Nicolaus Czungl in Klicman 1898, 16: “Secundo interrogatus de periurio respondit [sc. Johannes Swab de Puczpach] quod sic, quia de more universitatis studii Pragensis sit, quod quilibet iurat, cum primo intitilatur, quod velit servare concordiam inter naciones; et contra hoc venerit [sc. Jerome of Prague] propria in persona (...)”, and *ibid.*, 23-24.

misunderstandings. They used concepts and arguments that did not lead to heresy: *ex quibus nullum derivari possit erroris contagium*.⁷⁴

Fifty years later, the Parisian nominalists employed the same argument in their famous reaction to Louis XI's proclamation against nominalism. According to the nominalists, nominalism supports the faith, whereas realism leads to heresy: *pars Nominalium semper est fidei conformior, pars autem Realium periculosa*. Again there were references to John Hus and Jerome of Prague: *patet in materia universalium*.⁷⁵

4. CONCLUSION

My investigation gives rise to some further historical and methodological considerations.

1. The history of late medieval schools of thought is complicated, especially the history of the *via moderna*. Not only doctrinal but also institutional and church-political aspects play an important role. These aspects reinforced each other and produced situations in which established doctrines became suspect. The theory of universals is a case in point. In the fourteenth century the problem of universals was considered to be simply a logical and metaphysical issue. In the fifteenth century, however, it was the center of a debate on orthodoxy and heterodoxy.⁷⁶ The deciding factors in this new development were not doctrinal, but lay outside the field of philosophy: Bohemian nationalism and the condemnations of John Hus and Jerome of Prague at the Council of Constance. This demonstrates that the doctrinal history of nominalism and realism can be studied adequately only if the historical context is taken into account.

⁷⁴ Ehrle 1925, 282. Interestingly, the concerns of the Prince Electors are paralleled by three investigations against German Hussitists in 1425; see Köpstein 1963, and Heimpel 1969.

⁷⁵ I quote this interesting passage in full. It again demonstrates the intimate connection between heresy and schools of thought in the mind of the medieval academics. Ehrle 1925, 326: "Ad illud autem quod contra Nominales allegatur, quod scientia eorum est perversa et plena haeresibus, respondetur primo, quod in his, qui nominalitatem et realitatem concernunt, pars Nominalium semper est fidei conformior et ab ecclesia frequenter approbata, pars autem Realium periculosa et in multis ab ecclesia reprobata, ut patet in materia universalium (...)."

⁷⁶ The central importance of the issue of universals is confirmed by a speech of Stephanus Hoest of Ladenburg at the University of Heidelberg in 1469. According to Hoest, all differences between the *via moderna* and *via antiqua* are rooted in this issue. The speech is published in Stephan Hoest 1971, 164-79. See *ibid.*, 176: "Hec unica de universalibus sententia viam hanc [sc. modernam] ab antiqua discriminat ceteris, in quibus dissident, inde profluentibus." See also Ritter 1975, 150-53, esp. 153.

2. The official documents of the *Wegestreit* seldom give information about the doctrinal arguments of the various parties involved. Only brief statements are reported, if any.⁷⁷ Rather, attention is focused on references to past condemnations that affected the views of the antagonists. Opponents are discredited not through philosophical arguments but through the claim that they defend condemned propositions. Past condemnations, then, were being used to decide philosophical matters. Late medieval schools of thought were thus subject to political debates that controlled their status at the universities. Only a multidisciplinary approach can elucidate this interplay of philosophy, theology, and politics.

3. Even in regular academic treatises, condemnations played an important role. Henry of Gorkum based his criticism of John Wyclif not on the writings of the incriminated author, but on a list of heretical articles discussed at the Council of Constance.⁷⁸ The arguments Wyclif put forward in his writings were not even considered. The list of articles drew all the attention of the critic. Modern historians should be aware of this narrow focus. The fifteenth-century picture of Wyclif was not constructed on the basis of an academic study of his writings; rather it was focused on his heretical views concerning the sacraments and the hierarchy of the Church, which were the main points of the condemnation.⁷⁹

4. Both parties of the *Wegestreit* presented their views as a safeguard of orthodoxy and a weapon against heterodoxy. This is true for nominalism as well as for realism. The issue of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy can therefore be seen as a main ideological characteristic of the debate between the parties. This observation is important. It shows that the discussion about the curriculum of the Arts faculties was pursued with a theological perspective in mind. The masters tried to prevent students from being misguided in matters of faith through their study of the *corpus aristotelicum*.⁸⁰ The nominalists saw the complicated terminology of the

⁷⁷ Exceptionally, in their defence against the prohibition of 1474 the Parisian nominalists give some doctrinal information. See Ehrle 1925, 322: "Illi doctores Nominales dicti sunt qui non multiplicant res principaliter sign<ific>atas per terminos secundum multiplicationem terminorum. Reales autem, qui e contra res multiplicatas esse contendunt (condendunt *ed.*), secundum multiplicatam terminorum." On this issue, see Müller 2000.

⁷⁸ Weiler 1962, 207 and 231.

⁷⁹ One of the reasons for this focus on the condemnation might be because the writings of Wyclif were not easily available, since their circulation was forbidden.

⁸⁰ The theological perspective of the debate at the Arts faculty is evident in a piece written at the University of Ingolstadt at the end of the fifteenth century and edited in Ehrle 1925, 334: "Secuntur positiones et dicta rationalis et naturalis philosophie, in quibus dicta modernorum plerumque discrepant et contradicunt doctrine Realium. Prenotandum est quod dicit Johannes de Gerson, cancellarius Parisiensis in tractatu de examinatione doctrinarum (doctorum *ed.*): Attendendum est primo et principaliter, si doctrina sit conformis sacre scripture tam in se quam in modo traditionis." It should be kept in mind that most masters

realists as a possible danger and opted for a *stilus humilior*, whereas the realists held to the exposition of Aristotle as it was exemplified in the works of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. This theological perspective also explains why in 1474 King Louis XI could successfully prohibit nominalism by presenting himself as *rex christianissimus* in the tradition of Charlemagne, whose main task was to guard and protect the *fidei puritas* in France.⁸¹

5. The *Wegestreit* disappeared during the course of the sixteenth century. The reasons are partly ecclesiastical and partly institutional. The Reformation provoked new divisions, which made obsolete the opposition between the *via moderna* and *via antiqua* in the universities. In addition, secular rulers and cities had a growing need for well-educated scholars who would help them in political and governmental matters as professional civil servants. This affected the career prospects of Arts students. The study of the Arts was no longer seen as a preparation for higher faculties such as theology, but gained a significance of its own. Naturally, the *Wegestreit*, which had gained its force and influence through its relation to theology lost its meaning for the Arts curriculum.⁸²

It would be desirable to add to the foregoing picture of the fifteenth-century debates a study of the gradual death of the *Wegestreit*. An investigation of relevant sources would reveal cultural changes that no longer gave room to a phenomenon typical of the late medieval period, and thus would show the historical contingency of many of the issues at stake in the fifteenth century. But that study must await another time.

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who commented upon the *corpus aristotelicum* at the Arts faculty or at the *bursae* of the Arts faculty were *baccalarii* or professors at the theological faculty.

⁸¹ Ehrle 1925, 310 and 312.

⁸² On the changing historical profile of the Arts faculty, see the contributions in Schwinges 1999.

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