

# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Excursus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Conclusion

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

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

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

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



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