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THE TRANSITION OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE.
SCHOLASTICISM IN THE GHENT BOETHIUS (1485) AND OTHER
COMMENTARIES ON THE *CONSOLATIO**

1. *Introduction*

Medieval philosophy was related to the educational system of the schools and the universities, especially since the thirteenth century. It was institutional in character and expressed itself in a form which has been labelled as 'scholasticism', to underscore its intimate relationship with the schools and the universities. Education at the medieval universities was based on the reading of a relatively fixed list of texts, which in philosophy consisted mainly of the works of Aristotle, and in theology of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and the Bible. These works were studied and commented upon with standard procedures and with the use of concepts and theories, which most often were taken from the list of set texts or from a select group of acclaimed interpreters. A great number of medieval commentaries on Aristotle, the *Sentences*, and the Bible have survived in manuscripts and early printed editions, bearing witness to this prominent aspect of medieval thinking.¹

Because medieval thinking was so closely connected with the universities and their educational program, modern research has been mainly concentrated on the theories that were developed at the universities and

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¹ In addition to the commentaries on the texts of the curriculum, the disputation played an important role in university education as well. The commentary and the disputation are the most significant ways philosophical thinking expressed itself at the medieval schools and universities. On this subject, see A. Kenny and J. Pinborg, 'Medieval Philosophical Literature', *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg, Cambridge 1982, 11-42; *Philosophy and Learning. Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. J. F. M. Hoenen, J. H. J. Schneider, G. Wieland, Leiden 1995 (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, 6), and O. Weijers, *La 'disputatio' à la Faculté des Arts de Paris (1200-1350 environ)*, Turnhout 1995 (Studia Artistarum, 2).

the discussions between the university masters.² This approach is legitimate and valuable for the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. It studies the development of philosophical thinking within its proper educational context. Yet, for the later period, the situation differs. Although the universities still play a prominent role (their number is even growing), they no longer exclusively determine the intellectual climate of the time. New intellectual approaches and aspirations are developed outside the universities, a movement that is exemplified by the rise of humanism.³ Also the universities themselves are changing in character from more-or-less closed institutions to organizations with narrow ties to the cities and other secular powers. Intellectual knowledge is deprofessionalizing.⁴

1.1. *Non-academic philosophy*

This means that the history of late medieval philosophical thinking must be studied from a broad perspective. Not only the developments at the universities need to be studied, but also the growing intellectual interests and needs outside the universities. This is not an easy task. The many forms of non-academic philosophy are very different and they cannot be reduced to each other. There are the translations of Latin works into the vernacular, made for the court or for an intellectually interested lay public.⁵ And there are the sermons and writings mainly of Dominican authors like Meister Eckhart and John Tauler, in which philosophical notions developed at the university were adapted to and transmitted to a

² For a review of modern research in medieval philosophy, see *Gli studi di filosofia medievale fra otto e novecento*, ed. R. Imbach and A. Maierù, Rome 1991 (Storia e letteratura).

³ A recent account of the development of humanism is Ch. G. Nauert Jr., *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, Cambridge 1995 (New Approaches to European History, 6), which contains an extensive bibliography.

⁴ A general background of this cultural change is provided by the *Handbook of European History 1400-1600. Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Th. A. Brady Jr., H. A. Oberman, J. D. Tracy, 2 vols., Leiden, New York, Cologne 1994-1995. See also with an extensive bibliography, E. Meuthen, *Das 15. Jahrhundert*, München 1984 (Oldenbourg Grundriß der Geschichte, 9).

⁵ R. Imbach, *Laien in der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Hinweise und Anregungen zu einem vernachlässigten Thema*, Amsterdam 1989 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 14), 79-101, and S. Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement. Les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles*, 2nd edition, Paris 1987, 129-171. See also most recently R. Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs. Initiations à la philosophie médiévale 1*, Fribourg 1996 (Vestigia, 21).

spiritually affected public that had almost no philosophical training.⁶ Also, there are the many 'compendia' with abbreviations and extracts of academic philosophical and theological works, which were used at the schools outside the universities. Examples are the *Compendium theologiae veritatis* of Hugo Ripelin of Strasbourg and the *Summa naturalium* or *Philosophia pauperum*.⁷ The diversity of these sources makes it difficult to find the exact clue to understand the mechanisms that underlie the transition of knowledge from the universities to the lay public outside.

Although the universities played a distinctive role in the shaping of medieval thinking, not all the important developments took place within the walls of the university lecture hall. Outside the academic world events happened that were momentous for the history of medieval philosophy as well. It is important to reflect on these events, because only a thorough and detailed knowledge of the historical facts allows for an adequate evaluation of the reciprocal relationship between universities and the world outside. I will mention briefly three examples, each from a different period.

Albert the Great is the first scholastic author who wrote an extensive commentary on all the works of the 'corpus aristotelicum' that were known by then. He began his project about 1250, the period in which the reading and studying of the 'corpus aristotelicum' became officially part of the curriculum of the Arts Faculty at Paris.⁸ The historical importance of this undertaking cannot be underestimated. It paved the way for the many commentaries on the works of Aristotle that were to become characteristic of medieval scholasticism. Remarkably, however, Albert did

⁶ A. de Libera, *La mystique rhénane. D'Albert le Grand à Maître Eckhart*, Paris 1984 (Points Sagesses); id., *Eckhart, Suso, Tauler et la divinisation de l'homme*, Paris 1996, and L. Sturlese, 'Tauler im Kontext. Die philosophischen Voraussetzungen des 'Seelengrundes' in der Lehre des deutschen Neuplatonikers Berthold von Moosburg', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 109 (1987), 390-426.

⁷ G. Steer, *Hugo Ripelin von Straßburg. Zur Rezeptions- und Wirkungsgeschichte des 'Compendium theologiae veritatis' im deutschen Spätmittelalter*, Tübingen 1981 (Texte und Textgeschichte, 2); id., 'Das *Compendium theologiae veritatis* des Hugo Ripelin von Straßburg. Anregungen zur Bestimmung seines Verhältnisses zu Albertus Magnus', *Albertus Magnus und der Albertismus. Deutsche philosophische Kultur des Mittelalters*, ed. M. J. F. M. Hoenen and A. de Libera, Leiden 1995 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 48), 133-154, and B. Geyer, *Die Albert dem Großen zugeschriebene Summa naturalium*, Münster 1938 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 13/1-5).

⁸ F. Van Steenberghen, *La philosophie au XIII^e siècle*, 2nd edition, Louvain-La-Neuve 1991 (Philosophes Médiévaux, 28), 322f.

not write his commentaries at the University of Paris, where he had worked until 1248, but at the 'studium' of the Dominicans in Cologne.⁹

The second example again concerns Cologne, but almost a century later. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, a new and important development in the use of logic and semantic techniques for solving philosophical and theological problems made its appearance at the universities in England. This development was not taken over on the Continent immediately. It was only in the 1340s that theologians at the University of Paris used the writings of English authors in which these techniques were employed.¹⁰ The reception of this new form of theology ('theologia anglicana') was not confined to the university. Also outside it attracted the attention of theologians, perhaps even earlier than in Paris. The earliest summarizing redaction of the *Lectura Oxoniensis* of Adam Wodeham, one of most important theologians who contributed to the development of the 'theologia anglicana', was made in Cologne between 1334 and 1348, two generations before the foundation of the university in 1388, probably in the Franciscan 'studium'.¹¹

Thirdly, scholastic thinking in the late medieval period is characterized by the emergence of different schools of thought.¹² Although these schools played a role until at least the eighteenth century, in retrospect we can say that the most important philosophical movements did not come from the adherents of these schools, but from those outside. This development begins already in the early fifteenth century. Nicolas Cusanus, the most modern of the medieval thinkers, wrote his works without ever being affiliated with the university as a teacher. In 1435 he refused a professorship at the newly-founded Theological Faculty of the

⁹ L. Sturlese, *Die deutsche Philosophie im Mittelalter. Von Bonifatius bis zu Albert dem Großen 748-1280*, München 1993, 332-342.

¹⁰ W. J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1987, 250-306, and id., 'The Role of English Thought in the Transformation of University Education in the Late Middle Ages', *Rebirth, Reform, and Resilience. Universities in Transition 1300-1700*, ed. J. M. Kittelson and P. J. Transue, Columbus 1984, 103-162.

¹¹ W. J. Courtenay, *Adam Wodeham. An Introduction to his Life and Writings*, Leiden 1978 (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 21), 133f. and 215-222, and id., 'Theologia Anglicana Modernorum at Cologne in the Fourteenth Century', *Die Kölner Universität im Mittelalter. Geistige Wurzeln und soziale Wirklichkeit*, ed. A. Zimmermann and G. Vuillemin-Diem, Berlin 1989 (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 20), 245-254. On the 'studia' of mendicant orders in Cologne, see E. Meuthen, *Die alte Universität*, Köln 1988 (Kölner Universitätsgeschichte, 1), 41-51 (with further literature).

¹² M. J. F. M. Hoenen, 'Late Medieval Schools of Thought in the Mirror of University Textbooks. The *Promptuarium argumentorum* (Cologne 1492)', *Philosophy and Learning*, ed. Hoenen and others, 329-369.

University of Louvain.¹³ In his *De docta ignorantia* he explicitly rejected scholastic philosophy (*communis via philosophorum*), which for him was too much linked with Aristotelianism.¹⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that Cusanus used concepts that were developed in the writings of university teachers, especially Albert the Great and Heymericus de Campo, his philosophical methodology and the design of his writings have hardly any resemblance to current fifteenth-century scholasticism, but reveal the burgeoning spirit of the modern period.¹⁵ Almost naturally, his writings were not received at the universities, but criticized and attacked by the academy. Cusanus had his admirers outside the walls of the university, with the monks of Tegernsee.¹⁶

1.2. Transition of knowledge

Thus, a study of the medieval philosophical culture cannot limit itself to the world of the universities, but has to investigate the developments outside and examine the relationship between the currents at the universities and those outside. In the period between 1200 and 1500, it was mainly the universities that developed the standards for philosophical and theological reasoning, especially with regard to methodology and the subject-matters discussed. The academia had an impact on the mod-

¹³ On the foundation of the Theological Faculty at Louvain, see the contributions of J. M. van Eijl, J. IJsewijn, and H.-J. Brandt in *Facultas S. Theologiae Lovaniensis 1432-1797*, ed. J. M. van Eijl, Louvain 1977 (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 45), 19-51. As to the offer of a professorship, see *Acta Cusana. Quellen zur Lebensgeschichte des Nikolaus von Kues*, ed. E. Meuthen and H. Hallauer, vol. 1/1: 1401-1437 Mai 17, Hamburg 1976, n. 235, 161.

¹⁴ Nicolas Cusanus, *De docta ignorantia*, Lib. 3, ed. E. Hoffmann and R. Klibansky, Leipzig 1932 (Opera omnia, 1), 163 (Epistola auctoris ad dominum Iulianum cardinalem). On his rejection of aristotelianism, see M. J. F. M. Hoenen, 'Ista prius inaudita. Eine neu entdeckte Vorlage der *Docta Ignorantia* und ihre Bedeutung für die frühe Philosophie des Nikolaus von Kues', *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale*, 21 (1995), 375-476, esp. 420f. and 438-443.

¹⁵ On Albert the Great and Heymericus de Campo as sources for Cusanus, see R. Haubst, 'Albert, wie Cusanus ihn sah', *Albertus Magnus. Doctor Universalis 1280/1980*, ed. G. Meyer and A. Zimmermann, Mainz 1980, 167-194, and id., 'Zum Fortleben Alberts des Großen bei Heymerich von Kamp und Nikolaus von Kues', *Studia Albertina*, ed. H. Ostlender, Münster 1952 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Supplementband 4), 420-447. The significance of Cusanus for the modern period is discussed in the classical studies of W. Schulz, *Der Gott der neuzeitlichen Metaphysik*, Pfullingen 1957, and H. Blumenberg, *Aspekte der Epochenschwelle: Cusaner und Nolaner*, Frankfurt/Main 1976.

¹⁶ The reception of the thinking of Cusanus is studied in S. Meier-Oeser, *Die Präsenz des Vergessenen. Zur Rezeption der Philosophie des Nicolaus Cusanus vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Münster 1989 (Buchreihe der Cusanus-Gesellschaft, 10).

elling of the philosophical and theological knowledge cultivated and developed outside the universities, not vice versa. This also goes for the first two examples given above. The study program at the 'studia' of the mendicant orders was modelled according to that of the universities and some of the 'studia' were even incorporated into the university. Also the texts that were studied and the methods that were used in commenting these texts were taken over from the university curriculum.¹⁷ Yet, this dependency of the 'studia' on the universities does not mean that the intellectual level was only secondary or behind, as the above examples have shown.

A systematic study of the relationship between the universities and the intellectual culture outside has to take this normative role of the universities into consideration. Yet, not all the subjects and problems that were dealt with in the academic commentaries were also discussed at the 'studia' and elsewhere. There are at least three different aspects that need to be distinguished when dealing with the transition of academic knowledge to the outside.

The first aspect is that of delay. Works that were written outside of the universities do not always give an up-to-date account of academic discussions. Authors may have used older sources (Augustine, Peter Lombard, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas) and taken over the debates reported by these sources, presenting them as if they were still current.

Secondly there is the point of eclecticism. Authors may use very different sources and put texts together that are not always clearly connected, guided by encyclopedic interests, even at the expense of systematic coherence. Opposing or divergent opinions may be collected and quoted without indication of which opinion is adhered to or preferred.

Finally there is the aspect of simplification. The knowledge that is taken over from the academic sources is adapted and simplified. Not all the details are given, but only the essence or a few quotations, a phenomenon that was fostered by the use of so-called 'conclusiones' in the scholastic treatises since the fourteenth century.¹⁸

¹⁷ On the educational program of the mendicant orders, see A. Walz, *Compendium historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Rome 1948, 210-226; W. A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order. Vol. 2: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, Staten Island, New York 1973, and D. Berg, *Armut und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Studienwesens der Bettelorden im 13. Jahrhundert*, Düsseldorf 1977 (Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Bochumer Historische Studien, 15).

¹⁸ The 'conclusiones' were summarizing statements (not conclusions) on which the reasoning was focused. For an interesting example, see the 'conclusiones' extracted from the

1.3. *The commentaries on the 'Consolatio' and the problem of divine foreknowledge*

The tradition of the commentaries on the *Consolatio philosophiae* is an interesting field for studying the different aspects of the transition of knowledge, both synchronically and diachronically. This tradition begins already in the ninth century, long before the medieval universities were founded and continues in the modern period. It includes Latin as well as vernacular commentaries.¹⁹ Importantly, many of these commentaries were written outside the walls of the university. The reading of the *Consolatio* was not part of the regular curriculum at the universities, it was only lectured upon 'extraordinarie'.²⁰ Yet, in the treatise a number of problems are discussed, that were closely related to the subjects of the academic debates, such as the theory of the soul, the ordering of the cosmos, and the problem of divine foreknowledge. Especially the subject of divine foreknowledge is important for our investigation. It is discussed at great length in the last book of the *Consolatio* and recurs in many commentaries. The discussion in the commentaries on the *Consolatio* is paralleled by that in the commentaries on the *Sentences* and on the *De interpretatione*, works that were read as part of the regular university curriculum. This makes the problem of divine foreknowledge an appropriate subject for exploring the relationship between on the one hand the regular academic treatment of specific philosophical problems and on the other the 'extraordinarie' and non-academic discussion.

In addition, the problem of divine foreknowledge enables us to adequately investigate the three aspects of delay, eclecticism, and simplification. In the late middle ages, the development of the problem is in a constant state of flux. The discussions in the second half of the thirteenth

commentary on the *Sentences* of John of Ripa in: John of Ripa, *Conclusiones*, ed. A. Combes, Paris 1957 (*Études de philosophie médiévale*, 44).

¹⁹ For the Latin commentaries, see P. Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et Postérité de Boèce*, Paris 1967 (*Études Augustiniennes*). A bibliography with literature on the vernacular tradition is provided by N. H. Kaylor Jr., *The Medieval Consolation of Philosophy. An Annotated Bibliography*, New York 1992 (*Garland Medieval Bibliographies*, 7).

²⁰ For details, see A. Pattin, 'Reinerus van St.-Truiden, rector van de Latijnse school te Mechelen (circa 1370) en commentator van Boëthius' *De consolacione philosophiae*', *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 44 (1982), 298-319, esp. 305, and N. Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*', *Boethius. His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. M. Gibson, Oxford 1981, 362-409, esp. 380-381.

century are different from those in the fourteenth century and later.²¹ This allows for the study of the aspect of delay. Also, the problem is closely connected to the important developments that shaped medieval thinking, such as the debate about the works of Aristotle in the thirteenth century and the introduction of the logico-semantic approach in the fourteenth century. Although the issue of divine foreknowledge is among the oldest philosophical problems, in the mid-thirteenth century it received a new impulse by the growing acquaintance with the works of Aristotle, who seems to deny that God has knowledge of creation.²² The introduction of the logico-semantic approach in philosophy and theology again stimulated a new development of the problem. The debate became more logically orientated. The problem was no longer discussed by concentrating on the understanding of the essence of God, but by a semantic analysis of propositions *about* the essence of God and the knowledge that goes with the divine essence.²³ As a result of this last development, the problem became more technical than before. This gives us the possibility to study the aspect of simplification and to see whether in the non-academic and 'extraordinaire' writings the same technical level is reached as in the regular academic treatises. Finally, the issue of divine knowledge allows for the study of the aspect of eclecticism. Through the years, a number of different solutions to the problem were put forward. Some authors stressed the divine eternity (Thomas Aquinas), others the divine will (John Duns Scotus), and others underscored the impossibility of human understanding (William of Ockham). These traditions are different in outlook and methodology and they were also recognized as such by contemporaries, although some of them tried to reconcile them.²⁴ The question now is, whether these views were referred to or taken over in non-academic writings and whether they were taken over in their pure form or mixed with each other.

²¹ For a listing of the literature on the history of the problem, see most recently Ch. D. Schabel, 'Peter Aureol on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents: *Scriptum in Primum Librum Sententiarum*, distinctions 38-39', *Cahiers de L'Institut du Moyen-Age Grec et Latin*, 65 (1995), 63-212, esp. 65 note 4.

²² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, c. 9, 1074b15-1075a10.

²³ See p. 205 below.

²⁴ An interesting case is that of Robert Cowton, who tried to bring together the views of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. See H. Schwamm, *Robert Cowton über das göttliche Vorherwissen*, Innsbruck 1931 (Philosophie und Grenzwissenschaften, 3/5).

1.4. *The Ghent Boethius*

In this paper, we will study the above-mentioned problems by analyzing the so-called Ghent Boethius, an impressive incunabulum (1485) consisting of a Latin text, a translation and an extensive commentary in Middle Dutch. The commentary was composed between 1444 and 1477, perhaps about 1455, and printed several years later by Arend de Keysere in 1485. It had a wide circulation and many copies have survived, some of which are beautifully decorated.²⁵

1.4.1. *The authorship*

Unfortunately, the book is written anonymously. It is possible, however, to give a profile of its author. The dialect of the Ghent Boethius and a remark in the preface saying that the author has left a corrected copy of his work in the library of the St Veerle (Verelde) Chapter indicate that the author must have been connected with Ghent and the St Veerle Chapter there.²⁶ It has been suggested that the author therefore must have been an canon of that chapter, but there is no further evidence for that.²⁷ Yet, the author is familiar with scholastic thought and reasoning and knows how to handle the technical aspects of the problem of divine foreknowledge. Unlike Pseudo-Thomas and Dionysius the Carthusian, two other commentators of the *Consolatio*, our author inserts in his work lengthy discussions of the logical intricacies of how to reconcile divine foreknowledge and human freedom. This makes it likely that he must have had university training.

In the fifteenth century, it is not unusual that academics continue their career as writers outside the university. An interesting example is the Albertist Heymericus de Campo, who between 1420 and 1422 went to Diest near Louvain after finishing his studies at Paris. At Diest he wrote

²⁵ For further details on the Ghent Boethius, see the contribution of Goriş and Wissink elsewhere in this volume.

²⁶ J. Machiels, *De boekdrukkunst te Gent tot 1560*, Ghent 1994 (Bijdragen tot de bibliotekwetenschap, 7), 19-22, esp. 22 (with further literature), and the Ghent Boethius, ed. A. de Keysere, Ghent 1485 (Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 171 A 2), *De prologhe*, fol. a3^{rb}: "(...) so heb ic (...) den allereersten bouc van deser translacie met mijnder hand ghecorrigeert te sente Verelde te Ghend in de librarie doen legghen (...)."

²⁷ A. van de Vyver, 'Over de Nederlandsche vertalingen van Boethius' *Vertrouwing der Wijsbegeerte*', *Vlaamsche Gids*, 15 (1927), 216-221, esp. 219, and J. M. Hoek, *De Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae met een overzicht van de andere Nederlandse en niet-Nederlandse vertalingen*, Harderwijk 1943, 34f.

his first treatise, the *Compendium divinorum*, a large handbook of metaphysics. The *Compendium* is of a high intellectual level and betrays the hand of university-educated scholar.²⁸

Against a probable university training of our author it might be objected that in his commentary he quotes at large from the works of others, without mentioning his sources, as we will see.²⁹ This however does not argue against university training or academic habits. In the *Tractatus problematicus*, written at the University of Cologne in 1425-1426, Heymericus de Campo quotes from the work of Johannes de Nova Domo anonymously.³⁰ And Peter of Ailly inserts parts of the work of Gregory of Rimini in his commentary on the *Sentences*, again without mentioning the source.³¹

At which school or university our author was educated is difficult to determine. Regarding his thorough knowledge of theological problems, he in all probability must have received his training at a theological faculty. This seems to be confirmed by a reference to the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which were used as a standard textbook at every late medieval theological faculty.³² Unfortunately, this reference is taken from one of the sources he had at his desk.³³ Yet, independently of this source, he discusses a number of issues that are dealt with in the commentaries on the *Sentences* and that are usually not discussed in the commentaries on the *Consolatio*.³⁴ It remains hypothetical, but if he were educated at a university, it may have been the University of Louvain, which had a

²⁸ On Heymericus de Campo, see M. J. F. M. Hoenen, 'Academic and Intellectual Life in the Low Countries. The University Career of Heymeric de Campo († 1460)', *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 51 (1994), 173-209. The *Compendium divinorum* is edited in J. B. Korolec, 'Compendium divinorum Heymericus de Campo w rkp. BJ 695. Studia nad dziejami Albertyzmy Kolonskiego', *Studia Mediewistyczne*, 8 (1967), 19-75, and 9 (1968), 3-90.

²⁹ Also in other commentaries on the *Consolatio* there are anonymous quotations. See A. J. Minnis and L. Nauta, 'More Platonico loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches', *Chaucer's 'Boece' and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Chaucer Studies, 18), 1-33, esp. 1-11, for a discussion of the sources employed by Nicholas Trevet.

³⁰ A. G. Weiler, 'Un traité de Jean de Nova Domo sur les Universaux', *Vivarium*, 6 (1968), 108-154.

³¹ Ch. D. Schabel, *The Quarrel with Aureol. Peter Aureol's Role in the Late-Medieval Debate over Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents, 1315-1475*, Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Iowa 1994, 334 (table 4).

³² Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [T5]^{ra}: "(...) ende dese materie es int langhe ghe<de>termineert libro primo Sententiarum, daerse de clerke besouken moghen."

³³ Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 164^{rb}.

³⁴ See note 153 below.

theological faculty since 1432 and attracted many students from the Low Countries, who in earlier times went to Paris or Cologne.³⁵

1.4.2. *The author's intention*

In the preface (*de prologhe*), the author discusses the design and the methodology that he followed in composing the treatise. The preface consists of three sections of unequal length. In the first section, he introduces the treatise of Boethius to the reader using the scheme of the Aristotelian four causes.³⁶ In the next section, he gives account of his translating the *Consolatio*—how he rendered the verse and the prose parts into Middle Dutch.³⁷ Finally, the commentary that is attached to the translation is discussed. In this section, the author highlights that in his commentary he added things that are meant to be morally edifying and comforting.³⁸ This may suggest that the author primarily had a practical and ethical intention. A careful study of the commentary, however, shows that his ambition covers more. He also intends to educate his readership with interesting details and philosophical digressions. He gives minute information on personalities or natural phenomena.³⁹ And in the discussion of divine foreknowledge he elaborately deals with the logical puzzles involved in that problem. The commentary provides more than just comfort. It is a 'Compendium to the *Consolatio*', containing all the information needed to understand and use the text. The author not only intended to edify his readers, but also to educate.

³⁵ On the relationship between the Universities of Louvain, Cologne, and Paris, see A. G. Weiler, 'Les relations entre l'Université de Louvain et l'Université de Cologne au XV^e siècle', *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. IJsewijn and J. Paquet, Louvain 1978, 49-81, and in the same volume A. L. Gabriel, 'Intellectual Relations between the University of Louvain and the University of Paris in the 15th Century', 82-132.

³⁶ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), *De prologhe*, fol. A2^{ra}-A3^{rb}. For a contemporary example (1452) of the use of this scheme in the Latin tradition, see M. J. F. M. Hoenen, *Speculum philosophiae medii aevi. Die Handschriftensammlung des Dominikaners Georg Schwartz († nach 1484)*, Amsterdam 1994 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 22), 49f.

³⁷ Ibid., fol. A3^{rb}. See Goris and Wissink elsewhere in this volume.

³⁸ Ibid., fol. A3^{rb}: "Hebbe (...) ooc onderwilen wat sedelics vertroostens over al ghesayt."

³⁹ The same goes for the commentary on the *Consolatio* by William of Conches. See the contribution of Nauta in this volume.

1.4.3. *The sources*

In writing the commentary, the author invoked many different sources. Recent research has shown that he directly or indirectly used the commentaries of William of Conches, Pseudo-Thomas and Reinier of St Truiden.⁴⁰ Interestingly these three commentaries are written in Latin, not in the vernacular.

Apart from these commentaries, he also used other kinds of sources. Especially striking are the many references to the Church Fathers. Occasionally, they are so numerous and so systematically arranged that the assumption seems justified that he used one or more 'florilegia'. A clear example can be found toward the end of the commentary, where a large number of 'auctoritates' on the issues of humbleness (*ootmoedicheit*) and tears (*tranen*) are quoted. To following sample may illustrate the use of these 'auctoritates'.⁴¹

(...) *Gregorius Omelia octava supra Ezechielem*: Hets emmer eene droghe bede, die alsheels van gheinen tranen weet. *Idem in Pastoralis*: Therte van eenen yghelijken zal in rauwen alzo vele tranen drijncken alst hem voor gode in zonden kent zijnde verdrooght. *Idem octavo Moraliū*: Dat de droghe dorre zondaren hier in ignoreren, werdt niet zelden den screyenden gheopenbaert. Een rauwende herte vindt tquade vele bet dadt heift begaen dan tghoont dat noch rauwe noch leedschap heift. *Bernardus super Cantica*: De tranen der penitencien zijn den inghelen wijn, want in hemlieden de rooke des levens es de smake van gracen, tgevoelen van verlavenessen, de ghezondicheyt van wederkeerender kinderheyt ende onnozelheyt, de vreught van nieuwen payse, ende de zoetheit van eenen gheclaerden gronde. *Idem in Sermone*: Over al tghoont dat hij my vanden beghinne miner bekeernessen ghegheven heift, compunctie ende rauwe, devocie van tranen, troost in jegenheden, beweichnesse in ghepeinse, wat sal ic hem weder gheven, diet hem al eens ghegheven hebben. *Idem De contemptu mundi*: O salighe tranen, die de goedertieren hand des scheppers af droghen sal. Salich zijn de ooghen die daer inne verdienen ghesmolten tsijne. (...).

It is not unusual for a medieval author to employ 'florilegia' as an aid for composing his works. Remarkable however is that our author uses this genre massively and seems to take over large sections. The most well-known 'florilegia' with quotations from the Church Fathers were

⁴⁰ Hoek, *De Middelnederlandse vertalingen*, 196, en M. P. Angenent, 'Het Gentse Boethiuscommentaar en Reinier van Sint-Truiden', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde*, 107 (1991), 274-310.

⁴¹ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [V7!]^{rb}-va (italics are mine).

the *Pharetra* and the *Liber scintillarum*.⁴² Possibly, our author had made his own collection also (perhaps on the basis of existing 'florilegia'). A contemporary example of such a collection has been preserved in a manuscript of the German Dominican Georg Schwartz. It contains citations from Scripture and the Church Fathers, systematically arranged around subjects like 'de ira', 'de dilectione', and 'de scientia'.⁴³ The above-mentioned *Liber scintillarum* has a similar arrangement.⁴⁴ What kind of 'florilegium' our author used must be decided by further research.

In addition to quotations from the Church Fathers, there are also many references to Aristotle, Alexander of Hales, and Thomas Aquinas, to mention only the most important authorities.⁴⁵ Partly, these references are taken over anonymously from other sources. A clear example can be found in the last book of the commentary. There, a number of passages are quoted from the *Summa Halensis*, a voluminous treatise on theology based primarily on the writings of Alexander of Hales. The quotation is without identification. On closer look, these passages stem from the commentary of Reinier of St Truiden, who does not identify them either. Also on many other occasions, the author of the Ghent Boethius quotes from Reinier of St Truiden, without acknowledging his source. The table below illustrates this double use of the sources. It shows the objection to the unity of the divine eternity and its answer, which both occur in all three texts:

⁴² On the medieval 'florilegia', see M. A. Rouse and R. H. Rouse, 'Florilegia of Patristic Texts', *Les genres littéraires dans les sources théologiques et philosophiques médiévales*, Louvain-La-Neuve 1982, 165-180. See also A. Pattin, 'Reinerus van St-Truiden', 314-316, and S. Axters, *Geschiedenis van de vroomheid in de Nederlanden*, 2: *De eeuw van Ruusbroec*, Antwerpen 1953, 32.

⁴³ Hoenen, *Speculum philosophiae medii aevi*, 59f.

⁴⁴ Defensor Locogiacensis, *Liber scintillarum*, ed. H. M. Rochais, Turnhout 1957 (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 107), 1-308.

⁴⁵ Also here, our author may have used 'florilegia'. For medieval anthologies of the works of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, see J. Hamesse, 'Les florilèges philosophiques, instruments de travail des intellectuels à la fin du moyen âge et à la renaissance', *Filosofia e teologia nel trecento. Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi*, ed. L. Bianchi, Louvain-La-Neuve 1994 (Textes et Études du Moyen Age, 1), 479-508; M. Grabmann, *Methoden und Hilfsmittel des Aristotelesstudiums im Mittelalter*, München 1939 (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, 1939/5), and id., *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben. Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Scholastik und Mystik*, vol. 2, München 1936, 424-489.

<i>Summa Halensis</i> , Lib. 1, Ad Claras Aquas 1925, n. 63, 91f.	Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 157 ^{vb} -158 ^{ra}	Ghent Boethius (KB, Den Haag, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [R6] ^{ra}
Contra 1. Dan. 12, 3: 'Qui ad iustitiam erudiunt multos, fulgebunt quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates'; sed hoc nihil esset dictum, nisi aeternitas aliquo modo reciperet multiplicationem. (...)	Sed aliqua multiplicatio cadit in eternitate. Igitur eternitas non est essentia diuina. (...) Minor declaratur, quia dicitur Danielis 12: Qui ad iustitiam erudiunt multos fulgebunt quasi stelle in perpetuas aeternitates. (...)	Item, in der ewicheit valt menichvuldicheit: Danielis 12, daer staet dat de ghone die ter gherechticheit andre beweghen als sterren in donhende-lijke ewicheit blecken sullen. (...)
Ad illud ergo quod primo obicit dicendum quod aeternitas dicitur pluraliter, non quia ipsa aeternitas plurificetur in se, sed propter diversas participationes aeternitatis ex parte creaturae vel propter virtutem continendi multiplicem in effectu, prout dictum est.	(...) cum ergo dicitur pluraliter eterna[te]s, non dicitur quia ipsa eternitas plurificetur in se, sed propter diuersas participationes eternitatis ex parte creature uel propter uirtutem continendi multiplicem in effectu.	Ten andren dat in der ewicheit gheene menichvuldicheit valt: want al machmense int plurale beschriuen, dat dient alleene ten bewijse der menichvuldicheit van haren ghewercken ende ter menichvuldicheit van harer naturen niet.

The works of Alexander of Hales and Thomas Aquinas had been attracting attention especially since the third quarter of the fourteenth century at the universities as well as outside. Then, many theologians return in their writings to sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, such as Richard of St Victor, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas. This movement can be recognized in the works of Marsilius of Inghen, John Gerson, and Denys the Carthusian. It makes manifest that the quoting of these thirteenth century sources by Reinier of St Truiden and by our author cannot be regarded as a characteristic of non-academic works. It is a general phenomenon that is part of a broader development.

On the other hand, these quotations reveal how scholastic elements enter into vernacular texts. This may happen anonymously and indirectly, as we have seen. Again, this does not mean that the anonymous quotation of sources is a distinguishing feature of non-academic writings. It can also be found in many commentaries on Aristotle and the

Sentences, especially in the works of John of Mirecourt, Peter of Ailly, Marsilius of Inghen, and Heymericus de Campo.

1.5. *Different forms of commentary*

As was argued at the outset of the paper, the commentary is one of the forms in which medieval thinking expressed itself. Yet, there are many different forms of the commentary. The two extremes are the 'glossae' on the one hand and the 'quaestiones' on the other. The 'glossae' stay relatively near to the text they comment upon. The commentator annotates words or concepts in the text. He almost never departs from the subjects dealt with in the text.⁴⁶ The 'quaestiones' are different. The text that is commented upon serves as a starting point for the discussion of problems that are sometimes only loosely related to the text. The treatment of these problems can be independent from the source and may go in a different direction. The commentary on the *Consolatio* by Peter of Ailly is a case in point here.⁴⁷

In between the two extremes of the 'glossae' and the 'quaestiones' are many different hybrids, such as commentaries that stay close to the text, but add digressions, 'dubia', or 'quaestiones' to develop the issues put forward by the original text. The Ghent Boethius is part of this last group. The relationship with the original text is maintained. The *Consolatio* is divided into relatively small pericopes or sections, that are commented upon separately. Both the Latin text and the Middle Dutch translation are given.⁴⁸ The commentaries that follow these pericopes are not all of the same length and nature. Some only paraphrase the text, whereas others give a detailed discussion of the issues touched upon by Boethius and include quotations from other sources. The typical format of the scholastic 'quaestio' is almost never used.⁴⁹ The structure of the argumentation is narrative and expository, rather than syllogistic, al-

⁴⁶ A further characterization of the 'glossae' with examples is given by E. Jeuneau, 'Gloses et commentaires de textes philosophiques (IX^e-XII^e s.)', *Les genres littéraires*, 117-131. See also Nauta's first contribution in this volume.

⁴⁷ M. Chappuis, *Le Traité de Pierre d'Ailly sur la Consolation de Boèce*, Qu. 1, Amsterdam 1993 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 20).

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the Latin text and the Middle Dutch translation, see Hoek, *De Middelednederlandse vertalingen*, 109-193.

⁴⁹ The format of the scholastic 'quaestio' is explored in O. Weijers, 'L'enseignement du trivium à la Faculté des Arts de Paris: La *questio*', *Manuels, programmes de cours et techniques d'enseignement dans les universités médiévales*, ed. J. Hamesse, Louvain-La-Neuve 1994 (Textes, Études, Congrès, 16), 57-74.

though the commentator sometimes employs the latter form, as we will see. There is no grammatical analysis (*lectio*) of the *Consolatio*. The emphasis is on the contents of the text.

The commentary of Reinier of St Truiden was written before 1381 at Mechelen, where Reinier held the office of 'regens' of the local school (*scola*).⁵⁰ It is one of the main sources of the Ghent Boethius, but has a different format. It is divided by short lemmata that each time give only a few words of the *Consolatio*. These lemmata are followed by expositions of the text, which are not very extensive. Generally, they are only a few columns long and begin with a 'divisio textus', which normally is absent in the Ghent commentary.⁵¹ In these expositions, Reinier stays close to the original. There are almost no digressions. The syllogistic style of the reasoning is influenced by scholastic traditions. Reinier often inserts 'notabilia', as is customary in scholastic commentaries on Aristotle and the *Sentences*. Each separate part of the commentary is closed by a grammatical analysis of the *Consolatio*, which in the manuscript is called the 'construatur'.⁵²

The commentary of Pseudo-Thomas, composed probably in the second part of the fifteenth century and directly or indirectly dependent on Nicolas Trevet, is partly similar to that of Reinier. It is divided into smaller parts that are each preceded by a lemma. These parts all begin with a 'divisio textus' and a paraphrase of the text. Subsequently, a number of 'notabilia' follow in which the author elaborates upon the text. Unlike Reinier, however, the structure of the argumentation is not syllogistic and there is no grammatical analysis.⁵³

The commentary of Denys the Carthusian was written shortly before 1471, when Denys was living at the Charterhouse at Roermond, which he entered after his study at the University of Cologne in 1424 or 1425 and which he left only occasionally.⁵⁴ It is designed as a dialogue be-

⁵⁰ Pattin, 'Reinerus van St.-Truiden', 310 and 317.

⁵¹ The 'divisio textus' that appears in the Ghent Boethius on fol. [S6]^{rb} (Book V prose 6) has been taken over from Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 162^{vb}.

⁵² For further details see Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie*, 325; Pattin, 'Reinerus van St.-Truiden', 298-319; Angenent, 'Het Gentse Boethiuscommentaar', 274-310.

⁵³ The commentary was printed by Anton Koberger at Nürnberg in 1473. There are no earlier manuscripts known, which seems to indicate that the commentary belongs to the second part of the fifteenth century. On this commentary, see Courcelle, *ibid.*, 322f.; Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular', 363 and 399 note 7, and Palmer's contribution elsewhere in this volume. The commentary of Nicolas Trevet is discussed by Nauta, also in this volume.

⁵⁴ Concerning Denys' biography, see A. Stoelen, 'Denys le Chartreux', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique*, vol. 3, Paris 1957, 430-449.

tween the master (Denys) and his pupil (Joannes). Yet, this form is not consistently used. The commentary is divided into 'articuli', each of which discusses an extensive part of the *Consolatio*. In these 'articuli', the text of Boethius is followed closely. Quotations are mixed with paraphrases, a procedure that resembles the 'construatur' of Reinier. Additional remarks and clarifications follow the paraphrases immediately. They are not introduced with standard words like 'nota' or 'notandum'. Striking are the long quotations from the works of William of Auvergne, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and Bonaventure added to the commentary.⁵⁵

In comparison to these commentaries, the Ghent Boethius deals more independently with the text of the *Consolatio*. The anonymous author is guided not only by Boethius, but also by his own interests and concerns. His commentary is much more varied than the other works, which have a more systematic and uniform arrangement. It reveals the expository style of the modern period more than the rigorous discourse of scholasticism.

1.6. *Boethius and Thomas Aquinas*

The *Consolatio philosophiae* is one of the most important sources used in the late medieval discussion of divine foreknowledge. Although the work had always been available, it was only since the mid-thirteenth century that the views of Boethius on divine foreknowledge held the spotlight of discussion, especially when they were taken over and further developed in the writings of Thomas Aquinas.⁵⁶ The reception of Boethius by Thomas Aquinas contributed substantially to his reputation among the scholastics. Generally, the views of Boethius on the issue of divine foreknowledge were defended by Dominican authors in their commentaries on the *Sentences*. By a decision of the general chapter in 1286, the Dominicans pledged themselves to defend the teachings of

⁵⁵ Further details are provided by Courcelle, *ibid.*, 328f., and R. Macken, *Denys the Carthusian. Commentator on Boethius's 'De Consolatione Philosophiae'*, Salzburg 1984 (Analecta Cartusiana, 118). See also K. Emery Jr., *Dionysii Carthusiensis Opera Selecta*, vol. 1, Turnhout 1991 (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 121), 229 n. 51.

⁵⁶ Thomas Aquinas quotes Boethius' view on the divine knowledge in his commentary on the *Sentences*, which is his earliest treatment of the issue, and in the *De veritate*. In his later writings, such as the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*, he remained faithful to his early position. On the Boethian background of Thomas' discussion of divine knowledge see J. F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, D.C., 1984 (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 10), 245-248.

Thomas Aquinas.⁵⁷ As a result, the position of Boethius as presented by Thomas Aquinas was elaborated upon in the writings of the Dominican theologians and the problems connected with it were discussed in the debates between Dominicans and Franciscans. These debates took place in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Shortly after that, the Boethian view on the necessity of divine foreknowledge became heavily criticized by the defenders of a position that was developed by the Franciscans Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure and revived by John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.⁵⁸ This criticism was taken over in the academic writings of many late medieval thinkers. In the further course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, combinations of the Boethian position and that of Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure occurred, among others in the work of Marsilius of Inghen.⁵⁹ Whether or not this development took place in non-academic writings as well will be investigated below.

1.7. *Divine foreknowledge in the 'Consolatio'*

In the *Consolatio*, Boethius conveys the idea that creation is ordered and guided by God, who is the highest good possible and therefore directs the world in the best possible way. The world is not governed by blind fortune (*fortuna*), but by an intelligent maker, who helps to purify the good man by letting him suffer. The evil eventually will help to glorify the good, although this cannot always be grasped easily by human beings.

The idea of an intelligent God who destines the course of the world and has knowledge of all future events is difficult to reconcile with free will. A complete answer to this problem is impossible to reach for man, because man's thinking has no full access to the divine.⁶⁰ Yet, there are a few philosophical insights that according to Boethius may help to understand the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and free will. Firstly, knowledge does not change the nature of what is known. God can see at

⁵⁷ See F. J. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School*, Dubuque, Iowa, 1964, 17.

⁵⁸ On the views of John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, see W. L. Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez*, Leiden 1988 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 7), 127-168.

⁵⁹ Marsilius of Inghen, *Quaestiones super quattuor libros Sententiarum*, Strasbourg 1501, reprinted Frankfurt am Main 1966, Lib. 1, q. 40, fol. 164^{rb}-170^{vb}.

⁶⁰ Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 4, n. 2, ed. L. Bieler, Turnhout 1967 (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 94/1), 95.

one glance both the necessary (the rising of the sun) and the contingent (the walking on the street), without the modality of the necessary or the contingent being changed. This is true even of human knowledge, so why should it be different in God, he argues.⁶¹ Secondly, there is the neoplatonic point of epistemological subjectivism. The known is known in the way of the knower: 'omne quod cognoscitur secundum cognoscentium comprehenditur facultatem'.⁶² God is eternal and therefore his knowledge also is. In his eternal mode of being, every temporal being is present to him as if it were actually existing.⁶³ These two points explain the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and free will. By reason of his eternal mode of being, God has infallible knowledge of the future and because his knowledge does not change the nature of the known, he knows the future without destroying free will.

2. Boethius and the late medieval debate about divine foreknowledge

In the discussion of the problem, Boethius touched on some issues that attracted the attention of medieval authors: 1. the divine eternity and the way in which the things known are present to God, 2. the modality of the divine knowledge and its object, and 3. the possible influence of human beings on the divine knowledge. In the following part of the paper, I will investigate these issues and explore how they were dealt with in the medieval scholastic discussion and how this discussion is reflected in the commentaries on the *Consolatio*, especially in the Ghent Boethius.

2.1. The presence of things in God's eternal mode of being

Boethius defines the divine eternity as the perfect possession altogether of an endless life: 'interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecte possessio'.⁶⁴ This definition is crucial for our understanding of the divine omniscience. Because divine eternity is the perfect possession of an endless life, there is nothing that escapes it, not the present, nor the past, nor the future. It is always present to itself (*praesens sibi*) and has the infinity of

⁶¹ Ibid., Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 18-24, 102f.

⁶² Ibid., pros. 4, n. 24-30, 96f.

⁶³ Ibid., pros. 6, n. 15, 102.

⁶⁴ Ibid., n. 4, 101.

moveable time (*infinitas mobilis temporis*) present to itself as well.⁶⁵ The divine eternity is no perpetual duration, but an everlasting present, unmovable and simple. The same characteristics apply to divine knowledge. God's knowing is no perpetual duration, but an everlasting present that embraces all moments of time. God sees all things that will happen as if they happen already (*iam gerantur*). It is the knowledge of a never-fading instant of the present: 'scientia nunquam deficientis instantiae'.⁶⁶

Boethius does not discuss the ontological nature of the objects that are known by God in his eternal mode of being. The only point he makes is that the known is known in the way of the knower and that there is a difference between the known considered in itself and as referred to the divine knowledge.⁶⁷ This seems to imply that God knows things differently from what they in themselves are. They are known by a mode of being that is unlike in character to their own timely being. Boethius makes a comparison between the object known by the senses and the same object known by the intellect.⁶⁸ In the former case it is known individually, in the latter case generally. Similarly, a thing in the divine mode of being is known differently from the way it exists outside. In the divine mode of being it is known as present, whereas outside it may not yet exist.

2.1.1. *The scholastic discussion*

In the scholastic treatises of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the nature of the object known by God was frequently discussed. At the center of interest was the way Thomas Aquinas expounds the theory of Boethius. Special attention was given to the question of whether the things that are known by God in his eternal mode of being really do exist presently or only 'as if'.⁶⁹ The criticism was particularly directed against the real presence of the object. It would mean that the things that are known by God have eternal existence, an implication that was erro-

⁶⁵ Ibid., n. 8, 101.

⁶⁶ Ibid., n. 15f., 102.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pros. 4, n. 24-30, 96f.; pros. 6, n. 1, 15 and 26, 101, 102 and 103.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pros. 6, n. 36, 104.

⁶⁹ For a general discussion of the subject, see J. de Finance, 'La présence des choses à l'éternité d'après les scolastiques', *Archives de Philosophie*, 19 (1956), 24-62, and M. Th. Liske, 'Was meint Thomas von Aquin mit "Gott weiss das Künftige als gegenwärtig"?'', *Theologie und Philosophie*, 60 (1985), 520-537. As is clear from these essays, there is no agreement on the correct interpretation of Thomas' thought. According to de Finance, Thomas meant real presence, whereas Liske reads Thomas as saying only 'as if' presence.

neous. This kind of criticism was put forward by Franciscan authors and taken over by many Dominicans.

In the *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, an attack on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas by the Franciscan William de la Mare, the view that the things in God's eternal mode of being have real presence was considered as 'simpliciter falsum et erroneum'.⁷⁰ The treatise was written before 1279, probably in 1277 or 1278, but was still being read in the fifteenth century.⁷¹ William de la Mare chooses the second of the two alternatives. He submitted that God knows the things as if (*ac si*) they were present, through his knowledge of causal concepts and ideas. For what does not yet exist cannot itself be present to eternity.⁷²

The same view was maintained in the so-called *Littera septem sigillorum*, a list of twenty-two theses drafted by seven Franciscan theologians at the request of the Franciscan minister-general Bonagratia and directed against Peter of John Olivi.⁷³ As a direct consequence of this, the view that God knows the things only 'as if' they were present assumed a more-or-less official authority for Franciscans of the time. A significant detail here was that the libel also stated that the criticized view, according to which God knows the things themselves, should not be called heretical, as William de la Mare did. Bonagratia probably wanted to evade an official discussion of the orthodoxy of Thomas' view.

The *Lectura thomasina* by the Dominican William Peter of Godin, written 1296-1300, made reference to the criticism by William de la Mare. The author spoke of adversaries who criticized the view of Thomas as being erroneous. To the allegation that the view of Thomas was contrary to faith, he replied that eternity coexists with all moments in time, while the reverse does not hold. From this fact he also inferred that two different moments t_1 and t_2 , while both present to eternity, do

⁷⁰ *Le Correctorium corruptorii 'Quare'*. *Les premières polémiques Thomistes*, vol. 1, ed. P. Glorieux, Le Saulchoir, Kain 1927 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 9), a. 3, 18.

⁷¹ The dating of the treatise is according to L. Hödl, 'Geistesgeschichtliche und literarkritische Erhebungen zum Korrektorienstreit (1277-1287)', *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 33 (1966), 81-114, esp. 82. For the use of the *Correctorium fratris Thomae* in the fifteenth century, see Hoenen, *Speculum philosophiae medii aevi*, 32-35.

⁷² *Le Correctorium corruptorii 'Quare'*, a. 3, 18f.

⁷³ See G. Fussenegger, 'Littera septem sigillorum contra doctrinam Petri Ioannis Olivi edita', *Archivum franciscanum historicum*, 47 (1954), 45-53, esp. 51 (n. 5): "Item dicere quod res que non sunt, sint presentes Deo in sui propria natura et essentia, et aliter quam per ydeam vel per suam causam, est falsum; et dicere quod sit hereticum, est erroneum." On this letter and on the condemnation of Peter of John Olivi, see J. Koch, *Kleine Schriften*, vol. 2, Rome 1973 (Storia e letteratura, 128), 191-274, esp. 209-211.

not coexist with each other.⁷⁴ The objection Godin was trying to meet here, that all things that are present to eternity must also be present to each other, is one that is frequently raised against Thomas, even by present-day writers on the subject.⁷⁵

To William de la Mare's objection that the future is not yet real and therefore cannot be present, Godin replied that a thing considered in itself is present to eternity only as long as it exists, but that God can see it from eternity. For with respect to God there is eternal 'praesentialitas cogniti'. Godin rejected the eternal 'praesentialitas rei', thus following the criticism of William de la Mare.⁷⁶ The same line was followed in the *Quodlibeta* of Peter of Auvergne (1299) and in the commentaries on the *Sentences* of Hervaeus Natalis and Durand of St Pourçain, two Dominican authors who were still widely read in the fifteenth century.⁷⁷ The Dominican Jacob of Metz, however, interpreted Thomas as meaning real presence. He explicitly responded to the competing interpretation, which he claimed did not agree with the words of Thomas (a similar remark had been made by William de la Mare).⁷⁸ As his own view, Jacob submitted that the things are not really present in God's eternity, but have only an 'as if' presence. The interpretation of Thomas given by Jacob of Metz was criticized in the *Correctorium* addressed against him by Hervaeus Natalis, written 1302-1307 or about 1310. Hervaeus did not take issue with Jacob's view of a merely 'as if' presence (which he actually shared), but rather with his reluctance to accept this view as the correct interpretation of Thomas.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ See B. Decker, *Die Gotteslehre des Jacob von Metz. Untersuchungen zur Dominikanertheologie zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Münster 1967 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 42/1), 183f., with references to the relevant places in the *Lectura thomasina*. For the dating of the work, see *ibid.*, 44.

⁷⁵ Compare the criticism on Thomas by A. Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers*, Oxford 21986, 38f.

⁷⁶ See Decker, *Die Gotteslehre des Jacob von Metz*, 184.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 184f. (Peter of Auvergne), 186f. (Hervaeus Natalis), and 188 (Durand).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 177 and 183 (with quotations from the sources). As to William de la Mare, see *Le Correctorium corruptorii 'Quare'*, a. 3, 18 and 20.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 186f. For the *Correctorium* of Hervaeus, see Roensch, *Early Thomistic School*, 107 and 115, and Decker, *Die Gotteslehre des Jacob von Metz*, 22.

2.1.2. *The commentaries on the 'Consolatio'*

The discussion about the nature of the objects that are known by God returns in the commentaries on the *Consolatio*. First let us consider the Ghent Boethius, then some other late-medieval commentaries.

If we consider the way in which the Ghent Boethius argues that God knows everything in his eternal mode of being, the technical terminology is striking. The author transforms the reasoning of Boethius into a scholastic syllogism.⁸⁰ Also in the further course of his commentary, the treatment of the subject and the vocabulary used is scholastic in nature.

The use of this kind of terminology makes it plausible that the author used a scholastic source. Indeed, if we compare the Ghent Boethius with the commentary of Reinier of St Truiden, there can be no doubt about the origin of the syllogistic reasoning. Our author translated the Latin of Reinier almost verbatim into Middle Dutch.⁸¹ Obviously, in writing and compiling his vernacular commentary he did not omit or leave out sources that were heavily marked by the scholastic art of reasoning, even when discussing a subject so difficult and highly sophisticated as divine knowledge. He did not simplify his source by paraphrasing or summarizing, but quoted it literally. He must have assumed that his readership was able to grasp and deal with the difficult scholastic treatment of the subject. The question now is, how our author understands the presentness of the thing known in God's eternal mode of being and whether he conceptually has been influenced by the scholastic discussion on the subject.

There are several places where he discusses the problem, yet only briefly. As is manifest from these passages, he does not consider the presentness to be real, but only 'as if'. Especially the first time that he mentions the issue deserves our attention. There, he points out that there is a

⁸⁰ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [S4]^{rb}: "Alle sciencie begrijpt ende kent de dynghen die onder hare kennesse vallen, dats na de condicie ende maniere des kenners, also dicwijle boven bleken es. Nu, de staet der godlijker essencien es eewich ende alsheils jeghenwordich ende vooroghen. Ergo zou kent de dijnghen eewichlic ende voorogghelic. De major blijct boven in de voorledene naeste prosen. Ende de minor es onlaics in dese bleken." Cf. Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 15, 102.

⁸¹ Compare the passage quoted in the last note with Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 161^{va}: "Omnis cognicio comprehendit illa que sibi subiecta sunt secundum statum et naturam suam, scilicet ipsius noticie. Sed status diuine essencie est eternus et simpliciter presentarius. Ergo cognoscit res eternaliter presentarie. Maior huius rationis ponitur ibi 'Quoniam igitur omne iudicium' et probata est prius, huius libri prosa quarta. Minor ponitur ibi 'Est deo autem' et declarata est in precedenti parte presentis prose."

real problem with the question of presentness. He begins the passage with an opening that is characteristic for the introduction to a scholastic dubium: 'ende wilde yemand segghe', which is a translation from the Latin 'sed diceres'.⁸² It is unclear whether or not he is quoting from a source. The passage is not to be found in the commentaries of Reinier, Pseudo-Thomas, and Denys.

The objection of the anonymous opponent of the 'dubium' concerns the way in which things that do not yet exist or never will exist are present to God in his eternity. They have no existential being of their own and therefore cannot be present. In his response, our commentator maintains that all things are present to God 'beeldelic ende geestelic in haren cause', that is to say, God knows them as presently existing, because he knows them through the ideas in his mind and through the knowledge of the causes.⁸³

A similar wording is used at other occasions. God has infallible knowledge of the contingent future, because everything is present to him inasmuch as he sees it 'in hare moghelicheit van gheschiene of causen'. God knows what will happen, because he knows *how* it will happen: he knows everything by knowing its cause.⁸⁴

Since in both cases a similar terminology is employed, we can assume that 'knowing through the causes' is a standard and technical expression. This impression is corroborated by the scholastic debate on the issue, in which exactly the same wording is used. We therefore now have to return shortly to the debate on the reading of Boethius by Thomas Aquinas.

In the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas had stated that all things are present to God, not only because he has knowledge of their concepts (ideas), but also because his knowledge is aimed at the things insofar as they exist in their own presence.⁸⁵ This remark led William de la Mare to surmise, in keeping with his general interpretation of Thomas, that

⁸² Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. S3^vb.

⁸³ Ibid.: "Ende wilde yemand segghen (...) zo zuldij dat solveren ende segghen dat hem alle dynghen gheschiet ende noch te gheschiene na de vooroghentheit ziner ewewicheit beeldelic ende geestelic in haren causen of na der moghelicheit van gheschiene, also zeker ende clær vooroghent staen (...)."

⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. [S5]^{va}: "(...) want alle dese dynghen zijn gode present, ende voor zijn ghesichte ghedetermineert claerder vele dan sij ons werden als zij nader tijd ghevallen sullen. Want hij jeghewordchliker de toecomende dynghen in hare moghelicheit van gheschiene of causen ziet, dan wij in harer presencie de vooroghene doen."

⁸⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Pars 1, q. 14, a. 13 c., ed. Leonina vol. 4, Rome 1888, 186b.

Thomas believed that God is somehow the recipient of knowledge from the things, which would be repugnant to his nature as pure act. If there is an alternative source for God's knowledge, other than concepts and ideas, then this source must lie outside of him.⁸⁶ William de la Mare thus charged Thomas with presenting two modes of divine knowledge, one of which he accepted (knowledge through ideas and causes), while rejecting the other (knowledge of things in their own presence).

The view William de la Mare did not quarrel with, that God knows the existence of contingent things by means of the ideas and causes, was put forward by Thomas in his commentary on the *Sentences*. The practical ideas in God's mind, he claimed, are not only the cause of form, but also of matter, hence also of the existence of each thing. Therefore knowledge of the ideas or the causes is sufficient for God to know all there is to know about a thing.⁸⁷

If we look at the Dominican reactions to William de la Mare's criticism in the so-called *Correctoria corruptorii*, we see that some of them interpreted Thomas' disputed view in the light of the above passage from the commentary on the *Sentences*.⁸⁸ The idea that Thomas believed that God receives knowledge from outside is rejected as absurd. This means that, due to the discussion about the way in which Thomas explained the theory of Boethius, Dominican authors considered the presence of the objects known to God in his eternal mode of being as the

⁸⁶ *Le Correctorium corruptorii* 'Quare', a. 3, 20f.

⁸⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1, ed. P. Mandonnet, Paris 1929, 904: "(...) idea quae est in mente divina, est causa omnis ejus quod in re est; unde per ideam non tantum cognoscit naturam rei, sed etiam hanc rem esse in tali tempore, et omnes conditiones quae consequuntur rem vel ex parte materiae vel ex parte formae."

⁸⁸ According to the *Correctorium corruptorii* 'Quare' which was probably the first reaction to William de la Mare, God knows all things in their presence through the intelligible forms (*rationes*), *Le Correctorium corruptorii* 'Quare', a. 3, 24: "(...) Deus qui habet penes se omnium rerum rationes praesentes, ipsas perfectissime intelligendo poterit aeternaliter ferre intuitum intellectus sui praesentialiter super praesentialitates omnium antequam essent (...)." In the *Correctorium corruptorii* 'Quaestione' the emphasis was placed on the fact that God has knowledge of the future because he is the creator of everything, including matter and being, *Le Correctorium corruptorii* 'Quaestione'. *Texte anonyme du ms. Merton 267*, ed. J.-P. Muller, Rome 1954 (*Studia Anselmiana*, 35), a. 3, 20: "Cum autem ars divina sit productiva non tantum formae sed etiam materiae et etiam totius esse cuiuscumque creaturae, manifestum est quod Deus cognoscit omnes res etiam futuras perfecte." On these *Correctoria corruptorii*, see M. J. F. M. Hoenen, 'The Literary Reception of Thomas Aquinas' View on the Provability of the Eternity of the World in De la Mare's *Correctorium* (1278-9) and the *Correctoria Corruptorii* (ca. 1279-86)', *The Eternity of the World in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas and his Contemporaries*, ed. J. B. M. Wissink, Leiden 1990 (*Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*, 27), 39-68.

presence in the ideas and the causes. It is this view that we can find in the Ghent Boethius. The commentaries of Pseudo-Thomas and Denys the Carthusian maintain a similar position.

There are at least two points in which the commentary of Pseudo-Thomas is comparable to the Ghent Boethius. In both treatises the argument of Boethius is cast into a syllogism and followed by a discussion about the nature of the objects that are known in the eternal mode of God's being. In the commentary of Pseudo-Thomas this discussion is introduced with the phrase 'aliquis diceret'.⁸⁹

Yet, there are some distinctions. The syllogism is different. Nevertheless, the parallel is so striking that it cannot be excluded that the source of the Ghent Boethius, namely Reinier, had a text at his desk that was also used by Pseudo-Thomas, even if we consider that the syllogism is the most common form of scholastic reasoning and that the scholastics moulded almost every argumentation into a syllogism.⁹⁰ If our assumption is correct, we have an example of how the argumentation of the one text is transposed into the other (Reinier and Pseudo-Thomas) and finally is taken over in the vernacular tradition (Ghent Boethius), similar to what happened to the passages from the *Summa* attributed to Alexander of Hales.

As to the nature of the objects known by God, Pseudo-Thomas distinguishes two ways of non-being: there are objects that do not exist and never will exist (such as a 'chimaera'), and there are objects that do not exist, but eventually will. Only the latter are present to God. Although they do not actually exist in their own being yet, they are present to eternity, because the divine eternity embraces all the moments of time. Being present to eternity therefore does not mean that the thing in itself

⁸⁹ Pseudo-Thomas, *In Boethii De consolatione philosophiae*, edited in S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia, vol. 7, curante R. Busa, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1980, 121C-172C, esp. Lib. 5, 171b: "(...) notandum, quia cognitio sequitur modum rei cognoscentis, ideo cognitio et scientia dei sequitur statum et dispositionem dei: status autem dei est aeternus et praesentarius, cum esse divinum mensuretur aeternitate; ergo scientia dei erit aeterna et praesentaria (...). notandum, quod aliquis diceret (...)."

⁹⁰ Since the commentary of Pseudo-Thomas dates probably from the second part of the fifteenth century, it is unlikely that Reinier used Pseudo-Thomas as a source. Likewise, there is no positive evidence that Pseudo-Thomas had the commentary of Reinier at his disposal. The resemblance between the two commentaries is therefore probably due to the use of a common third source.

(*simpliciter*) exists already. Things that are present to the divine eternity are not necessarily present to the present time.⁹¹

In the further course of the exposition, the author summarizes his view by saying that God knows all things 'tamquam praesentia', that is, as if presently there. The word 'tamquam' is used here to underscore the belief that the presence of the things to God's eternity does not imply any eternal existence on their part.⁹² There is no further philosophical elaboration on the question of how this 'tamquam praesentia' must be understood. Rather, the author gives a number of examples to make clear that the flow of time in all its parts is always present to the divine eternity. One of the examples is that of a man who standing at the top of a tower sees at one instant all those who walk below, while those who are below see only the one after the other. In almost a similar wording, this image is also given by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae*, which may be perhaps the source here.⁹³

Denys the Carthusian is following the same line. In his commentary he stresses that all things are only 'tamquam praesentia' present to God as well.⁹⁴ In contrast to Pseudo-Thomas, he enters into the details. According to him, God knows everything 'ac si iam praesentialiter sit', that is, as if already present, and thereby uses the concept of 'ac si', which played a prominent role in the debate on the view of Thomas Aquinas.⁹⁵ 'Ac si' means to him that the things are not themselves present to God. They are only conceptually present, as objects of divine knowledge or ideas in the divine mind: 'quoad esse suum cognoscibile et exemplare quod habet in mente divina'.⁹⁶ Denys is at this point very close to the au-

⁹¹ Ibid., 171c: "(...) unde non sequitur, si aliquid coexistit aeternitati, quod pro tanto simpliciter existat; quia aeternitas etiam extendit se ad non existens sicut ad praeteritum et futurum."

⁹² Ibid., 171c: "(...) deus suo aeterno intuitu omnia cernit tamquam praesentia."

⁹³ Ibid., 171c: "(...) notandum, de hoc quod dicitur deum praesentialiter omnia cognoscere, scilicet praeterita et futura, ponunt quidam exemplum (...). aliud exemplum ponitur de aliquo qui vadit per viam et non videt homines post se venientes; sed ille qui de alta turri respiceret, videret totam viam et homines per eam transeuntes tam praecedentes quam sequentes (...)." Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Pars 1, q. 14, a. 13, ad 3 (ed. Leonina, 4), 187b: "(...) Sicut ille qui vadit per viam, non videt illos qui post eum veniunt: sed ille qui ab aliqua altitudine totam viam intuetur, simul videt omnes transeuntes per viam."

⁹⁴ Denys the Chartusian, *Enarrationes seu commentaria in V libros B. Severini Boetii De consolazione philosophiae*, Tournai 1906 (Opera omnia, 26), Lib. 5, pros. 6, a. 12, 616bC and 617bD. See also ibid., 615aB: "(...) simplici intuitu cognoscere et quasi praesentialiter intueri tempus (...)."

⁹⁵ Ibid., 618aA.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 618aB.

thor of the Ghent Boethius, more than Pseudo-Thomas or Reinier of St Truiden are.

2.2. *The modality of God's foreknowledge and its object*

Reflecting on God's eternal mode of being, Boethius considers the necessity of God's knowledge as a natural consequence of his eternity. This brings us to the second issue: the discussion about the modality of God's foreknowledge and its object.

As was said above, God's knowing has no impact on the modality of the object, no more than human knowledge has. Man can know at the same time the rising of the sun and the walking on the street of his neighbor. The rising of the sun is necessary, but the walking of his neighbor not. Human knowledge does not affect the modality of the events he considers. The same goes for divine knowledge. God knows necessary events as well as contingent. But his knowledge does not change the necessity nor the contingency of these events.⁹⁷

Nonetheless, Boethius thinks that the event, when it is known by God, will happen necessarily. This is not in contrast with the above, as in the former case the nature of the object or event is at stake, whereas in the latter case the relationship between God's knowledge and the object known is concerned. By his eternal mode of being, God knows everything that will happen. He is omniscient. Consequently, when God knows that something will happen, it will happen, and impossibly cannot take place. Otherwise it would not have been known by God. The object known thus will happen necessarily, when it is referred to the divine knowledge: 'cum ad divinam notionem refertur'. Yet, it may happen contingently and freely, when considered according to its own nature: 'cum in sua natura perpenditur'.⁹⁸

This form of necessity, which is related to the divine knowledge and which leaves the nature of the object unharmed, is called by Boethius 'conditional necessity' (*necessitas conditionis*). It is the necessity that follows from the condition (*conditio*) of referring the object to the divine knowledge. He distinguishes it from the so-called 'absolute necessity' (*necessitas absoluta*), which depends solely on the nature of the thing it-

⁹⁷ Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 20-24, 102f.

⁹⁸ Ibid., n. 26, 103.

self. It concerns things or events which in themselves are necessary, such as the rising of the sun or the mortality of man.⁹⁹

2.2.1. *Thomas Aquinas*

The position of Boethius, that the object, when referred to God's knowledge is necessary, was taken over and further developed by Thomas Aquinas. Thomas affirmed the necessity of God's knowledge, including that of future contingents. This necessity he derived from the nature of the divine knowledge and the manner in which things are the object of God's knowledge. His position is a clear example of Boethian epistemological subjectivism, according to which the mode of knowledge depends entirely on the subject and not on the object of knowledge.

Thomas explained this subjectivism in terms of linguistic analysis. The *that*-clause in sentences like 'I say that Socrates is walking' does not have significative power. It functions only as the material object of the activity expressed by the verb 'to say'. Therefore the truth value and the modality of the sentence as a whole are not affected by the verb contained in the *that*-clause. Even if Socrates is not walking, the sentence 'I say that Socrates is walking' can be true.¹⁰⁰ When this principle is applied to divine knowledge, we find that the modality and truth of what is known depend upon God's knowledge.

That God's knowledge is necessary, Thomas inferred from the necessity of the past, a theory that goes back to the writings of Aristotle. If God has foreknowledge, then this knowledge must somehow be like a past event, notwithstanding the fact that He does not exist in time. The event has existed, which means that it is impossible for it not to have existed when it existed.¹⁰¹ Thomas took issue with the view that God retains the possibility *not* to have known, because his knowledge is beyond time. Although there is no outside force to constrain him, Thomas

⁹⁹ Ibid., n. 27-30, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4, 913: "Quando autem aliquod dictum ponitur ut materia alicujus actus, ut dictum, oportet quod materialiter sumatur, et non secundum quod ad significationem rei refertur (...)." See also id., *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 12, ad 7, ed. Leonina 22/1, Rome 1975, 85a-86b, and id., *Summa theologiae*, Pars 1, q. 14, a. 13, ad 2 (ed. Leonina, 4), 186b-187a. For a discussion, see A. N. Prior, *Papers on Time and Tense*, Oxford 1968, 34f.

¹⁰¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 4, 913. Compare Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, Lib. 6, 1139b5-11. Similarly, Aristotle and Thomas defended the related idea of the necessity of the present, see notes 110 and 111 below.

argued, God's immutability implies that it is impossible for him to know more or less presently than he would have known previously.¹⁰²

Thus equipped, Thomas turned to the conditional sentence 'If God knew that A will happen, then A will happen', of which he gave the following analysis. The antecedent is necessary because God's knowledge is necessary. Because the antecedent is about God's act of knowledge, A must be taken as known in the consequent as well, this time not as a material object but as present to eternity. Now, God knows contingent things as if they exist. What exists cannot not-exist. Hence, considered with respect to God's knowledge, A is necessary. Therefore, the consequent 'A will happen' is necessary.¹⁰³ This analysis has often been critically discussed in the secondary literature.¹⁰⁴

Considered in relation to God's knowledge, the known is necessary. From this it does not follow, however, that it is necessary in itself, or that it is produced by a necessary cause. Thomas explained himself here by invoking the distinction between 'de dicto' and 'de re', which parallels the distinction between 'necessitas conditionis' and 'necessitas absoluta' used by Boethius.¹⁰⁵ It has its roots in Aristotle and was developed in the medieval literature on the fallacies of speech.¹⁰⁶ The assertion, 'Whatever God knows is necessary', is true when taken 'de dicto'. Taken in this sense, it states the necessary truth that whatever God knows exists. This necessity does not affect the contingency of what is known, but merely expresses the fact that all things are present to God. Taken 'de re', however, the same assertion means that everything that is known by God is a necessary being. In this sense it is false, for there actually are contingent things (God has made causes that work contingently) which are known by God in his omniscience.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 13, ad 7 (ed. Leonina, 22/1), 86a: "(...) hoc antecedens est simpliciter necessarium et consequens est necessarium absolute eo modo quo ad antecedens sequitur."

¹⁰⁴ See Prior, *Papers on Time and Tense*, 31-44; A. Kenny, 'Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom', *A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. Kenny, London 1969, 260f.; J. F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas*, 248-250.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Pars 1, q. 14, a. 13, ad 3 (ed. Leonina, 4), 187b; id., *Scriptum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, ad 5 (ed. Mandonnet), 914; id., *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 12, ad 4 (ed. Leonina, 22/1), 84b-85a.

¹⁰⁶ See A. Maierù, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, Rome 1972 (Lessico intellettuale Europeo, 7), 499-600; N. Kretzmann, 'Sensus compositus, sensus divisus and Propositional Attitudes', *Medioevo*, 7 (1981), 195-229; S. Knuuttila, 'Modal Logic', *The Cambridge History*, ed. Kretzmann and others, 347.

2.2.1.1. *Criticism of Boethius and Thomas Aquinas*

The view defended by Boethius and Thomas that the known is necessary, when referred to God's knowledge, was by no means the standard view among the medieval theologians. Mostly, theologians were of the opinion that a contingent object, when it is related to God's knowledge, remains contingent, and that God's knowledge of this contingent object is contingent and not necessary, as Boethius and Thomas claimed. This view was developed in the thirteenth century by Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure. According to Grosseteste, what is true of the antecedent is also true of the consequent, provided the second follows upon the first. Now, let the antecedent be, 'The Antichrist will not be', which is contingent. Then the consequent, 'God knows from eternity that the Antichrist will not be', will also be contingent.¹⁰⁷ Bonaventure's position was that with regard to assertions of the form 'God knows that A will be', we should distinguish, on the one hand, the divine act of knowledge (as the 'principale significatum'), and on the other hand, the relation of the future contingent to this act (as the 'connotatum'). The divine act of knowledge itself is necessary, for it coincides with God. Because the 'connotatum' is contingent, however, the assertion 'God knows that A will be' will also be contingent, taken as a whole.¹⁰⁸

A similar view was put forward by Richard of Middletown and John Duns Scotus. In contrast with Thomas Aquinas, the latter held that God's knowledge of contingents is itself contingent and not necessary. It follows the modality of the objects of knowledge. That God has knowledge is necessary, but that he has knowledge of a contingent object is not necessary. Likewise, it is necessary that man is a living being, but not that he is a *white* living being.¹⁰⁹ The belief that God's knowledge of contingents is itself contingent and not necessary was commonly held

¹⁰⁷ Robert Grosseteste, *De libero arbitrio*, edited in L. Baur, *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Münster 1912 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 9), 176. See also N. Lewis, 'The First Recension of Robert Grosseteste's *De libero arbitrio*', *Mediaeval Studies*, 53 (1991), 1-88. In this first recension, however, the passage quoted is absent, cf. *ibid.*, 54.

¹⁰⁸ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, a. 2, q. 2, Ad Claras Aquas 1882, 678f. (Opera omnia, 1).

¹⁰⁹ Richard of Mediavilla, *Super quattuor libros Sententiarum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, a. 1, q. 6, ad 7, Brescia 1591, reprinted Frankfurt am Main 1963, fol. 342a; Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, Lib. 1, d. 39, qq. 1-5, Vatican City 1966 (Opera omnia, 17), n. 80, 505f.: "Deus non scit necessarium 'a' fore, quia denotatur necessitas actus sciendi ut transit in obiectum non-necessarium (...)."

among the fourteenth century theologians. It is defended by William of Ockham, Gregory of Rimini, Peter of Ailly, and Marsilius of Inghen.

2.2.2. *The Ghent Boethius*

The author of the Ghent Boethius adheres to the view of Boethius and Thomas Aquinas, not to that of Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure. The known object is necessary when referred to God's knowledge, even if the object is contingent. God's knowledge, so the author explains, bestows on the object 'a sort of necessity' (*eene maniere van noodmaken*). All things are present according to God's eternal mode of being. And because things that are present cannot not be when they are present, all things that are known by God are in a way necessary.¹¹⁰ This line of reasoning is similar to the one that is put forward by Thomas Aquinas in his commentary on the *Sentences*. Things that are contingent can be known with certainty when they exist, since it is impossible that they do not exist, when they do exist. God in his eternal mode of being knows contingencies as existing. Therefore, they are necessary and can be known with certainty, when related to God's knowledge.¹¹¹ Thomas refers in this connection to the teachings of Boethius in the *Consolatio*. He considers his treatment of the problem as in line with and corroborated by Boethius.¹¹² The same goes for the author of the Ghent Boethius and his explanation of the issue.¹¹³

There is a second indication that our author is following the line of Thomas Aquinas, directly or indirectly. As we have seen, Boethius distinguishes between objects that are necessary (the rising of the sun) and those that are contingent (the walking of the neighbor). Both kinds of objects are known by God's eternal mode of being. Boethius does not

¹¹⁰ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [S6]^{va-b}: "(...) want tghoont dat in hemselves contingent ende twelvic es eert gheschiet, moet emmer alst gheschiet ende ghevalen es noodmakich wesen, want zine voorooghentheit hem eene maniere van noodmaken gheeft, ende moet doch zyn te wile dadt es. Ende aldus alle dijnghe overmids dat sij gode vooroghen zijn, nemen uter causen van ziner vooroghentheit in ordene van ziner godliker kenneſſe wat noodmakelicheden." The view that the present has a certain necessity goes back to Aristotle's *De interpretatione* (19a23). For a discussion, see Ch. Kirwan, 'Aristotle on the Necessity of the Present', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 6 (1986), 167-187, esp. 177-187.

¹¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, c. (ed. Mandonnet), 910 and 912 (ad tertium).

¹¹² Ibid., 911: "(...) Quod qualiter sit, evidenter docet Boethius in fine De consolatione."

¹¹³ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [S6]^{vb}.

discuss the difference between these objects. He only mentions that the necessity is linked to the nature of the necessary object and that the contingency is based on free will.¹¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, however, goes much further. He relates the necessity and contingency of an object or event to its cause and makes these observations in connection with divine epistemology. Natural causes, so he argues, produce their effect necessarily, as in the eclipse of the sun. This means that knowledge of the causes implies knowledge of the effects. Even when the effects do not exist yet, they can necessarily be known in their causes which are determined to cause the effects: 'in istis causis habet causatum esse certum et determinatum'.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, contingent effects that are caused by free will cannot possibly be known beforehand when they are still contained in their causes. This sets them apart from necessary effects that can indeed be known in their causes. The intelligibility of a thing, according to Thomas, follows the nature of its being. What is as yet indeterminate in its being can only be known in an indeterminate way. We do not know beforehand whether John will be walking, but we do know that he will be either walking or not. This uncertainty with regard to future contingents caused by the will is absolute. According to Thomas, this applies to human knowledge as well as to God. The effect of a free act of will can only be known with certainty once it has actually been realized. Its being has then become determinate, and even necessary, for that which is cannot not be. As a determinate being it has lost its mutability, and can be an object of intellectual knowledge.¹¹⁶

The author of the Ghent Boethius has a similar understanding of the relationship between causality and epistemology. In an explanation, which is added to convey a deeper understanding of Boethius (*ende omme dit wat claerder te verstande*), he says that there are two ways in which a thing can be known with certainty: by knowing the necessary action of its cause, or by knowing its actual existence.¹¹⁷ The first way does apply to things that happen necessarily, the second to things that happen necessarily *and* to those that come about contingently.¹¹⁸ Also in

¹¹⁴ Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 27-29 and 31, 103.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, c. (ed. Mandonnet), 910.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 910, and *id.*, *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, Lib. 1, lect. 13, ed: Leonina, 1*/1, Paris 1989, 69a.

¹¹⁷ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. [S5]^{rb}: "Ende omme dit wat claerder te verstande, so suldij weten dat men de verzerke gheschienesse van einighen dync nemen mach ute dien dat de selve dync te gheschien ghesloten es: of uter noodsakelicheit van haren causen, of bider jeghewoordicheit van haren wesene."

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the further course of the commentary, the author connects the necessity or contingency of a thing to the nature of its cause. Necessary things will happen with certainty, because they are produced by a cause that generates its effects necessarily, even if God would close his eyes and not see it: 'al waert dat god, per impossibile ghestelt, dat niet en saghe met zyn oghen loke'. On the other hand, things that are contingent have a natural possibility for not-being: 'eene natuerlike moghelicheit van niet gheschiene'. Their being is indeterminate, as long as they do not actually exist. Only when their existence is referred to divine knowledge, is their being determinate (*ghedetermineert*) and necessary.¹¹⁹

Finally, there is a third hint that the author of the Ghent Boethius is dependent on Thomas Aquinas in his explanation of Boethius. In his dealing with the problem that some sentences concerning God's foreknowledge can be understood in two different ways, he quotes from the *Summa contra gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas to give the reader some further examples.¹²⁰ The passage that immediately precedes this reference is based mainly on the commentary of Reinier of St Truiden.¹²¹ Yet, in the work of Reinier there is no mention of Thomas. This means that the reference to the *Summa contra gentiles* is added by our author. He therefore must have been familiar with the work of Thomas. Or he may have used a source that contained this reference to Thomas. But even in that case it is clear that he thought it appropriate to complete the quotations from Reinier with the authority of Thomas Aquinas. Obviously, he held the *doctor sanctus* in high esteem.

In writing the passage prior to this reference, the author had the commentary of Reinier at his desk. There, he deals with an analysis of the following syllogistic argumentation. Everything that cannot not happen, happens necessarily (*MaP*). Now, everything that is known by God to happen, cannot not happen (*MiP*). Therefore, everything that is known by God to happen, will happen necessarily (*Con*).¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid., fol. T2^{rb}-T2^{va}. Reinier of St Truiden also distinguishes between determinate and undeterminate being. Yet his treatment was not the source of the Ghent Boethius. See Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 163^{vb}-164^{ra}: "(...) omnia enim prouisa pro certo euenient. Sed quoddam eorum descendit de necessitate rerum, scilicet quod habet causas determinatas ad hunc effectum. Aliud uero est in potestate faciendum, scilicet quod prouenit ex arbitrio et uoluntate, que uoluntas de se non est ante actum determinata magis ad hoc quam ad illud."

¹²⁰ Ibid., fol. [S6]^{va}: "(...) also thomas in summa contra gentiles libro 2 seit (...)."

¹²¹ Compare ibid., fol. [S6]^{rb}-[S6]^{va} to Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 162^{vb}-163^{ra}.

¹²² Ibid., fol. [S6]^{rb}-[S6]^{va} and Reinier of St Truiden, ibid., Cod. 348C, fol. 162^{vb}.

To evaluate this argumentation, two different readings are distinguished. The propositions *MaP*, *MiP*, and *Con* can be taken in the compounded or in the divided sense, a distinction that is similar to the one between 'de dicto' and 'de re', which we saw earlier. If the premises *MaP* and *MiP* and the conclusion *Con* are taken in the compounded sense, the conclusion is true, since in that case the modal operator is related to the proposition, not to the things in reality. Consequently, the infallibility of God's knowledge does not imply the necessity of the known objects. In this sense, the conclusion *Con* reads: 'It is necessary: everything that is known by God to happen will happen'.¹²³

Taken in the divided sense, the major premise *MaP* is true, but the minor premise *MiP* is false, since there are objects known by God that happen contingently and thus may not happen. Consequently, the conclusion *Con*, which in the divided sense would read 'Everything that is known by God will necessarily happen', is false as well, since a true and a false premise give a false conclusion.¹²⁴

Again, the conclusion would be false if the premises *MaP* and *MiP* would be taken in the compounded sense and the conclusion *Con* in the divided sense, since then there is fallacy of speech, an illegitimate jump from the one sense to the other. This fallacy, so our author adds, is called by the logicians the fallacy of the divided and compounded sense.¹²⁵ Thus, there is only one true reading of the above argumentation, and that is the first. Taken in this sense, divine knowledge does not render necessary the things that are known. The necessity expressed in the premises *MaP* and *MiP* and the conclusion *Con* is only on the propositional level, not on the level of the nature of the things known.

In the discussion of the above argumentation, the author of the Ghent Boethius is quoting from the commentary of Reinier, but with an interesting addition. Reinier refers to the 'fallacia secundum divisionem et compositionem'. Our author, however, adds that it is the fallacy that *logicians* call 'fallacia divisionis et compositionis'.¹²⁶ Apparently, he was unsure as to whether or not his readers were able to locate the prove-

¹²³ Ibid., fol. [S6]^{va} and Reinier of St Truiden, *ibid.*, fol. 162^{vb}.

¹²⁴ Ibid., fol. [S6]^{va} and Reinier of St Truiden, *ibid.*, fol. 162^{vb}.

¹²⁵ Ibid., fol. [S6]^{va}: "Item, neemt men de premissen na den vergaderden zin ende de conclusie na den verscheidenen zin, so ne doocht de consequencie niet ende behelst eene fallacie die de logiciene hieten fallaciam divisionis et compositionis." Compare Reinier of St Truiden, *ibid.*, fol. 162^{vb}: "Item, si premissae capiuntur in sensu composito et conclusio in sensu diuiso, tunc non ualet consequentia, sed est fallacia secundum compositionem et diuisionem."

¹²⁶ See the text quoted in the preceding note.

nance of the fallacy. Yet, he borrows the whole technical analysis from the work of Reinier. He seems not to have any objections to difficult logical details, although he expects not all of his public to be familiar with them.

This and earlier passages seem to suggest that the scholastic reasoning in the Ghent commentary goes back to Reinier of St Truiden.¹²⁷ Yet, this is only partially true. After quoting Reinier, our author again discusses the logical aspects of the problem and used scholastic terminology such as 'major' (*maior*), 'inconvenient' (*inconveniens*), and 'distingueren' (*distinguere*).¹²⁸ He tries to show that logical contradictions will arise if, in analyzing propositions concerning divine foreknowledge, one does not distinguish between the two kinds of necessity mentioned by Boethius: absolute and conditional necessity.¹²⁹

Distinguishing different meanings of a proposition is a typical activity of the scholastic tradition. It received special attention in the mid-fourteenth century.¹³⁰ A comparable propositional treatment fails in the commentary of Reinier. This suggest that our author was interested in the logical aspects of the problem of divine foreknowledge and that he used logic to prevent possible mistakes and errors, more than Reinier did. He shows a similar attitude in his commentary on the third prose, where the logical side of the problem is discussed at great length as well.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Also in the comments on the two sorts of necessity that are mentioned by Boethius, our author used the commentary of Reinier, quoting it verbatim. See *ibid.*, fol. [S6]^{vb} and Reinier, *ibid.*, fol. 163^{ra}.

¹²⁸ On the use of scholastic terminology in Middle Dutch, see S. Axters, *Scholastiek Lexicon*, Antwerpen 1937, 3*-197* (Introduction), which is still very informative.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. T1^{rb} (italics are mine): "In dese materie vallen onder de logiciene ende anders vele subtiler argumenten, daermen hem af wachten moet, die men nochtan metten onderscheede van desen twee noodsakelicheden wel solveren mach, als ofmen argueirde aldus (...). Voort aldus nemende de conclusie van desen argumente ende danof makende de *major* van eenen nieuwen argumente aldus (...). Ende dat es groot *inconvenient* (...). Ende daeromme zonder vele gloserens machmen de *major* vanden argumente *distingueren*, daert seit (...)." This part of the commentary is different from that referred to in foregoing notes.

¹³⁰ See most recently Z. Kaluza, 'Les sciences et leurs langages. Note sur le statut du 29 Décembre 1340 et le prétendu statut perdu contra Ockham', *Filosofia e teologia nel trecento. Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi*, ed. L. Bianchi, Louvain-la-Neuve 1994, 197-258.

¹³¹ An edition of the commentary on the third prose (Book 5) is given in the Appendix at the end of this volume.

2.2.3. *Pseudo-Thomas and Denys the Carthusian*

The author of the Ghent Boethius is more technical in his analysis of the problem in comparison to Pseudo-Thomas and Denys the Carthusian. Yet, all these writers defend the position of Boethius and Thomas Aquinas: God's knowledge of the contingent is necessary. There is no indication of any criticism as it was put forward in many fourteenth century commentaries on the *Sentences*. The discussion in the commentaries on Boethius is focussed mainly on the dialogue between the two kinds of necessity that Boethius used to solve the problem of the modality of God's knowledge and its object.

In this connection, a remark by Pseudo-Thomas deserves our attention. After introducing the distinction of Boethius between the 'necessitas simplex' and the 'necessitas conditionis', he points out that others (*alii*) solve the problem by distinguishing between the compounded and the divided sense. He thus differentiates between two strategies. On the one hand is the tradition that remains with the distinction made by Boethius. On the other hand is a purely logical and propositional approach.¹³² These two strategies differ in philosophical outlook. The distinction made by Boethius is of an ontological nature. It stresses the difference between a thing when considered in itself and a thing when considered in connection with something else. The distinction between the divided and the compounded sense, however, is logical and concerned with the analysis of propositions, not with things.

Also in the commentary of Denys, a distinction is made between different methods for solving the puzzle of modality. He adds a third approach, which distinguishes between a thing taken 'formaliter' and a thing taken 'materialiter'. The former parallels the compounded sense or the 'necessitas conditionis'. In this case the thing is referred to the divine knowledge. The latter is equivalent to the divided sense or the 'necessitas absoluta'. It considers the thing in itself. According to Denys, the approach that uses the distinction between 'materialiter' and 'formaliter' is more philosophical than the one proposed by Boethius.

¹³² Pseudo-Thomas, *In Boethii De consolatione philosophiae*, Lib. 5, 172a: "(...) notandum, secundum intentionem boetii, ista ratio, quidquid est provisum a deo necessario evenit: solvitur dicendo, quod verum et quod necessario evenit necessitate conditionata, sed non necessitate absoluta. alii aliter solvunt: quod illa propositio est vera in sensu composito, sed falsa in sensu diviso. unde cum dicitur: quidquid provisum est necessario evenit: verum est in sensu composito: quia impossibile est provisum a deo non evenire: tamen in sensu diviso falsa est: quia eventus rei saltem contingentis in se non est necessarius."

The reason why, however, remains unclear. Denys does not discuss the matter any further.¹³³ Yet, the remarks by Denys and Pseudo-Thomas make clear that in the commentaries the distinction of Boethius was expressed with different analytical tools and that these different approaches were seen as related, but not as identical.¹³⁴

2.3. *Man's influence on divine knowledge*

In the third and final section, we want to discuss a problem that was hotly debated in the fourteenth century, namely the question of whether or not man has the power to change the divine foreknowledge. This issue was broached in the *Consolatio*.¹³⁵ There, Boethius reflects on the problem of whether man by his free will can alter God's knowledge. It is in the disposition (*potestas*) of man to change his intentions and to act differently. If man does change his plans, God will have known something different from what will actually happen. Also, there is the related question of whether or not God's knowledge is subject to change each time man alters his plans. The issue at stake here is, to what extent God is dependent on his object, more specifically, on the free will of human beings.

In his response, Boethius leaves no doubt at all. God is omniscient and has knowledge of all human plans and decisions up to the smallest details. Even if man changes his mind, God knows of this change beforehand. He is not dependent on his object and his knowledge is immutable, since he knows everything in his eternal presence.¹³⁶

¹³³ Denys the Chartusian, *Enarrationes seu commentaria*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, a. 12, 621aC-bA: "Vera et catholica ista solutio superius habita est per distinctionem magis philosophica (philosophicam, ed.), qua est dictum, quod de praevisis, praecognitis, praedestinitis, praescitis, de electis, de virtuosis et vitiosis, possimus loqui dupliciter: primo formaliter, utpote secundum quod tales sunt; secundo materialiter, prout sunt creaturae quaedam secundum se consideratae, libero arbitrio decoratae. Itaque primo modo de eis loquendo, non possunt non evenire, seu non salvari aut non damnari, secundum quod a Deo praecognitum est: sic enim considerantur per relationem ad providentiam seu praeordinantiam, et sortiuntur necessitatem conditionalem. Porro materialiter de ipsis loquendo, possunt aliter evenire, et potest praedestinatus damnari ac virtuosus perire, vitiosus quoque poenitere et adipisci salutem."

¹³⁴ Undoubtedly, the developments of medieval logic play a decisive role in the emergence of these different approaches. For further details, see the literature referred to in note 106 above.

¹³⁵ Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 37-43, 104f.

¹³⁶ Ibid., n. 36 and 40f., 104.

2.3.1. *The discussion in the fourteenth century*

In the fourteenth century, these questions were raised again, not so much because of theological and philosophical thoughts about the power of free human beings, but because of logical and semantical developments. In the commentaries on the *Sentences*, the focus of attention was no longer the content and nature of divine foreknowledge, but rather its logical and formal aspects. This logico-semantic approach was not confined only to the issue of divine knowledge, but manifested itself also in other fields. It formed part of a broad orientation that took place in England after about 1315 and in Paris in the 1340s.¹³⁷

In the works of Richard of Campsal and William of Ockham, this approach was applied to the problem of divine foreknowledge for the first time.¹³⁸ The question of whether God has knowledge of the future was solved by posing a number of logical rules: If A will happen, God will have had knowledge of A from eternity, because God knows everything that is true and if A will be, the proposition p 'A will be' will always have been true from eternity. On the other hand, if A will not be, God will always have known that A will not be, because in that case the proposition $\neg p$ 'A will not be' has always been true from eternity.

As a result of this approach, the relationship between free will and divine foreknowledge again could come to the fore. If the truth value of a proposition determines whether the thing signified by the proposition is known by God, and if human beings can change the truth value of a proposition because of their free will, then also they might change the objects the divine foreknowledge.

A clear example of such a consideration can be found in the *Sentences* commentary of the English theologian Adam Wodeham. In dealing with things that depend on the free will of human beings, he claimed that man can bring about (*potest facere*) that God knows something from eternity or not. Since man is free and is able to act otherwise than he actually does, he can bring about that a true proposition p 'Socrates will run' will become untrue, and vice versa. Consequently he also has the

¹³⁷ See W. J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars*, 250-306.

¹³⁸ Richard of Campsall, *Notabilia de contingencia et prescencia dei*, in: *The Works of Richard of Campsall*, vol. 2, ed. E. A. Synan, Toronto 1982 (Studies und Texts, 58), 38-43, and William of Ockham, *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei respectu futurorum contingentium*, ed. Ph. Boehner and S. Brown, St Bonaventure, New York, 1978 (Opera Philosophica, 2), 507-539. The roots for this logical approach went back to Anselm and Robert Grosseteste.

possibility to change the divine foreknowledge. He can bring about that God knows something that he did not know before, and vice versa.¹³⁹

Similar thoughts were put forward in the *Sentences* commentary of Gregory of Rimini, one of the first works on the Continent in which the new approach was adopted. Although a proposition *p* has an unchanging truth value from eternity, this does not mean, so he argued, that proposition *p* is necessarily true. Any event that will happen in the future is contingent and might possibly not happen. And just like man can bring about that a future event will not happen, so he can also bring about that God never has known that this future event would have happened.¹⁴⁰

It goes without saying that these thoughts evoked strong reactions, since they claim that man can have an effect on the divine knowledge. A first reply came from John of Ripa, a Parisian theologian from the 1350s, who said that the view that man can make it happen that God foreknows something was advocated by many theologians: 'hoc dicunt multi reputati et famosi'. He nonetheless chose to disagree with it, finding it totally absurd ('nimis absurdum'), and a view to be despised and derided by every theologian a philosopher. How could what is eternal and immutable ever fall under the power of what is created and mutable? Although created will is able to act, it is not within its province to make this act be known and willed by God.¹⁴¹

At the end of the fourteenth century, similar thoughts were voiced by the theologian Marsilius of Inghen. He distinguished two different ways of seeing human causality in relation to divine knowledge. On the one hand, one might claim that man may act in such a way as to change God's foreknowledge itself: 'agere circa providentiam'. Quite different, on the other hand, is the claim that whichever way man acts, the act is also foreknown by God from eternity: 'facere aliquid ad quod sequitur Deum ab aeterno praescire'. According to Marsilius, only the second interpretation can be admitted. Human sins are committed in freedom, so depending on whether man chooses to sin or not, the corresponding proposition *p* about God's foreknowledge is made either true or false. What is changed by man is not God's knowledge itself, but only the

¹³⁹ Adam Wodeham, *Ordinatio Oxoniensis*, Lib. 3, q. 2, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Cod. 915, fol. 175^{vb}.

¹⁴⁰ Gregory of Rimini, *Lectura*, Lib. 1, d. 38, q. 2, ed. A. Trapp and V. Marcolino, vol. 3, Berlin 1984 (Spätmittelalter und Reformation, 8), 203.

¹⁴¹ The relevant passages are quoted in H. Schwamm, *Magistri Ioannis de Ripa OFM doctrina de praescientia divina*, Rome 1930 (Analecta Gregoriana, 1), 64 (John of Ripa, *Sent.*, Lib. 1, d. 39, a. 1).

truth value of p about God's knowledge. God in his 'immensitas' has knowledge of what man will do and therefore knows which proposition will be true, without depending on man in any way whatsoever.¹⁴²

In the course of his investigation, Marsilius used the term 'lustrare' to refer to the act of divine knowing, where other authors in their commentaries on the *Sentences* would have written 'scire' or 'videre'. The term 'lustrare' occurs in Boethius' discussion of God's knowledge.¹⁴³ The use of this term by Marsilius seems to suggest that for him there is a connection between the question of human causality as discussed by his contemporaries and the problem raised in the *Consolatio* of Boethius. This is also implied by his use of the Boethian concept 'potestas' and his response, which is completely in line with that of Boethius. God in his eternal mode of being sees every future things and every movement of the human will, without receiving anything from them.¹⁴⁴

As a result of the logico-semantic approach of the fourteenth century, the Boethian issue of human causality in relation to divine knowledge moved to the center of attention in the scholastic commentaries on the *Sentences*. The question that suggests itself now is, in what way the issue was discussed in the non-academic commentaries on the *Consolatio*.

2.3.2. The Ghent Boethius

The Ghent Boethius treats the issue at great length. The author is in his response direct and unambiguous: human beings can have no influence on the divine knowledge. That man can change his decisions is no threat to the infallibility of the divine. God knows exactly when and how a human being will alter his plans. His knowledge encompasses everything, not only the visible actions of man, but also his inner thoughts and ponderings.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Marsilius of Inghen, *Quaestiones*, Lib. 1, q. 40, a. 2, fol. 176^{vb}. This distinction goes back to John Hiltalingen of Basel, as is clear from the text cited in Schwamm, *Magistri Ioannis de Ripa*, 210.

¹⁴³ Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 18, 102: "Quid igitur postulas ut necessaria fiant quae diuino lumine lustrentur (...)." See Marsilius of Inghen, *ibid.*, fol. 176^{va}: "Abyssum enim scientiae divinae sine hoc quod deinde a voluntate simul scit quid voluntas eliget, quasi omnia lustrando antequam fiant (...)."

¹⁴⁴ Marsilius of Inghen, *ibid.*, fol. 176^{va-b}. The concept of 'potestas' also occurs in the commentaries of Adam Wodeham and Gregory of Rimini.

¹⁴⁵ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. T2^{vb}: "(...) Ende dit meughdy merken bij dien dat god niet alleene de ghewerken der meinschen, maer ooc alle hare ynderlike heimelike ghepeinsen ende ghedochten kent."

If man changes his mind, the divine knowledge will not alter, since God knows everything in an immutable manner. His way of knowing is different from that of man. It is part of his eternal mode of being and thus not subject to change. Everything is present in the mirror of his eternity. God knows from eternity, those that will be saved and those that will be damned. Yet, this in no way comes into opposition with human liberty. Human beings act freely. But God knows what they will do. Therefore, the author adds, it is important to act prudently and to put our hope in God, who will reward the good and punish the evil.¹⁴⁶

The latter point, that it is important to lead a virtuous life and to hope, is elaborately discussed with references to the Scripture and the Church Fathers. The commentator anticipates the ending of the *Consolatio*, which is devoted to that issue.¹⁴⁷ The certainty about God's infallible knowledge is the best assurance for our hope. If God has foreknowledge, there will be remunerations to the good and castigations to the evil.¹⁴⁸

In discussing the immutability of divine knowledge, the author does not mention the problem of the human causality as it is discussed in the commentaries on the *Sentences*. Yet, he deeply enters into the causality of the divine knowledge, highlighting that God is the cause of the things he knows, and that the things he knows have no influence on his knowledge. There is a manifest connection with the problem put forward by Boethius.¹⁴⁹ Human beings have no impact on the divine, since the essence of God has no cause, but exists by itself. God is not dependent on creation, but creation is dependent on God, who is the first cause. Our author starts his exposition with a long anonymous quotation from Reinier of St Truiden, in which the Boethian text is paraphrased and it is argued that God in his knowledge is not controlled by others.¹⁵⁰

Next, he raises the question of how God can be the cause of the things he knows. His knowledge has causative power insofar it is con-

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., fol. T3^{rb}-vb.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 46f., 105.

¹⁴⁸ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. T3^{vb}-[T4]^{vb}.

¹⁴⁹ See Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, n. 42, 104f.

¹⁵⁰ Ghent Boethius (Den Haag, KB, 171 A 2), Lib. 5, pros. 6, fol. T5^{ra}: "Hier stelt filosofie de solucie van eenen pointe dat boven ghenoot es (...). Of filosofie segghen wilde dat kenne an de dynghen niet en hant, noch vanden selven niet en ontleent, maer soude den toecommenden dijnghen wat schuldich wesen, waert dat zij haers causen waren (...)." and Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 164^{rb}: "Hic philosophia ex istis inducit solucionem unius superius tacti (...). Quasi diceret quod ipsa nichil ab eis recepit. Tunc enim futuris rebus debitor fieret dei providencia, si ipse cause forent ipsius providencie (...)."

nected with the divine will. God can be compared to a craftsman, who not only has in his mind the idea of the product he makes, but also has the ability to produce it.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, the discussion is punctuated with references to the *Summa contra gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas. These references are not taken from Reinier, in whose commentary they are absent, as is the whole discussion about the causality of God's knowledge. They underscore again the Thomistic background of the author of the Ghent Boethius.

Referring to Thomas Aquinas, our author discusses the relationship between the divine intellect and the divine will. God has complete knowledge of creation, because his will is the cause of everything. Also, he deals with the distinction between divine and human knowledge, again mentioning Thomas Aquinas. God knows creation by knowing his essence, without being dependent on what he knows. Man, however, receives his knowledge from outside. Interestingly, in this section he employs the scholastic jargon again. His quotations from Thomas are not verbatim. He paraphrases and summarizes his source, using a vocabulary that elsewhere in the commentary is only rarely employed, such as 'zo suldijs weten', a translation of the Latin 'sciendum est', which in scholastic treatises is a standard turn of phrase.¹⁵²

The further course of the commentary deserves our attention as well. There our author discusses a number of issues that normally are treated in the commentaries on the *Sentences*, not in the commentaries on Boethius, such as the questions whether God knows the infinite and whether he knows the evil. These questions are solved along traditional lines. Although there cannot exist a infinite being except for God, God may know the infinite being, because his understanding is unlimited. And God has knowledge of the evil because he knows how much it lacks the being of the good.¹⁵³ In this connection, he again refers to Thomas,

¹⁵¹ Ibid., fol. [T5]^{ra}: "(...) de sciencie gods es cause der dynghen, ghelijc de coonste des wercmans cause zyns werchs of werkens es, want (also sente Jan seit) 'bij hem zyn alle dynghen ghemaect', dats bij ziner sciencie."

¹⁵² In this part of the commentary, the image of the craftsman again is mentioned, *ibid.*, fol. [T5]^{va}: "Voort, omme te verclaren einighe pointen boven verhaelt, zo suldijs weten dat god de toecommende dynghen, die noch ter tijt in gheen en wesene zijn, kend of weet also of ghelijc een coonstenaer de dynghen van ziner coonsten doet, die noch te voorschijn niet comen zijn."

¹⁵³ Ibid., fol. [T5]^{va}: "Hij kent oec wel onhendelike dynghen; niet bij dat hijse ziet, want gheen dync onhendelic es dan hij. Ende dit en bejeghent zijner edelheit niet. Want zo eenighe werk ende cracht staerker of meerder es, zo sou voorder ende breeder werken mach. Nu, de godlijke verstantesse es onhendelic, ende dus kent sou alle dynghen hoe verre zij strecken of

without quoting him word for word.¹⁵⁴ Perhaps he used a third source. More important, however, is the fact that he brings up these and other issues from the traditional stock of questions dealt with in the commentaries on the *Sentences*. These issues are not discussed by Reinier, Pseudo-Thomas, or Denys the Carthusian. In this respect, the author of the Ghent Boethius is unique. He is indebted to the scholastic theological tradition, notwithstanding the fact that he is writing in the vernacular.

2.3.3. *The other commentaries*

The other commentaries give far lesser attention to the problem raised by Boethius. In the commentary of Reinier, only the opinion of Boethius is mentioned. There is no dealing with the issue of human causality and divine knowledge.¹⁵⁵ The same goes for the commentaries of Pseudo-Thomas and Denys the Carthusian. There are no hints that the authors had knowledge of the scholastic debate on the issue similar to what we have found concerning the nature of the things that are present in God's eternal mode of being. Perhaps the discussion was too recent or too elite to be included. The commentary of Pseudo-Thomas remains very close to the text of Boethius. If man changes his intentions, God will have known this from eternity. God will have known the initial plan, the changing of it, and the action that eventually will take place. He is omniscient and nothings escapes from his view.¹⁵⁶ Also, the author deals briefly with the nature of divine knowledge. God knows the future by having knowledge of himself, not by looking outside, as man does. His nature is undivided and therefore everything is present to him. He is not dependent on creation, but creation is dependent on him.¹⁵⁷

In the commentary of Denys, the point that God knows creation by knowing his essence is put forward as well. Many philosophical and theological authorities are mentioned to strengthen this view, among which are Aristotle, Proclus and the *Liber de causis*.¹⁵⁸ This is not an un-

hoe snode zij zyn. Hij kent ooc quade dynghen, ende dat biden goeden (...)." In the commentaries on the *Sentences*, these questions are treated in Book 1, d. 35 and 36.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Aquinas discusses these issues in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Lib. 1, c. 69-71.

¹⁵⁵ Reinier of St Truiden, Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université, Cod. 348C, fol. 163^{vb}-164^{rb}.

¹⁵⁶ Pseudo-Thomas, *In Boethii De consolatione philosophiae*, Lib. 5, 172b.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Denys the Chartusian, *Enarrationes seu commentaria*, Lib. 5, pros. 6, a. 12, 623b.

usual procedure. Denys likes to quote extensively from the works of others. However, he only cites traditional sources, here and elsewhere. There is no discussion of contemporary authors, an observation that applies to the other commentaries as well.

3. Conclusion

At the outset of the paper it was argued that the commentaries on the *Consolatio* are an important source for the study of the transition of knowledge from academic to non-academic circles and that the problem of divine foreknowledge is a good example for studying this transition. Now we can draw some conclusions.

1. The vernacular language is no barrier for the reception of scholastic thinking as it was developed at the universities, even if this knowledge is of a high intellectual level. The Ghent Boethius is a case in point here. It discusses the logical aspects of the problem of the divine knowledge more elaborately than any of the Latin commentaries on the *Consolatio* studied. Its treatment of the problem is similar to that in the academic commentaries on the *Sentences* and the *De interpretatione*. That a treatise is composed in the vernacular therefore does not mean that it is more simple or less specialized than the writings of the same literary genre written in Latin, the language of the universities.

2. Although the Ghent Boethius matches the level of the discussion of the divine foreknowledge in academic writings, it has a different format and arrangement. The typical elements of a scholastic commentary, such as the 'quaestio' and the 'notabilia', seldom occur. There is no uniform structure in the different parts of the commentary. The commentaries of Reinier and Pseudo-Thomas, on the other hand, bear the mark of the academic commentary, but are less ambitious and stay closer to the text they comment upon than many of the treatises composed at the universities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The content therefore does not necessarily determine the format, nor vice versa.

3. The Ghent Boethius repeatedly refers to Thomas Aquinas and has been influenced by him, even where there is no mention of the *doctor sanctus*. The other commentaries do not have an 'auctoritas', which is followed in the exposition and repeatedly quoted. In the fifteenth century, the writings of Thomas Aquinas were frequently used and cited. There also circulated abstracts of his writings and other tools, that facili-

tated the quoting of his ideas.¹⁵⁹ Yet, it is not self-evident that the Ghent Boethius refers so often to Thomas Aquinas. The late medieval period is characterized by the growth of different schools of thought, among which are the 'albertistae', 'scotistae', 'nominalistae', and 'thomistae'.¹⁶⁰ They all had their own reading of the traditional texts and their own way of solving philosophical and theological problems, including that of divine foreknowledge. There was a 'processus albertistarum' and a 'processus thomistarum'. The reference to Thomas Aquinas therefore cannot be considered as a neutral act. It may be a sign, that the author reckons himself among the 'thomistae' and their way of dealing with philosophical and theological issues.

4. Concerning the three issues explored in the paper, it is striking that only the first, which is about the presence of things in God's eternal mode of being, shows the influence of academic debate. There are no traces of academic discussions in the exposition of the two other problems. This needs to be explained. It may be due to the historical development of scholastic debate. The discussion about the nature of things that are present to God took place mainly in the period between 1270 and 1310. The opinion that God's knowledge of the future is contingent and not necessary, which pertains to the second issue, became the received view in the time after about 1320, when Ockham had finished his commentary on the *Sentences*. The third issue, the problem of man's influence on divine foreknowledge, was discussed in England from the 1330s (Adam Wodeham) and in Paris from the 1340s (Gregory of Rimini). Only the earliest issue found its echo in the commentaries on the *Consolatio*. A partial explanation may be the dating of the commentary of Reinier, which is a product of the fourteenth century. Yet, the observation still remains significant for the other commentaries. The phenomenon therefore must be explained, so it seems, by the aspect of delay mentioned in the introduction above. Academic debates only gradually found their way into the treatises from the outside, if they did at all.

5. The aspect of eclecticism distinguished in the introduction above is clearly visible in the Ghent Boethius. The author combines theoretical analyses of divine knowledge as he found it in the commentary of

¹⁵⁹ See Hoenen, *Speculum philosophiae medii aevi*, 85f. and 88, and Grabmann, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, vol. 2, 424-489.

¹⁶⁰ On these schools, see the reference in note 12 and M. J. F. M. Hoenen, 'The *Reparationes totius philosophiae naturalis* (Cologne 1494) as a source for the late medieval debates between Albertistae and Thomistae', *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 4 (1993), 307-344.

Reinier with long quotations from the Church Fathers, that have no theoretical, but rather an ethical intention. The other commentators hardly ever quote at large from the works of others, at least not openly. They stay close to the text of Boethius. An exception is the final part of the commentary by Denys, in which a number of abstracts from the writings of scholastic authors are put together. These abstracts are not organically connected with the commentary itself, but serve as a collection of important views on how God steers and governs creation.

6. The writings of Eckhart and Tauler are a good example of the aspect of simplification. Academic theories are adapted to a vernacular public with almost no university training. Yet, in the vernacular commentary that we have studied, the Ghent Boethius, there is no question of simplification. The logical aspects of the divine knowledge are exposed in a way that is similar to discussions in the academic writings. In the remaining commentaries, on the other hand, simplification plays a role. Pseudo-Thomas mentions two different traditions with regard to the distinction between 'necessitas simplex' and 'necessitas conditionis', without discussing the background of these differences. He only notes them, but adds no further explanation. The same goes for distinction between 'formaliter' and 'materialiter' put forward by Denys, which is not explained either.

7. As has been noted earlier, the commentaries that we have studied stay close to the text of the *Consolatio*. In this respect, there is sharp contrast between these writings and the academic commentaries on Aristotle and Peter Lombard, which are much more independent from their source. In the academic commentaries, the views of Boethius on the modality of divine knowledge are attacked, especially in the fourteenth century. The commentaries on the *Consolatio*, however, never question or criticize the theories of Boethius, as far as the divine knowledge is concerned.¹⁶¹ Only the Ghent Boethius seems to be independent in the choice of subjects discussed, but is in the final analysis no more critical than the other commentaries. Yet, this does not lower the value of the treatise. The author used his (most likely) university training to educate a readership of mainly academic laymen. He wrote his massive commentary in the native language, leaving us a document that gives impor-

¹⁶¹ This does not mean that when dealing with other issues, such as the theory of the soul, the commentaries may correct or criticize the view of Boethius. See in this respect the contribution of Goris and Wissink elsewhere in this volume and also A. J. Minnis and L. Nauta, 'More Platonico loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches', *Chaucer's 'Boece' and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Chaucer Studies, 18), 1-33.

tant insights in the reception of academic knowledge in the intellectual culture and the vernacular tradition of the Low Countries.