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CHAPTER FOUR

Historical background

This chapter will sketch the historical background of the *Questiones libri Porphirii* edited here. In a broad historical sense, there is the long tradition of commentaries on the *Isagoge* into which Manlevelt's text is to be placed. So firstly, in section 4.1 I will explain why the *Isagoge* is worth commenting upon, and to what commentaries it has given rise. In a narrower historical sense, Manlevelt seems to have taken part of the Ockhamist movement of the early fourteenth century, and is intellectually associated with the universities of both Oxford and Paris. So secondly, in sections 4.2–6 I will see in how far Manlevelt can be called an Ockhamist, say something about Ockhamist trends in Oxford and Paris, and spend some thoughts on Manlevelt's possible connections with either of these universities.

4.1. *Porphyry's book, and what it is about*

4.1.1. *The Organon*

The authority of the text commented upon in the *Questiones libri Porphirii*, the *Isagoge* by Porphyry (c. 234–304), is derivative of the authority of the text to which this *Isagoge* was meant to be an introduction: the *Categories* by Aristotle (384–322).¹ The *Isagoge* was more than one thousand years old by Manlevelt's time, and the *Categories* was six centuries old by Porphyry's time and therefore sixteen hundred years old by Manlevelt's time. The *Categories* in its turn was the first of a series of six treatises by which Aristotle single-handedly laid the foundations on which the complete system of logic was to rest for more than two millennia.² Together

- 1 For a most excellent survey of the history of commentaries on the *Isagoge* the reader is referred to Libera 1996 and to the author's introduction to Porphyry 1998.
- 2 In the Philosopher's own words: 'When it comes to this subject [i.e. logic], it is not the case that part had been worked out in advance and part had not; instead, nothing existed at all.' *De sophisticis elenchis* 34, 183b34–36. Cited by Smith 1995,

these six treatises were to find their place in philosophical history and curriculum under the collective title of *Organon*: apart from the *Categories*, these were the *Perihermeneias* or *De interpretatione*, the *Analytica priora*, the *Analytica posteriora*, the *Topica* and the *De sophisticis elenchis*.

The subject matter of each of these works is indicated in a few words. *De interpretatione* is about the structure of propositions and their truth-values. The *Prior Analytics* is about inference, by way of the syllogistic method; in fact, it contains the first ever systematic exposition of a theory of correct inference itself. The *Posterior Analytics* is about demonstration: valid reasoning leading to scientific, certain knowledge. The *Topics*, leaving the field of strict demonstration for that of dialectics in a broader sense, is about equally valid reasoning in fields where there is no certainty to be had, leading to knowledge that is probable at the most. In this treatise Aristotle unfolds his own theory of the Predicables, which was to be developed by Porphyry in his *Isagoge*; of the eight parts of the *Topics*, two are about accident, one about genus, one about property, and two about definition. The *Sophistical Refutations* is about logical fallacies and as such can be looked upon as an appendix to the *Topics*.³

4.1.2. *The Categories*

Pinpointing the subject matter of the *Categories* has always been more problematic.⁴ The *Categories* presents us with Aristotle's ten-fold categorization of what there is. The ten highest categories are substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action, and

27. Smith's is as good and insightful an introduction to the logic of Aristotle as one can get in forty pages.

3 Smith 1995 groups *De interpretatione* and the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* together as covering the field of demonstration, and the *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations* as covering the field of dialectical argument. Aristotle's *Rhetorica*, traditionally not a part of the *Organon*, might also be grouped with these works on dialectical argument.

4 Even its position within Aristotelian logic is matter of debate. See Smith 1995, 28f. An ancient tradition took it to be a preface to the whole of logic, giving a theory of the meanings of the terms of which propositions or composed. There is some irony, then, in the fact that the *Categories* was to lose that role to its own prefatory treatise, the *Isagoge*. But an even older tradition entitled it 'Prefatory Materials for the *Topics*', thus binding it closer to the more 'dialectical' compartment of Aristotelian logic (*Topics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, and maybe even including the *Rhetoric*) than to the works concerned with demonstration in a strict sense (*De interpretatione* and the two *Analytics*). That the *Isagoge* in its role as introduction to the *Categories* picks out part of the contents of the *Topics* lends some plausibility to this last tradition.

passion.⁵ But what is the nature of these categories: are they primarily things, words, or concepts?⁶

Now, in the categories of being items are collected and sorted out by which man can name reality, and this categorization is the basis for forming complex wholes (for instance ‘white man’) and propositions and judgements (for instance ‘men are white’) that in their turn are the basis for inferences, in the end constituting real knowledge about the world. So the theory of the categories is fundamental for philosophy.⁷ One

5 For a general survey of the discussions on the categories through the ages, see H. Baumgartner a.o., ‘Kategorie, Kategorienlehre’, in J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* IV, Darmstadt 1976, cols. 714–725.

6 To avoid misunderstanding, one should keep in mind that ancient and medieval philosophers are said to have taken for granted a parallelism between thought and reality. This means that they accepted that there are things that exist in reality and that there can be, and is, knowledge of those things. The assumption of this characteristic of Medieval as well as Ancient thought is usually indicated as ‘the parallelism postulate’. The key text on the parallelism postulate might well be De Rijk 1988. These things as conceived by human understanding are designated by a term. So human understanding does involve a subjective element when the thing is conceived or named, but thanks to the parallelism, the thing conceived matches the thing in reality. The question need not be asked whether a kind of gap has to be overcome: there is no gap. For an explanation of the role of the parallelism postulate in the semantics and ontology of Aristotle, see De Rijk 2002a and 2002b. Latest insights tend to limit the scope of the parallelism postulate. See, for example, Dutill Novaes’s forthcoming article on Burley.

7 A word here on the relevance of Aristotle’s categories for present-day philosophical practice. The twenty-first century had its philosophical kick-off in Paris, where, on the 25th and 26th of February 2000 an international symposium was held at the Centre Georges Pompidou, entitled *Quelle philosophie pour le XXI^e siècle?* Subject of this symposium was Aristotle’s categories, that, according to the *avant-propos* to its textual edition (J. Benoist e.a. 2001), during twenty centuries had dictated the elementary grammar of philosophical reasoning. The question asked at the symposium was: what rests today of these categories? Must we abandon them? Or should we rethink them anew? One may be tempted to say this question about the relevance of Aristotle’s categories for today’s philosophizing is already answered by looking at the list of ten renowned contributors to the symposium, who each have lent their names to one of Aristotle’s categories, by writing an essay about it. If, say, J.R. Searle deigns to write some twenty-odd pages about the category of time, then things are not looking too bad for this category, at least from an inspirational point of view. On the other hand, as I. Hacking remarks in his contribution on the category of quality, having lived a fruitful life for twenty centuries, Aristotle’s *Organon* had definitely had its time by the 18th century. So it is hardly to be expected that it will arise to its former philosophical omnipresence in the century we are now living in. Or is it? (For a system of thought ‘definitely moribund in the 18th century’ it was a present enough source of inspiration in the intervening centuries, if we only think of C.S. Peirce’s 1867 paper ‘On a New List of Categories’, F. Brentano’s early 20th century

could even say that one's choice of a particular theory of categories depends on what kind of philosopher one is.⁸

What, then, is the nature of the members of the categories? Are these members (primarily) terms which refer to something in reality? Or are they things so far as (and only so far as) these are captured in a linguistic expression or thought? In the context of medieval philosophy, a penchant towards one or the other of these options will place a thinker in the camp of either the 'realists' or the 'nominalists'.⁹

4.1.3. *The Isagoge*

Now, keeping in mind that the categories, about which these intricate questions are asked, are the highest genera, and that genus is the first of the five universals or predicables treated by Porphyry in his *Isagoge*, it will come as no surprise that the problems involved with the nature of the categories will also come to the fore when the nature of these predicables is discussed. In fact, it was the *Isagoge* that ignited the never-ending war between realists and nominalist on the nature of the universals.

The author of the *Isagoge*, the little introductory book to the *Categories* that virtually came to function as an introduction to the whole body of Aristotelian logic in the centuries to come,¹⁰ was not an Aristotelian himself. Pupil of the founder of Neo-Platonism Plotinus (204?-270),

Kategorienlehre, or W.E. Johnson's turn-of-the-19th century theory of determinants and determinables – a distinction recasting the Porphyrian one between universal and particular.)

- 8 E. Lask, *Die Logik der Philosophie und die Kategorienlehre*, 1923 (1911) (*Gesammelte Schriften* 2, 4): 'Was für eine Kategorienlehre man wählt, hängt davon ab, was für ein Philosoph man ist.' Cited in Bos & Van der Helm 1998, 184.
- 9 These labels, clear as they may seem, should be used with some caution. It is not that 'nominalists' deny the usefulness of universal concepts in referring to certain aspects of concrete things in 'reality', rather they tend to take more seriously than the 'realists' the Aristotelian conviction, shared by all, that reality consists of concrete things only; in the light of the 'linguistic' character of all speaking and thinking about reality they reject every instance of ontological projection of our mental objects and other thought-constructions. See De Rijk 1994, 8 n. 4.
- 10 According to Barnes in the introduction to his 2003 translation of the *Isagoge*, Porphyry's little book is really meant as an introduction not to the *Categories* in particular, but to logic in general, comprising as it does the theories of predication, definition, and proof. Whether meant as such by its author or not, the *Isagoge* at least *de facto*, being the introduction to the first part of the *Organon*, was the introduction to the whole of Aristotelian logic. See Porphyry 2003, xv.

Porphyry was honoured by Simplicius, the sixth century commentator on Aristotle, as being the most erudite of all Neo-Platonists.¹¹

Written in Sicily¹² at the request of the Roman senator Chrysaorius, the *Isagoge* originally seems to have been only an occasional piece of work. In this work Porphyry builds on Aristotle's treatment of the so called predicables in his *Topica*. But there was one little difference to begin with. With Aristotle the predicables were four in number; with Porphyry their number is five. Aristotle's definition is not included in Porphyry's list, while species and difference are added. So to sum up in familiar Latin the complete series of five predicables, or *quinque voces*, as they came to be called in the Middle Ages, we get: *genus, species, differentia, proprium* and *accidens*. We will not go into the logico-philosophical consequences of this re-listing of the predicables here, but accept the five as listed by Porphyry, because that is the list that was to go down in history.¹³

- 11 Porphyry must count as *the* pivotal figure in the transition of ancient philosophy to the middle ages and beyond. Not only did he compose the *Isagoge* and compile Plotinus' *Enneads*, thus contributing two texts of everlasting endurance, but even greater was his indirect influence on the course of philosophical history, by providing Augustine (354–430) with his essential reading material. In the *Confessiones* Augustine makes no secret about the powerful influence the 'books of the Platonists' exercised on him – the 'Platonists' in fact being an inextricable mix of Plotinus and Porphyry, in Latin translations. The Churchfather seems to have been initially unaware that Porphyry was also the author of *Against the Christians*. Once he had discovered Porphyry's hostility, that became a leading motif of his later discussions on Platonism, notably those in Books 8–10 of the *De civitate Dei*. On Augustine's change in appreciation of Porphyry, see O'Donnell 2001, 22.
- 12 Porphyry's move to Sicily, and in consequence, his writing the *Isagoge* there, would seemingly not have happened, had it not been for a fit of melancholy on the part of this famed pupil of Plotinus. 'I myself at one period had formed the intention of ending my life; Plotinus discerned my purpose; he came unexpectedly to my house where I had secluded myself, told me that my decision sprang not from reason but from mere melancholy and advised me to leave Rome. I obeyed and left for Sicily (...). There I was induced to abandon my first intention but was prevented from being with Plotinus between that time and his death.' Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus and the Arrangement of His Work*, 11. Translated by S. MacKenna, cited from the 1991 Penguin edition.
- 13 Was it Porphyry's logico-technical acumen that attracted so many readers, interpreters and commentators throughout history? Another one of Porphyry's works, the philosophical allegorization of a passage in Homer's *Odyssey*, best-known under its Latin title *De antro nympharum*, was translated by Thomas Carlyle, and subsequently illustrated by William Blake. But there seems to be room for doubt about the literary qualities of the *Isagoge* helping to pave the way to its everlasting logico-philosophical glory. Schopenhauer compares Porphyry favourably to all other Neo-Platonists, when it comes to clear and coherent writing; in fact Porphyry is the only one among them that one can read for one's pleasure. 'Die Lektüre der

4.1.4. *The three questions*

Also to go down in history was the intrinsic linking of logic and metaphysics, the basis for which was laid by Porphyry in raising three questions somewhere in the beginning of the *Isagoge*: (1) Are genera and species substances? (2) Are they corporeal or incorporeal? (3) If the latter, are they in sensible things or separated from them?¹⁴ Even though Porphyry dismisses these questions right away as being of a too metaphysical nature to be treated in an introductory work of logic such as the *Isagoge* was meant to be, he in fact had laid the foundations for the war about universals that would rage through the Middle Ages. Are the predicables, or universals, something really existent or not?

Porphyry's literally stated intention notwithstanding the notorious Three Questions would continue to be raised and – in utterly divergent ways – be answered in connection with the *Isagoge*. The first who did try to provide his readers with the answer to the problem Porphyry refused to resolve in a logical context, was the one to have coined the term 'universalia' as well, viz. Boethius, in his two commentaries on the *Isagoge*, which thus proved to be instrumental in providing Latin medieval philosophy with its main subject-matter, and the terminology to discuss it. The irony has been remarked by many an observer: the medieval preoccupation with the ontological status of universals arose out of Boethius' comments on a passage where Porphyry discards the question as unimportant in a logical context.¹⁵

Neuplatoniker erfordert viel Geduld; weil es ihnen sämtlich an Form und Vortrag gebracht. Bei weitem besser, als die andern, ist jedoch, in dieser Hinsicht, Porphyrius: er ist der einzige, der deutlich und zusammenhängend schreibt; so dass man ihn ohne Widerwillen liest.' (*Parerga und Paralipomena*, cited from *Sämtliche Werke* v1, 60) Baumstark, on the other hand, in his monograph on Syrian commentaries on the *Isagoge*, criticizes Porphyry's lack of style, accusing him of being tedious, dry and all too fond of schematizations. Faults for which Porphyry's Syrian intellectual background is to blame, says Baumstark. 'Porphyrios war hellenisierter Syrer. Seine εἰσαγωγή, obwohl nach bestimmter Überlieferung im römischen Westen geschrieben, ist denn in ihre Dürre und Trockenheit, der schmucklosen und stillösen Sachlichkeit des Ganzen und der bis zur Langeweile schematischen Behandlungsweise des Einzelnen ein echtes Kind syrischen Geistes.' (Baumstark 1900, 133)

14 *Isagoge* prooem., 2 (1.10–15): 'Mox de generibus ac speciebus illud quidem, sive subsistunt sive in solis nudis purisque intellectibus posita sunt sive substantia corporalia sunt an incorporalia, et utrum separata an in sensibilibus et circa ea constantia, dicere recusabo.' (Tr. Boethii)

15 Boethius, PL64 82B–86A

In his introduction to the French translation of the *Isagoge* Libera rightly speaks about the paradox of the *Isagoge*: ‘Nul livre, sans doute, n’a eu dans l’histoire de la philosophie un destin comparable à celui de l’*Isagoge*: susciter (et entretenir) durant des siècles la controverse que son auteur avait, en le composant, explicitement voulu éviter.’¹⁶ Probably these Three Questions coming with the *Quinque Voces*, the Five Words, added just that little bit of complementary interest needed for this introductory work to become an instant classic. For an instant classic it was.

4.1.5. *Commentaries on the Isagoge*

Not only did the *Isagoge* continue to be translated and commented upon, from late Antiquity until the present day, be it on its own or as part of the logical canon, but in the Middle Ages its string of commentaries even led to a spin-off of tracts dedicated to its very subject matter: the universals.

An excellent overview of the immensely influential afterlife of Porphyry’s occasional piece is provided by Libera in *La querelle des universaux*, and in the introduction to his Greek-French-Latin edition of the *Isagoge*.¹⁷

16 Porphyry 1998, xxxiii

17 Libera 1996, Porphyry 1998. All this translating and commenting should be seen in its proper perspective. Porphyry’s *Isagoge* shares the interpretative fate of the Aristotelian body of work it came to be so indissolubly attached to. As is the case with almost anything that Aristotle has written, the interpretation of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* has come to be the subject matter of many centuries’ worth of debate, the process of interpreting having started already in Late Antiquity. With respect to Aristotle’s *De generatione et corruptione* and other *libri naturales* first available to the Latin west from the end of the twelfth century onward, Thijssen 1999, esp. 15 ff., has argued that the full significance of the response to these texts – be it in the form of translations or in the form of commentaries or autonomous tracts about their subject matter – can be better understood with the help of the terminology of ‘appropriation’ and ‘naturalization’ as employed by Sabra in his insightful 1987 article on the reception and reworking of Greek science in medieval Islam. The same goes for the response to Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. The *translation movement* then, according to Thijssen’s adoption of Sabra’s insights to Western Latin circumstances, represents the *process of appropriation*, which was a decidedly active process: the Greek science and philosophy were not pressed upon the Latin West, no more than they were pressed upon medieval Islam. The *commentary literature* then represents the *process of naturalization*. Over time, the imported Greek knowledge came to be totally absorbed and thoroughly transformed in its new Latin context, even in such a way, says Thijssen, that the Western culture became its new natural home. Of

The Latin tradition of commentaries can be given a not altogether arbitrary starting point in the year 1255.¹⁸ In that year at the Arts Faculty in Paris the study of all known works by Aristotle was prescribed to all students. Other universities followed or had already preceded Paris. And so, for the next four hundred years, these works came to be routinely studied and commented upon all over Europe. The main vehicle by which Aristotle's ideas – and Porphyry's ideas along with them – were mastered, assimilated, and further developed was the commentary literature. Thijssen has to admit, however, that unfortunately so far only few doctrinal aspects of the commentary tradition have been studied. In the next chapter of this Introduction I will return to the commentary tradition in relation to the present text.

When trying to come to terms with Manlevelt's commentary on the *Isagoge*, it is important to know something about the tradition of commentaries on the *Isagoge*, and the answers to the main questions posed by it. The explanations and the general line of a solution indicated by Boethius are held to be of even importance with the questions posed by Porphyry. The dichotomy between *res* (things) and *voces* (words) that was to hold sway from the eleventh century onwards goes right back to this very same dichotomy in late Antiquity, expressed in such a clear a manner in Boethius' logic: 'The *Categories* is not about things, but about words.'¹⁹ To the medieval logicians, the same held for the *Isagoge* as well, and so from the eleventh century onward, logic was taken to be a *scientia sermonicalis*, a linguistic science. For a fair enough presentation of the medieval interpretation of Porphyry's questionnaire one may best turn

course, Sabra's nor Thijssen's contentions are very revolutionary. Hardly any modern scholar would disagree with them about the element of activity in translating Greek philosophical works into Latin. As acknowledged by Thijssen, this aspect is also emphasized, for instance, by Lohr 1982, 82–84. One might turn to De Rijk 1977 as well. The *Isagoge* itself of course was a key element in the Greek body of science, logic and wisdom absorbed in medieval Islam. It promises to be a worthwhile venture, if one was to seek out in how far Sabra's ideas about the ultimate petrification of medieval Islamic philosophy (Sabra 1987, 238ff.) are also applicable to the late scholastics loosing themselves in hair-splitting and sterility. On a whole different scale, the labels of 'appropriation' and 'naturalization' in a Sabraian sense would also come in handy to give some *cachet* to the humble handi-craft of editing obscure medieval manuscripts for a twenty-first century academic readership.

18 Thijssen 1999, 17.

19 Boethius, PL 64, 162B: 'non de rerum generibus, neque de rebus, sed de sermonibus rerum genera significantibus in hoc opere tractatus habetur'.

once more to Libera, who devotes a paragraph to precisely this subject in his already oft-quoted introduction to the French translation of the *Isagoge*.²⁰

Has the dichotomy ever been overcome? If so, one would expect to find a consensus among present day scholars, on a convincing interpretation firmly rooted in tradition. According to De Rijk,²¹ the categories are neither the terms (words) nor the things as such, but are the things for so far they are signified by the terms, and, in a manner of speaking, adapted to our sensations of them and our intellection of them. Categorization: just what the word means. Libera, who gives this fair summarization

20 Porphyry 1998, LXII–LXXXV, where we learn that a large portion of the original problem, to wit the Stoic contribution to the Stoic-Platonic-Peripathetic amalgam that Porphyry's theory of the universals turned out to be, was to play no role at all in the medieval discussion, while the Platonic contribution as well as the Peripathetic contribution wore one and the same Aristotelian mask. Porphyry's first question, whether genera and species are substances, was posed in Stoic language, according to Libera, and was given a peripathetic and anti-stoic answer by Porphyry himself. Not, however, in the *Isagoge* itself, but in his commentary on the *Categories* and in a work known under the title of *Sentences (Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, ed. B. Mommert. Leipzig 1907). Genus and species, as the abstract essences of the material things, were not just a *figmentum*, an 'empty concept' without a real counterpart (such as the universal of the Stoics), but a veritable entity present in its totality in each of the things determined by it, and acquiring the status of a universal in our thought by way of abstraction. This is how the instigator of the whole discussion on the status of universals thought about it himself. But as remarked before, Porphyry's posing the question proved to be historically fertile and his answer did not. Moreover, the whole Stoic or anti-Stoic aspect of the matter got lost as well. All in all, the deficiencies in the transmission of texts by Porphyry and his contemporaries, combined with the unfavourable destiny of the Stoic sources, has prevented the medievals to take full measure of the discussion potentially instigated by Porphyry. The 'conceptualistic' interpretation was partly preserved via Boethius, but soon got to be replaced by other models, inspired by the Aristotelian psychology and epistemology. This change of paradigm is witnessed, Libera says, by the Latin translation of the Greek ἐπίνοια: intellectus. From 'concept' as with Porphyry, it came to mean 'intellect' (νοῦς) as in the sense of Aristotle's *De anima*.

21 De Rijk 1980; 1988. De Rijk is leading in the field of study of the *Categories*; from his very first endeavours in philosophy in the 1950s the categories have had his keen interest and up to his latest publications the categories hardly ever go without mention. De Rijk's dissertation was about Aristotle's *Categories* and one of his latest books, the critical edition of the tract on *intentiones* by Geraldus Odonis (De Rijk 2005), contains a neat summarization of his findings on Aristotle's categories as well. Perhaps the most rewarding presentation of De Rijk's views on this matter is to be found in a series of 1980s articles in *Vivarium* – containing refinements when compared to the dissertation, and presenting things in a more detailed manner when compared to the introduction to his edition of Geraldus Odonis. The full-fledged account of De Rijk's view on these matters is to be found in his monumental two-volume study *Aristotle. Semantics and Ontology* (De Rijk 2002a and 2002b).

of De Rijk's views,²² points out that this presentation of Aristotle's true intention is very close to the thesis on this matter by Simplicius – a fact that is not likely to be denied by De Rijk. But just the same Libera rounds off his description of De Rijk's and Simplicius' views by stating that he does not subscribe to them. Instead of looking for an 'authentic' Aristotelian interpretation, Libera holds that the interpretational tradition on the subject matter of the *Categories* cannot be done justice if any ambiguity of the Aristotelian position is excluded beforehand. So even nowadays there is no consensus among the champions of ancient and medieval philosophy on Aristotle's real intention on the status of the categories.²³ To Manlevelt's mind, however, the true nature of the categories, and that of the universals, did not seem to be a matter of discussion anymore. Their status had already been ascertained once and for all, and had been discovered, we may safely surmise, by William of Ockham: a universal is a concept referring to a multiple of which it is a natural sign. That is the context within which he worked and within which we must try to understand him.

4.2. Thomas Manlevelt's Ockhamism

Ockham, of course, is famous for Ockham's razor, the principle (actually deriving from Aristotle) that 'entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity'.²⁴ While Ockham sliced away at the undergrowth of medieval realism,²⁵ Manlevelt will be seen taking up this razor, boldly slicing away at our very conceptual framework.

22 Porphyry 1998, XL–XLI.

23 There is not even consensus about which scholars are to be reckoned 'mainstream' Aristotle scholars. Some would say that De Rijk is not a mainstream Aristotle scholar. The mainstream would in that case adhere to the view that Aristotle was really a realist about the categories. See, for example, Frede 1985.

24 See Spade 1999 and Dutilh Novaes's forthcoming contribution to the *Companion to Burley* on how the 'razor' by itself is quite innocuous. The point is what is to be considered as 'beyond necessity'.

25 Andrews 2008, 348 holds that in doing this, Ockham was responsible for an enormous conceptual shift within philosophy, and has been accorded credit variously for the Scientific Revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and the modern world view. For the Scientific Revolution credit, Andrews refers to P. Duhem *Le Système du monde*, 10 vols. (Paris, 1913–1959). For the Protestant Reformation credit, Andrews refers to Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Theology* (Durham, Labyrinth Press, 1983) 4–5. For the modern world view credit, he refers to Gordon Leff, *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975) xiii.

With regard to the Ockhamist background of Thomas Manlevelt, signalled by Andrews,²⁶ the regrettable thing is that Manlevelt does never mention William of Ockham by name. Of course, this is no argument against his Ockhamism; Manlevelt just displays the reluctance for naming any contemporary, be it philosophical friend or foe, that for one reason or another is shared by all medieval authors – detrimental as it may be to our understanding of what was going on and of who was engaged in a polemic with whom. This does not mean that Manlevelt refuses to take sides. He does range himself with the *moderni* and their ‘modern way’ (*via moderna*) and turns himself with them against the ‘old way’ (*via antiqua*), associated with thirteenth century scholasticism.

In fact, ranging himself with the ‘moderni’ may be the most one can hope for as a means for a fourteenth century thinker to denominate himself.²⁷ Ockham had scarcely any avowed disciples, even though we have already met at least one of them, be it an anonymous one, in the author of the *Defensorium Ockham*.

In so far as thinkers were termed ‘Ockhamists’ at all, this label was used in a disparaging way. Thus we read about ‘Ockhamiste’ and a ‘secta Occanica’ in a series of statutes and ordinances issued by the Parisian Arts Faculty and its English-German nation respectively in the years 1339–1341, directed against the teaching and discussing of the ‘scientia Okamica.’²⁸ Scotists in late fourteenth-century Paris qualified the

26 Andrews 2008.

27 The ‘Ockhamism’ of even the most famous (or infamous) of Ockhamists has been called into question. ‘That such figures as Nicholas of Autrecourt and John of Mirecourt were called “Ockhamists” tells us more about their social attitudes – or the attitudes of those who so labeled them – than about their philosophical positions.’ (Boler 1982, 471 n. 56). Concerning the ecclesial condemnation in 1347 inflicted upon Nicholas of Autrecourt, De Rijk holds that a comparison, let alone a connection, with the condemnation of William of Ockham is inappropriate (Nicholas of Autrecourt 1994, 3). The term ‘Ockhamism’ only came in general use in the 19th century, as a general label for the 14th century thinkers who followed in the doctrinal footsteps of William of Ockham. Contemporary writers did not generally refer to this school of nominalist thought as ‘Ockhamism’. One 1425 manuscript even speaks of the century of Buridanism, and not that of Ockhamism. As a term ‘Ockhamism’ did survive the twentieth century, and is not likely to lose its usefulness to present-day investigators. Whether or not they called themselves so, there is a clear-cut enough group of thinkers conveniently labelled by the term ‘Ockhamism’. See, for example, the acts of a symposium on ‘Ockham and Ockhamists’ edited by Bos and Krop in 1987.

28 For a rendering *in extenso* of these documents, and a highly nuanced interpretation thereof, see Courtenay & Tachau 1982.

Ockhamists as ‘rudes et terministae’. Only since the 1474 Paris decree on Nominalism, they come to be called, and call themselves, ‘nominalists’.²⁹

Given the widespread use of Ockham’s logical criteria of demonstration and evidence there is good reason to label ‘Ockhamist’ in the wide sense the nominalist movement that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was known as the ‘modern way’, and that was to branch off in an Ockhamist school in a stricter sense, besides a Buridan school of nominalism, and a Marsilian school. And for the same good reason Thomas Manlevelt may safely be labelled an Ockhamist as well. To be even more specific: an Ockhamist in the strictest sense, seeing the high level of doctrinal concordance with the Venerable Inceptor.³⁰

No such doctrinal concordance is to be found with either of the other two schools of nominalism. This is not the place to go into the intricate relationship between Buridanism and Marsilianism. The least that can be said about it is that these two varieties of nominalism are mutually closer related to each other than either of them to Ockhamism in its strictest sense. For my present purpose it will suffice to indicate the differences of Manlevelt’s thought to either Buridanism or Marsilianism, and therefore to the amalgamation of the two schools. In our case it is Buridanism that Manlevelt is compared to.

With a career spanning roughly the same span of years as that of John Buridan, Thomas Manlevelt was not in any sense a Buridanist. Doctrinal concordances with the work of William of Ockham abound, but specific concordances with the work of John Buridan, other than sharing a common ‘nominalist’ worldview, are few, while doctrinal divergences are many. Buridanist key terms such as ‘contractio’ (referring to the relation between the more general and the less general, including the relation between genus and species as well as the relation between species and individual) are hardly to be found in the works of our author,³¹ and both

29 Maurer 1994, 388 is of the opinion that Ockham’s traditional title of nominalist is justified by the Venerable Inceptor himself, who in *Summa logicae* 1, 3, p. 11.27 refers to universals existing in the mind as ‘mental names’ (*nomina mentalia*).

30 This high level of doctrinal concordance between Thomas Manlevelt and William of Ockham is surely deserving of further study. On the medieval problem of universals, and Ockham’s role in solving this problem by replacing the *via antiqua* conception with his own *via moderna* conception, see Klima 2008.

31 On ‘contractio’ in the Buridanist technical sense, see for example King 1994, 407 and especially 424 n. 26. It has to be admitted, though, that Manlevelt does talk about signs being contracted, in Q. 2 DISTINCTIONES, 2^{ta}: ‘Divisio vero logicalis vocatur ista qua aliquod signum commune contrahitur pro aliquibus significatis per aliquam

thinkers have quite different ways of tackling the question of the number of the categories, to take but two random examples. If not to be taken as a proof, then at least as a strong indication that Manlevelt cannot have been a Buridanist in a strict or even a wide sense is the historical circumstance that Manlevelt's logical tracts in use at various European universities had to make place for those by John Buridan.³² This would not have been necessary had the two of them shared the same doctrine.

Moreover it must be remarked that historians of philosophy nowadays tend to deny there ever having been a 'Buridanist school', any more than an 'Ockhamist school'.³³

differentiam vel per aliquam suam speciem, sicut hoc signum commune "animal", quando additur sibi hec differentia "irrationale", contrahitur ad standum pro aliis suis significatis,' and also in Q. 35 DIST. 1, 34^{vb}: 'differentia addita alicui non convertibili cum eo cuius est differentia constitutiva, contrahit ipsum, ut totum resultans ex ipso et tota differentia convertibiliter cum eo cuius est differentia, contrahit ipsum cui additur ad standum tantummodo pro significato vel significatis illius cuius est differentia, sicut hec differentia "rationale mortale" addita subiecto vel corpori vel animali contrahit ipsum ad standum tantummodo pro significato vel significatis.' And in Q. 37 CONCL. 4, 36^{ra}: 'nulla differentia specifica est necessaria ad divisionem generis in suas species secundo modo per se, quia talis divisio potest fieri per proprium quod competit tali speciei per se secundo modo, ut si fiat talis divisio: animalium aliud risibile, aliud hinnibile, in qua divisione nulla ponitur differentia specifica, et tamen genus dividitur in suas species, idest: per aliqua que contrahunt genus ad standum precise pro suppositis talium specierum, sicut hoc proprium "risibile" contrahit hoc genus "animal" ad standum precise proprie pro suppositis "hominis".'

32 Lorenz 1996, 147f.

33 Courtenay 2004, 8 holds that 'If a Buridan school existed, and I think it is a label that obscures more than it enlightens, it was based on a compatibility of intellectual outlook on certain issues, not on any institutional context.' From several different perspectives, institutional, geographical, and intellectual, Thijssen 2004 rejects the notion of a Buridan school in the fourteenth century altogether. He sees the five big names commonly associated with Buridanism 'John Buridan, Albert of Saxony, Nicole Oresme, Themon Judeus, and Marsilius of Inghen as a small intellectual network of nearly contemporary masters of arts, who were familiar with each other's work and at times responded to one another. This concept seems more adequate than that of a unified Buridan school in explaining the dynamics of conflict and alliance that we encounter in the texts.' (Thijssen 2004, 42) A difference with the supposed school of Ockhamism – if we may add our own little note here – is that there never has been written a Buridan *defensorium* while we do have a *defensorium ockham*, and that on the other hand the spreading or teaching of Buridanist ideas was never officially prohibited in any university. So there seems to have been some kind of Ockhamist alliance after all. No doubt, Manlevelt's feeding ground has to be looked for in this direction.

4.3. *Ockhamism in Oxford and in Paris*

Quite roughly the development and spread of Ockhamism or whatever label this nominalist movement is given, can be divided in two phases, with a geographical shift marking the beginning of the second phase. Between 1330 and 1350 there was the rapid spread of Ockham's doctrines and method in Paris and Oxford. From 1350 onward the 'modern way' got to be less closely associated with Ockham's teachings, and Paris became more important than Oxford, at this time.

A neat arrangement of things happening in the field of late medieval logic is presented by Spade.³⁴ Confining his attention to the two centuries span between 1300 and 1500, its most original contribution, he says, was made before 1350, especially at Oxford. This had everything to do with the revival of terminism, after it had oddly undergone a sharp decline on both sides of the Channel in the 1270s. In France, terminism was replaced for half a century by modism until the 1320s, when John Buridan suddenly restored the theory of supposition and associated terminist doctrines. In England, it was Walter Burley who very early in the fourteenth century began to do new work in the terminist tradition. Spade distinguishes three distinct stages in English logic after 1300. The best work was done between 1300 and 1350, the period during which Burley and Ockham were the paramount figures, setting the high standard for the next generation, associated with Merton College, Oxford, to live up to. Spade mentions the names of Richard Kilvington, William Heytesbury, Thomas Bradwardine, Adam Wodeham and Richard Billingham. The name of Holkot could have been added by Spade as well. But Thomas Manlevelt, who did hold the Oxford logicians in high esteem,³⁵ is not directly linked by Spade to this logical heyday. Instead, he places our author in the stage of consolidation, lasting from 1350 until 1400, along with logicians like Richard Lavenham, John Wyclif, Ralph Strode and Richard Feribrigge – a time of sophisticated, but no longer especially original work.³⁶ Spade acknowledges that this is a period not yet well

34 Spade 1998, 402 ff.

35 See Q. 10 (9th), where Manlevelt makes mention of the good work being done 'in universitate Ocsonienti'. More on this below, subsection 4.6.2.

36 Thomas Manlevelt thus is placed by Spade in presumably the wrong period, and probably the wrong intellectual context (that is to say: the wrong country). But this misplacing need not be the reason for Spade's failing to appreciate Manlevelt's originality. The reason will rather be Spade's not being acquainted with Manlevelt's

researched. I may add that indeed in a circumstantial way Manlevelt fits in well with this period in so far as he himself has not been the object of thorough historical investigation either. And it is precisely this circumstance that allows one to place him maybe a little closer to the hotbed of logical originality than directly warranted by Spade's admittedly rough division of late medieval logic. That is to say: nothing really prevents one from placing him in Spade's first stage of English logic after 1300, namely the period between 1300 and 1350, when the best work was done. In fact, there is reason enough to positively place him there, the overall high quality of his work being a main argument. Another argument happens to be provided by Spade himself, who in an earlier study cites a medieval text in which Thomas Manlevelt's tract on *Insolubilia* is mentioned alongside the *Insolubilia* of Bradwardine and Heytesbury³⁷ – which clearly connects Manlevelt to the period in which the best work in English logic was done. The very least that can be said is that he needs not to be associated in any way with the third stage of development of English logic, lasting from 1400 until 1500 and labelled by Spade as one of shocking decline. Medieval logic, he says, 'was effectively dead in England after 1400.'³⁸

Is it Spade's placing Thomas Manlevelt in the wrong stage of development of British logic, which prevents him from acknowledging the originality of his work? No, any lack of appreciation seems rather to be caused by the inaccessibility of all Manlevelt's works unedited until now – a drawback that the present edition will only partially do away with.

In fact, however, one will still have to take into account the possibility that Thomas Manlevelt was not a British logician at all, but a continental thinker who worked under a strong British influence.³⁹ Ockham's confrere Adam Wodeham however is known to have been instrumental in transmitting much English learning (and, we may safely presume, much Ockhamist teaching) to Paris. This explains Manlevelt's Ockhamist frame of mind, whether he has some Mertonian background or whether he received his complete intellectual education in Paris.

highly original but hardly-known logical works. This edition of his *Questiones libri Porphyrii* should contribute to a keener appreciation of Manlevelt's standing as a logician and philosopher.

37 See Spade 1975.

38 Spade 1998, 403.

39 See above, subsection 2.2.4 of this Introduction.

4.4. *Parisian denials of substance*

After having overcome an initial reluctance, of which the above mentioned 1340 Statute of the Paris Arts Faculty bear witness,⁴⁰ the ‘modern way’ becomes settled as a relatively stable, and in some respects scientifically fruitful, philosophical school that endured and spread throughout central Europe in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. Famous names in this Parisian setting are John Buridan and Gregory of Rimini.⁴¹ Infamous among these second phase Parisians were John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt, who denied the existence of substance. As we have seen, our own author was one to deny substance too, albeit in a cautious enough way and in parentheses, so to speak.⁴² Nevertheless, it is hard to tell what prevented the works of Thomas Manlevelt to join in the censorship that befell those of Mirecourt and Autrecourt: his caution, or the presumable fact that he made his daring statement about the non-existence of substance not in Paris, centre of learning, but in Louvain, and so out of the immediate sight of those keen enough to prevent philosophers to dare think such thoughts.⁴³

40 See above, section 3.4 of this Introduction.

41 The results of the work done in Paris by John Buridan in the field of natural philosophy spread to the new universities of central Europe, presumably carried there by Albert of Saxony and Marsilius of Inghen. That is to say: both these illustrious men were long taken to have been pupils of Buridan. Quite recently, however, Fitzgerald has come up with a reversal of this story. See Fitzgerald 2002, especially the introductory chapter titled ‘Albert, Buridan, and Maulfelt’. According to Fitzgerald, Albert was already an old man when he came to Paris, and long from becoming Buridan’s pupil there, he was the one to criticize Buridan’s thoughts as expressed in his *Summulae*, causing Buridan to revise these. So if anything, Buridan was influenced by Albert of Saxony, rather than the other way round. But this is not the place to go into this, notwithstanding its possible importance for the interpretation of the data known about our own author. A name to remember in connection with the spread of the ‘modern way’ to the new universities in the German countries in late 14th century is Henry Totting of Oyta. More about him below, subsection 5.5.4.

42 Further witness of the fact that the status of the category of substance became a subject of discussion in the first half of the 14th century is to be found in a text discussed in Courtenay 1995, whose anonymous author, a contemporary of Nicholas of Autrecourt, shares the latter’s ideas about the indemonstrability of substance.

43 Too farfetched is another possible hypothesis: that the works containing Manlevelt’s controversial ideas did share the fate of those by Mirecourt and Autrecourt, and as a result are untraceable apart from this one manuscript that we are using for our edition.

I have already contemplated a spectacular manifestation of this Ockhamist frame of mind in Manlevelt's denial of substance.⁴⁴ So far, I have closely followed Andrews' interpretation of this remarkable text when it comes to its historical roots and its uniqueness. In all fairness it has to be conceded, however, that maybe Manlevelt's doing away with the category of substance was not such a unique thing in his time after all.

The name comes to mind of a more cautious thinker like John Buridan, but also the names of more outrageous figures like John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt. All of them were working in Paris around the same time I think that Thomas must have been there, but wild ideas did not seem to be limited to Paris alone, when one takes into account an Oxford thinker like Crathorn.⁴⁵ Putting Manlevelt's attack on substance in a more contemporary context may also throw some more light on the precise nature of his Ockhamism.

Mirecourt, a known follower of William of Ockham working in Paris around 1344–1347, may be looked upon as no less a forerunner of David Hume than Thomas Manlevelt is taken to be, by rejecting the Aristotelian notion of causality.⁴⁶ Even closer to Manlevelt's position is that of Autrecourt, working in Paris somewhat earlier, in 1335–1337, who held that the existence of substance is unprovable – a view that not only merited him the honorary nickname 'medieval Hume', but in Autrecourt's case met with severe oppression by the ecclesiastical authorities.⁴⁷

Buridan, deriving crucial information from the Eucharist – that is to say: information not to be had anywhere else in the world – comes on the evidence of transsubstantiation to the conclusion that accidents too cannot be denied their subsistence.⁴⁸ The wording may not be spectacular, but the impact is no less devastating to the traditional Aristotelian categorical framework than the downright denial of the existence of substance, as proposed but hastily withdrawn by Thomas Manlevelt.

44 This Introduction 1.1.

45 The list of Manlevelt's contemporaries holding more or less 'Humean' ideas does not have to stop short here, as a glance at the anonymous text edited in Courtenay 1995 will suffice to convince anyone interested in the matter.

46 See Weinberg 1964, 269 ff. See also De Rijk 1994, 8.

47 See Weinberg 1948, and in a more condensed form Weinberg 1964, 273 ff. See also De Rijk's edition of texts by Autrecourt.

48 See De Rijk 1994, 19, 26, 35.

Crathorn, lecturing in Oxford around 1330, is one who dares to deny the existence of substance as well.⁴⁹ That is to say: he advocates a complete agnosticism as regards the knowability of substance.⁵⁰ Being a Dominican philosopher and theologian, his intellectual background however was quite different from that of the other thinkers. His Dominican background makes it unlikely that he will have taken William of Ockham as his intellectual master, while the others, with the exception of Buridan, must be reckoned as belonging to the Ockhamist 'school', if ever there was one. Moreover, Crathorn made his remarkable pronouncements in Oxford, and not in Paris, where the others were at work.

Apparently, Manlevelt's denial of substance did not come out of the blue.⁵¹ The prime category was seen with a critical eye, if it did not come under downright attack, both in Paris and in Oxford. The question is not whether Thomas Manlevelt was the first to deny its existence, or if he was only inspired to do so by others. When it comes to his intellectual background, what matters is rather if his doing so should be seen within a primarily Oxonian, or a primarily Parisian context.

Ockham has himself never denied the existence of substance. (So when viewed from an Ockhamist point of view Manlevelt has really taken a decisive step by doing so.) Ockham seizes upon the fact of transsubstantiation during the Eucharist to set out the categories of quality and quantity against one another, without concerning himself with the category of substance. Just like Buridan, however, Thomas Manlevelt finds occasion in the very same Eucharistical fact to doubt the demonstrability, if not the very existence of the category of substance.⁵² In one of the preliminary arguments of the *questio* on the existence of substance in his commentary on the *Categories*, it is stated that 'naturally speaking we don't experience, nor have any reason to believe, that there is any more substance in an unconsecrated communion wafer than in a consecrated one (according to theologians); for the same reason we cannot experience or prove that there is any substance in an

49 See Schepers 1970 and 1972. See also De Rijk 1994, 43.

50 'Substantia enim per propriam speciem non cognoscitur pro statu isto.' Cited by Schepers 1972, 113 n. 41.

51 Maybe the first 'reductionist' in any relevant sense of the term was Peter John Olivi (1248–1298). Historically, however, he is somewhat beyond the scope of this study on Thomas Manlevelt.

52 For Buridan on this, see De Rijk 1994, especially 19–28. For Manlevelt on this, see Andrews 2008.

unconsecrated communion wafer, and likewise for any other thing whatsoever.⁵³ The least that can be said is that both of them, unlike Ockham, tend to question the privileged position of substance when it comes to its subsistence. Does this mean that one has to draw Manlevelt out of the Ockhamist corner and push him over to the Buridanist corner?

Mirecourt and Autrecourt were Ockhamists taking the same remarkable step with regards the category of substance, and they were also in Paris, which is quite in line with our hypothesis that Manlevelt was also an Ockhamist working in Paris: evidently, it was an endeavour that Ockhamists there and then were willing to embark on. As yet, there is no need then, by sticking to our Parisian hypothesis, to place Manlevelt under a Buridanist, rather than an Ockhamist sphere of influence.

Crathorn working in a Manleveltian vein in Oxford poses no necessity to give up my Parisian hypothesis either. Prima facie at least the case for Oxford is in no way stronger than the case for Paris, and thus the former cannot pose any counterweight to the evidence pointing to Manlevelt being a Parisian. True, Pinborg tends to push Manlevelt all the way into the British corner, with Bradwardine and the other Calculators, to be more specific.⁵⁴ But Lorenz, finding full support in Andrews, is quite convinced of Manlevelt's Parisian whereabouts, while he does not rule out the possibility of him having received a preliminary training in Oxford.⁵⁵

4.5. *The University of Paris*

In some ways, Thomas Manlevelt's name seems to be connected both to the University of Paris and to the University of Oxford. In the next subsection I will have something to say about Oxford. Now I will take a look at the University of Paris, with its four 'Nations' – a system that

53 *Questiones super Predicamenta*, Q. 16 3., 55^{vb}, 'non habemus aliquem experientiam vel rationem naturaliter loquendo quod magis substantia sit in hostia non consecrate quam in hostia consecrate, et per nihil possimus experiri vel ratione probari substantiam esse in hostia consecrate, sicut patet per theologos; igitur pari ratione per nihil possimus experiri vel probare substantiam esse in hostia non consecrate; et pari ratione nec in aliqua alia re.' (ed. Andrews). Translation by Andrews 2008, 350.

54 Pinborg 1967, 146.

55 Lorenz 1996, 157f.

needs a brief word of explanation.⁵⁶ It will turn out that this four Nations system leaves room for Manlevelt having resided there. It may even throw some light on his name and loyalties.

Final authority in the Parisian arts faculty lay in the general congregation of the arts masters, presided over by the rector. This congregation was itself the combination of four smaller organisms, loosely based on a geographical classification: the French, Picard, Norman, and English nations. The English nation included students from central and northern Europe, and was in time to be called the English-German or even simply the German nation.⁵⁷ In Paris only the largest faculty, that of arts, had nations. The nations comprised masters of arts from the arts faculty, and included professors of higher faculties with a degree in arts.⁵⁸ Incoming students in arts were enrolled by mutual agreement with a master, who would be responsible for overseeing his studies. The master so chosen had to belong to the nation with which the student would be affiliated on the basis of geographical origin.⁵⁹

Now as we have seen, there is a Thomas Anglicus mentioned twice as a *Magister actu regens* and the proctor of the English nation in the *Chartularium* of the University of Paris for the year of 1331.⁶⁰ If this is really Thomas Manlevelt, this would mean that by that time he would have been a member of the English nation.⁶¹

56 See the statute of 1290 in Denifle and Châtelain 1891, 46–47, # 570.

57 Boyce 1928, 30: 'During and prior to the fourteenth century the nation had always been designated as the English nation; (...) it retained the name *Anglicana* until well into the fifteenth century. (...) The first use of *Alemania* as a title of the nation occurred in August, 1400, but it was not until 1442–1443 that it was normally used.'

58 Together, the four nations acted as the faculty of arts, providing, for instance, for the needs relative to the curriculum, the degrees, and the organisation of teaching. In addition to those common duties, the nations exercised activities as separate corporate components. The members of the nation were headed by a proctor (*procurator*) chosen for a period of one month by the masters and often re-elected several times. Each nation had its own revenues and expenditure, treasury, seal, *libri nationis*, patron saints, and authority to regulate its own members. See Thijssen 1998, 58; Gieysztor 1992, 114.

59 Courtenay 2004, 4

60 Denifle and Châtelain 1891, 363, 365–368, 392, cited by Lorenz 1996, 158 n. 53. See above, subsection 2.2.2, footnote 26.

61 The *Liber procuratorum* of the English nation has survived and was edited by Denifle and Châtelain. It offers a conscientiously kept administration from 1339 onward, but bad luck has it that it contains only a few scattered notes from the years 1333 and 1337. The name of Thomas Manlevelt is not to be found in the entire *Liber procuratorum*, a fact which Lorenz accepts as a proof by negative demonstration that Manlevelt must have been a teacher in the Parisian arts faculty precisely in the years 1333 and 1337, and certainly not after 1339. See Lorenz 1996, 158

But even if this identification should be correct, does this mean that our author was really an Englishman? First appearances notwithstanding, this is not necessarily so. Lorenz has to confess that he could not find a trace of our author in England.⁶² This would be very strange, if it did not just leave open the possibility that Thomas Manlevelt 'dictus Anglicus' was not an Englishman after all. The English nation was quite heterogeneous in its makeup, consisting of masters not only from England, but from northern, central and north-eastern Europe as well. In the fourteenth century, when Manlevelt is supposed to have been one of its members, its roll included masters from the British Isles, Holland and part of Flanders, from the Germanies and the Scandinavian countries, and also from Hungary and the Slavic lands.⁶³ As stated, geographical boundaries were indefinite and quarrels over this lack of clarity were frequent, especially between the English nation and the Picard nation, made up of masters from the Low Countries and from northern France.

In most cases the boundaries of the nations coincided with the boundaries of groups of dioceses. The various enumerations of these dioceses in present-day literature, not altogether consistent the one with the other, may very well reflect the source of conflict between the nations in those days. According to Courtenay, the Picard nation included as their students those from the dioceses of Beauvais, Noyon, and Laon on the southern edge of Picardy, and all dioceses north and east (Thérouanne, Tournai, Cambrai, Liège) up to the left bank of the Meuse, thus including a portion of Holland and a small portion of the diocese of Utrecht.⁶⁴ This would include the duchy of Brabant. Kibre, on the other hand, names Laon, Cambrai, Liège, Utrecht and Tournai as the dioceses making up the Flemish province of the Picard nation.⁶⁵ None of these dioceses were then part of the duchy of Brabant. Boyce, after warning us once again that the geographical boundaries which defined the areas from which the members of the various nations emigrated to Paris were in most cases vague and indefinite, holds that the continental area of the English-German nation comprised approximately all the land lying north or east of the Meuse, thus including Holland, and parts of the dioceses of Utrecht and Liège (the other portions of which were claimed by the Picards).⁶⁶

62 Lorenz 1996, 157.

63 Such is the precise listing of the roll by Kibre 1948, 19.

64 Courtenay 2004, 4 n. 3.

65 Kibre 1948, 19.

66 Boyce 1928, 28 f.

Clarity seems to have been brought in this matter by the outcome of a mid-fourteenth century conflict between the two nations, dragging along from 1356 until 1358.⁶⁷ The conclusion of the debate was that the English-Germans and the Picards settled on the River Meuse in the Low Countries as the boundary between the two nations.⁶⁸ That is to say: the boundaries only took definite shape after the ‘Englishman’ Thomas Manlevelt’s presumed lecturing in Louvain, the heart of the disputed region of Brabant.

The least that can be said is that before the settling of the boundary along the river Meuse, the move from Brabant to the Picard nation in Paris was not the obvious one. The fact that the most famous of all Brabantian philosophers, Siger, belonged to the Picard nation, has generally been taken as a sign of Siger’s Frenchifying.⁶⁹ In other words, a Brabantian should more rightly have joined the English nation, rather than the Picard nation.

The gist of all this is that the borderline position of Louvain in Brabant, only entering the Picard nation for good in the second half of the fourteenth century, leaves ample room for the admittedly speculative conclusion either that Manlevelt as a Brabantian may have belonged to the English nation in Paris,⁷⁰ or that Manlevelt if he really was from English, or more precisely Oxonian-Mertonian origin, may easily have come into contact with the Brabantians in the English nation at the Parisian arts faculty. Thus, both directions are open: Thomas Manlevelt as an Englishman moving from Paris to Louvain, or Thomas Manlevelt as a Brabantian meriting the nickname ‘the Englishman’ in Paris, before returning to Louvain. And then again, he could also simply be German, or any other of the above-mentioned nationalities clearly belonging to the English-German nation, while not being English.

Thijssen has rightly drawn attention to the fact that in Paris, possibly because of the Venerable Inceptor’s English origin, Ockham’s ideas found

67 See Kibre 1948, 21–23 for some more quarrels between the Picard and English-German nations.

68 Thijssen 2004, 26.

69 For example, Siger of Brabant 1992, 16. In his introduction to Siger’s text, its translator into Dutch, Krop, bases his idea of Siger being Frenchified on Van Steenberghen’s 1977 monograph *Maître Siger de Brabant*.

70 Above, in subsection 2.2.4 of this Introduction, I already put forward the suggestion that Manlevelt’s being called Thomas Anglicus in several manuscripts may reflect nothing more than a possible association with English logicians or with the English nation at the University of Paris, which had German members and members from the low countries as well.

more adherence in the English-German nation than in any of the other nations of the arts faculty.⁷¹ Whatever the precise impact of the 1340 ‘anti-Ockhamist’ statute alluded to in the previous chapter of this Introduction may have been, the Parisian climate for an Ockhamist way of thinking seems to have been favourable enough in the few decennia preceding the statute. And that is exactly the period in which Manlevelt must have worked there. This also explains why his logical tracts, conceived in this period, could receive the warm welcome that was in fact bestowed upon them on the European mainland, taking full advantage of the splendour Paris had in the field of intellectual developments. As can be seen from the example of John Buridan, whose ideas were enthusiastically received in Middle-Europe without Buridan himself ever setting foot there,⁷² the intellectual infrastructure was such that an innovative thinker like in our case Thomas Manlevelt did not have to travel in person, for his ideas to take hold all over Europe.

4.6. *The University of Oxford*

Relaying my attention from Germany and Brabant to England, I will now look at a possible connection of Thomas Manlevelt with the University of Oxford. To be more precise, I will see in how far our author’s name can possibly be linked to Merton College.

When sketching the overall development of British logic, it has already been seen that among all Oxford Masters the Mertonians in particular contributed much to the development of logic in the early fourteenth century. Even more important were their achievements in the field of physics.

While in a way continuing the fine logical tradition started off by William of Ockham, Merton cannot, contrary to popular belief, claim Ockham as one of its illustrious Fellows. Nevertheless, as maintained by Weisheipl in his 1968 article on ‘Ockham and some Mertonians’, the contributions of the Mertonians cannot be appraised properly without reference to William of Ockham.⁷³ Many of the later writings of Walter

71 Thijssen 1998, 63–67.

72 To be consulted on this matter is, for example, De Rijk 1994.

73 This is not an opinion shared by all scholars. There are those to whom it feels more like quite different circles. Dutilh Novaes, for instance, never had the impression that except for Burley, the other Mertonians really knew much about Ockham. On the other hand, if our surmises are correct, Thomas Manlevelt is closely enough

Burley, for example, were directed against the nominalism of William of Ockham under the guise of ‘true’ Aristotelianism. The fundamentally new physics as well as the vigorously orthodox theology of Thomas Bradwardine stands in sharp contrast to the teachings of Ockham. But later Oxonians, even at Merton, were more favourably disposed towards the views of Ockham. By the end of the century, however, John Wyclif again reacted strongly against the nominalism of Ockham.⁷⁴

The attractive simplicity and disturbing unorthodoxy of Ockham’s views both in theology and in philosophy, says Weisheipl, had the inevitable result of arousing sharp opposition as well as ardent enthusiasm.⁷⁵ Thomas Manlevelt, if his name is to be connected to Merton at all, is of course to be placed among the enthusiasts.

4.6.1. *Manlevelt and Bradwardine: De incipit et desinit*

Now, one of the medieval thinkers whose authorship has been confused with that of Thomas Manlevelt was Thomas Bradwardine.⁷⁶ The latter, already mentioned several times before, was a prime member of the so-called Oxford Calculators or ‘Mertonians’. He was famous for his work on *insolubilia*⁷⁷ and the science of motion as well as his opposition to contemporary Pelagianism.

A genre closely related to the *insolubilia*, and one practised by Bradwardine as well, was that of the *probationes*,⁷⁸ in vogue since the 1330s.⁷⁹ It was concerned with procedures for proving sentences of all types, and the scope of one of its subgenres was limited to propositions containing the terms ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’.⁸⁰

associated with Ockham as well as the Mertonians. This might in itself serve as a secondary clue that a direct acquaintance of the Mertonians with Ockham is not to be ruled out beforehand.

74 Weisheipl 1968, 164.

75 Weisheipl 1968, 173. Which goes to show once again that Ockham is pre-eminently a philosopher to leave a school behind him. After all, why should a philosopher who was honoured with a *defensor Ockham* not also lend his name to the philosophical trend that had our author as one of its most original partisans? And who is to doubt that in a slightly later period a thinker like Henry Totting of Oyta was an ‘Ockhamist’?

76 As already mentioned above, section 2.1.

77 On this, see Read 2002, and especially the edition and translation of Bradwardine’s *Insolubilia* by Read: Thomas Bradwardine 2010.

78 The main name for *probationes* is another Mertonian, Billingham.

79 On the subject of *probationes*, one may consult De Rijk 1982, 3–5.

80 The genre of the *probationes* and its subgenre on the terms ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’

Thomas Bradwardine's treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit', edited by Nielsen in 1982, has been transmitted in four manuscripts. Two of these manuscripts are to be found in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana; one in the Bibliothèque Royal Albert 1^{er} in Brussels; one in the Dominikanerkloster in Vienna. The Vienna and Brussels manuscripts name Thomas Manlevelt as the author of this work.⁸¹ The two Vatican manuscripts however point out Thomas Bradwardine as its author.⁸² Nielsen's deciding the question of authorship with a very high degree of likelihood in favour of Thomas Bradwardine has to my knowledge never been challenged.⁸³

A marginal note might be made, however.⁸⁴ Nielsen shows the possibility of establishing a doctrinal concordance between the treatise

being in vogue in the 1330s does not mean that no attention was paid to these subject matters earlier on. Braakhuis 1997 cites a manuscript containing an overview of teachings in logic in Paris, 1230–1250. One of the subjects treated by then was that of the *sincategoreumata* including a paragraph 'de verbis "incipit" et "desinit"':

81 The Vienna manuscript has the ascription in its incipit as well as its explicit: 'Incipit tractatus de incipit et desinit magistri Thome Maulfeld', ed. Nielsen 1982, 47; 'Explicit tractatus de duabus dictionibus "incipit" et "desinit" editus a magistro Thoma Manlovel', ed. Nielsen 1982, 83. The Bruxelles manuscript has the ascription in its explicit only: 'Explicit tractatus de istis duabus dictionibus "incipit" et "desinit" editus a magistro Thoma dicto Manlovel Anglico', ed. Nielsen 1982, 83.

82 Nielsen 1982, 2 f.

83 The ascription to Manlevelt, if correct, would directly have linked him to a genre in vogue since the 1330s, and would thus be entirely in line with our tentative dating of his philosophical activity around that time. Even if incorrect, however, the ascription at the very least counts as an indication that to contemporaries and near-contemporaries Thomas Manlevelt's name did not sound absurd when put forward as being the author of a work stemming from the 1330s or 1340s – Thomas Bradwardine having died in 1349. And this, in turn, counts as an indication that his philosophical activity may indeed very well be dated around that time.

84 In fact, quite another marginal question might be posed as well, one that would put our whole enterprise upside down, if answered in the affirmative: would it be possible that not Thomas Manlevelt but Thomas Bradwardine is the author of the commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* edited here? Luckily, this question can be discarded right away and need not disturb us further, if only because, after all, it is the name of Thomas Manlevelt and not the name of Thomas Bradwardine that is connected with our manuscript in the writing above the first columns. No, there really is no need to fear some kind of diabolical reversal of the ascription of our manuscript, in connection with the possible ascription of the Bradwardinian text on 'incipit' and 'desinit' to Thomas Manlevelt. Apart from there being no *prima facie* doctrinal reasons obliging us to consider Thomas Bradwardine's authorship, there is no internal evidence at all pointing in Thomas Bradwardine's direction. On the contrary, in as far as references to the author's own works are to be found in the texts, these are either to a title undoubtedly written by Thomas Manlevelt, and not known from the bibliography of Thomas Bradwardine (namely the tract on Supposition), or to works not known from Manlevelt's bibliography, but not known from Thomas

on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’ and Bradwardine’s other writings. In his tract *De continuo* Bradwardine touches on the question whether one should assign internal or external limits to the so-called permanent thing. Here he strongly suggests the point of view that decision of this question should be in favour of an external limit:

... et alicuius rei permanentis, ut hominis, non est aliquod ultimum intrinsecum sui esse.⁸⁵

This point of view is considered to be of fundamental importance in the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’:

Secunda suppositio est hec quod non est dare ultimum instans rei permanentis in esse.⁸⁶

On the evidence of a doctrine on ‘desinit’ espoused in Manlevelt’s *Confusiones*, Nielsen holds that Thomas Manlevelt defends the view that permanent objects are limited internally:

Similiter hec dictio ‘desinit’ dicitur exponi uno modo per unam (*scil.* propositionem) affirmativam de presenti et negativam de futuro, ut in hac propositione ‘Sortes desinit esse’ hoc est ‘Sortes nunc est et immediate post hoc Sortes non erit’. Alio modo exponitur per unam negativam de presenti et affirmativam de preterito ut ‘desinit esse motus’ id est ‘nunc non est motus et immediate ante hoc fuit motus.’⁸⁷

Nielsen concludes that this view is strictly opposed to the one sustained in the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’, and this would disqualify Thomas Manlevelt as its author.

Bradwardine’s bibliography either (namely the commentaries on *De anima* and *Physica*). One might say that this apparent lack in Manlevelt’s bibliography does not amount to so much, seeing the still highly provisional status of his biography and bibliography. Has Thomas Bradwardine written any commentaries at all on works by Aristotle? Lohr 1973 only mentions, under the heading ‘doubtful’: *De fallaciis elenchorum* in *Quaestiones super XII libris Metaphysicae*. Weisheipl 1969 sums up eight certain works and four uncertain, among which no commentary on Aristotle whatsoever. Moreover, the fact that Brabant plays a geographical role in our manuscript does point in the direction of Thomas Manlevelt, as we have seen, but points away, if anything, from Thomas Bradwardine. To wit: Thomas Bradwardine – whose life is comparably well-documented, at least in comparison to our author’s life – was all over the place, so to speak, as confessor of king Edward III. But there is no mentioning of his following the king to Brabant, let alone that he would have been a teacher in pre-university Louvain (see e.g. Lohr 1973, Weisheipl 1968 and all the more recent handbooks).

85 Cited by Nielsen, 1982, 3.

86 Ed. Nielsen, 1982, 47. It should be noticed, however, that this *ultimum instans* is not specified here as either an *ultimum intrinsecum* or an *ultimum extrinsecum*.

87 Cited by Nielsen, 1982, 4.

Is Nielsen's citation from Manlevelt's *Confusiones* really proof of his holding the view that the ceasing of permanent objects is limited internally, rather than a non-obliging explanation of what we mean when we say that something ceases to be? If so, the view held by Manlevelt in the *Confusiones* does not seem to tally well with the view to be distilled from his treatment of accidents ceasing to be in the commentary on the *Isagoge* edited here. In the forty-second *questio* Manlevelt seems to be a strict adherent to the Aristotelian dictum that

... non est dare ultimum instans rei permanentis in esse.⁸⁸

And so it might turn out that the doctrinal concordance between the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit' and Bradwardine's other writings established by Nielsen can also be established between this treatise and at least one of Manlevelt's other writings, viz. the one here presented. In short, Nielsen holds that the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit' fits Thomas Bradwardine and does not fit Thomas Manlevelt, while I hold that this treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit' may fit Thomas Manlevelt after all, when his *Questiones libri Porhirii* is taken into account. But of course, this is not the place to seriously challenge Nielsen's widely accepted ascription of the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit' to Thomas Bradwardine. The most that may be said at this moment is that the question of the authorship of this treatise could be given a more thorough treatment now than when Nielsen published his edition. As is acknowledged by Nielsen, it was very difficult for him to find a solution to this question, because at the time the knowledge of Manlevelt's career and works was very limited. Since 1982, at least some light is thrown on these matters, and this light may also clear up the matter left somewhat unsatisfactory solved on Manlevelt's side by Nielsen.

4.6.2. *Manlevelt and Bradwardine: Opus artis logicae*

In the same issue of the *Cahiers de l'Institut de Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin* that contains Nielsen's edition of the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit', there is a reprint of Pinborg's edition of another treatise attributed to Bradwardine: the *Opus artis logicae*. That there remains more to be said about the authorship and interrelationship of the diverse works attributed to Bradwardine and/or Manlevelt may be gathered from the introduction to this reprint, where it is remarked that in some respects

88 Q 42 CONCL. 4 40^{rb}.

this tract seems to stand closer to the ideas of Manlevelt, but on the other hand illustrates the same doctrinal trends as the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’.⁸⁹

In fact Pinborg takes up again an aspect already pointed out by him in his introduction to the earlier version of this edition: if the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’ is by Bradwardine, the *Opus artis logicae* can hardly be attributed to him and vice versa. The author of the treatise on ‘incipit’ criticizes Ockham’s analysis of propositions like ‘Sor bis bibit vinum’ and ‘Sor incipit esse grammaticus’ as involving a thus far unnamed type of supposition, and asserts instead that the terms ‘vinum’ and ‘grammaticus’ have no supposition at all. In the *Opus artis logicae* as well as in Manlevelt’s *De suppositionibus* they are supposed to have *suppositio confusa tantum*.⁹⁰

The least that can be said about it is that it is an intricate matter. Further insights into Manlevelt’s theories on confused supposition will be needed to clear up the intricacy. On the correlation between syncategoremata and words introducing confused supposition, including modal terms, verbs introducing opaque reference and incipit/desinit, all listed in Manlevelt’s *Confusiones*, one may consult the relevant quotations in Maierù’s standard work on late scholastic logical terminology,⁹¹ but the indispensable step forward can only be made when the critical edition of Manlevelt’s logical treatises *De suppositionibus*, *De consequentiis* and *De confusionibus*, now in preparation by Kann, Lorenz and Grass, has seen the light of day.⁹²

Without stretching the matter further than necessary or warranted by the present state of investigation, there are at least some indications that the linking of Manlevelt’s thoughts to the intellectual circle of the Oxford calculators or Mertonians might not be that far-fetched after all. One such indication is to be found in the present text. In it, Thomas Manlevelt speaks with more than a hint of appreciation about the groundbreaking investigations taking place in Oxford, at the time of his composing his commentary on the *Isagoge* in Louvain, presumably.⁹³ Would he do

89 Pinborg 1982, 151.

90 Pinborg 1981, 29 n. 7.

91 Scattered through the body of the text and the footnotes Maierù 1972 contains several quotations edited from the manuscripts of Manlevelt’s logical treatises.

92 A definite date for this edition has not yet been set.

93 Q. 10 (9^{tb}): ‘Pro ista questione et pro omnibus consequentibus et subsequentibus se argumentis est notandum quod nihil determinative, sed tantummodo exercitative

that, if he were not educated there, or in another way thoroughly acquainted with the latest developments over there?⁹⁴

Another such indication is to be found in the Bibliotheca Amploniana in Erfurt, where one of the manuscripts contains the *Insolubilia* by Thomas Manlevelt, along with other logical texts by authors, who are all of undisputedly listed as calculators, like Bradwardine and Burley.⁹⁵

Insignificant as it may seem, even Manlevelt's use of the letters of the alphabet to stand not only for people and things,⁹⁶ or their accidental properties,⁹⁷ but also for propositions⁹⁸ lends his work a somewhat Mertonian hue. So 'A' or 'B' can stand not only for Sor or his whiteness, but also for propositions like 'Omnis substantia est homo'. Bottin has pointed out that it was Bradwardine who introduced this attitude, widely

dicitur in eisdem, et hoc ad istum finem ut aliqua inveniantur quia multum sit inventum quia iste est modus inveniendi, sicut patet in universitate Oconienti in qua plura nova inveniuntur quam in aliquo alio studio generali.

- 94 Other European authors were aware of Mertonian activity at the time even if they did not have clear links with Merton. What distinguishes Manlevelt from them is his overtly expressed appreciation for the 'experimental' method to obtain new knowledge.
- 95 The manuscript dates from the first half of the fourteenth century, and is listed number 076 by Schum, number 11 by Amplonius himself. The contents are listed by Sylla 1995, p. 327. A close scrutiny of this text by Manlevelt might be the best way to figure out whether there really is a Mertonian influence.
- 96 For instance, in Q. 11 and Q. 29, respectively. Q. 11 CONCL. 5, 9^{va}: 'capiatur hoc individuum mentale "iste homo" demonstrando Sortem vel Platonem, et vocetur totus Sortes A, et Sortes preter digitum B, et vocetur individuum mentale Sortes C, tunc sic: C predicatur univoce de A et de B, igitur C predicatur de pluribus, et C est individuum propriissime acceptum, igitur individuum propriissime acceptum predicatur de pluribus', etc. Q. 29 AD 4. 29^{tb-va}: 'Ad quartum conceditur quod omne istud quod differt per aliquod accidens, tantum differt quantum istud accidens ipsum facit differre, ut si A per aliquid differat a B, tunc A tantum differt a B quantum istud accidens facit ipsum A differre a B', etc.
- 97 For instance in Q. 42 CONCL. 4, 40^{tb}: 'capiatur aliquis calor naturalis sine quo hoc animal non potest existere. Qui calor vocetur A, et incipiat aliquod agens in hoc instanti remittere A; tunc sic A post instans non erit, quia immediate post hoc instans corruptetur secundum aliquid sui', etc.
- 98 For instance in Q. 4 and Q. 10. Q. 4 SECUNDO QUANTUM AD SECUNDAM PROPOSITIONEM, 3^{tb}: 'Et vocetur hec propositio in intellectu "omnis homo est substantia" A, et ista propositio "omnis substantia est homo" B, tunc sic: quidquid est pars A, est pars B, et e converso, ergo A est B, quia ex eisdem partibus resultat totum', etc. Q. 10 CONCL. 4, 8^{va}: 'vocetur ista propositio "Hec substantia est" A, in qua demonstraretur hoc genus generalissimum *substantia*, et ista propositio "Substantia est" B', etc.

adopted among the Mertonians after him, toward the use of the letters of the alphabet as singular names of sentences.⁹⁹

Thomas Manlevelt's very name, often suffixed as it is with the identifying adjective 'Anglicus', may be interpreted as a further indication of his being associated with the Mertonians, who in their own days were not called Mertonians at all. As pointed out by Sylla, contemporary and slightly later Continental philosophers rather tended to call the members of the group simply 'Anglici' or 'Britannici'.¹⁰⁰ And this is precisely the way in which Manlevelt was not only given credit in the Brussels manuscript of the 'incipit et desinit' text variously ascribed to him or Thomas Bradwardine,¹⁰¹ but also the way in which he is introduced in the late fourteenth-century note¹⁰² added to the sole manuscript of this present edition: 'Hec questiones fuerunt compilate per Thom. Manlevelt Anglicum doctorem solempnem.' Manlevelt being called 'Anglicus' should of course not be counted as conclusive evidence of his being a 'Mertonian'. Mertonians being called English does not mean that everyone called English should be a Mertonian. By calling the members of the Merton School 'Anglici' or 'Britannici', their contemporaries and near-contemporaries were doubtless associating them with the larger group of British logicians whose contribution to logic was considered noteworthy, sometimes further associating these 'British' with nominalism.¹⁰³ And this seems to be a denomination that fits quite well with Thomas Manlevelt in any case, no matter whether his Britishness should be taken literally or associatively: a nominalist he was, and his contribution to logic was noteworthy enough, seeing the widespread use of his logical tracts. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries however, the members of the narrower Mertonian group were being called *Calculatores*, and this is an epithet never awarded to Thomas Manlevelt.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the doctrinal evidence, Nielsen points to the mode of composition of the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit' as proof of Bradwardine's

99 Bottin 1985, 244.

100 Sylla 1982, 540f.

101 See above, note 81.

102 In the dating of this addition to the manuscript we follow Schum 1887.

103 Sylla, 1982, 541.

104 Taking in consideration the present state of knowledge about the Mertonians as well as about Manlevelt, it may well be just too early to definitely establish his exact relationship to them. In Q. 24 of his commentary on the *Isagoge* Manlevelt – to give just another example – sets out to answer the question whether there is to be had knowledge of infinity. It is a matter of further investigation, to estimate to what degree he is indebted to the Mertonians in his treatment of this matter.

authorship. The fact that the author has clearly attempted to construct his exposition along axiomatic lines tallies well with Bradwardine's predilection to do so in the works of which he is the incontestable author.

One may wonder, however, if this predilection for the axiomatic manner really is exceptional enough to serve as an identifying mark for Bradwardine's (or anyone's) authorship. The anonymous author of the early fourteenth century *Defensorium Ockham*,¹⁰⁵ to take just one example, makes an attempt to see Aristotle's *Categories* as a book that proceeds *more geometrico* and for his own part tries to follow in Aristotle's footsteps.¹⁰⁶ This is not to say that proceeding *more geometrico* is so widespread that even Aristotle already knew its ins and outs, but it is to say that in the fourteenth century such a proceeding was widespread enough for a defender of Ockham to read it into Aristotle.

Furthermore, if one sees what Nielsen exactly means by Bradwardine's proceeding *more geometrico* in the treatise on 'incipit' and 'desinit', namely that it is modelled according to the scheme 'definitiones – suppositiones – conclusiones', the case for Bradwardine's authorship does not really seem to get stronger in this respect. Nielsen's remark that the fact that Bradwardine in this treatise has chosen to substitute 'distinctio' for 'definitio' makes no difference of significance, and may even be turned into its opposite. For the substitution of 'distinctio' for 'definitio' leads us from Bradwardine's terminology into that of Thomas Manlevell. And the scheme 'distinctiones – suppositiones – conclusiones' is precisely the scheme that lays at the core of Manlevell's handling of many a *questio* on Porphyry's *Isagoge* or Aristotle's *Categories*.

That Manlevell's way of handling things is not too different from the Mertonians' is borne out by Fitzgerald, who in the introduction to his critical edition of *Albert of Saxony's Twenty-Five Disputed Questions On Logic* brings forward that Manlevell's treatment of terms like 'aliud', 'non-idem', 'differt' and 'incipit' and how they affect the personal or material supposition of terms in his tract *De confusionibus* (the authenticity of which has never been questioned) is reminiscent of the treatment 'secundum usum Oxonie'.¹⁰⁷

105 Edited by Andrews 1997.

106 Ebbesen 2000, 275.

107 Fitzgerald 2002, 31. As we have already seen, Fitzgerald dates Manlevell's philosophical activity a couple of decennia later than we do, in faithful adherence to Lorenz's tentative sketch of our author's vita. That may explain why Fitzgerald concludes his comparison of Manlevell's method to the treatment 'secundum usum Oxonie' with a specification relating to the late 14th and early 15th centuries.

A last remark on the authorship of the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’: in the discussion on the authorship of the anti-modist treatise *Destructiones modorum significandi*¹⁰⁸ it was brought forward that the name of a better-known author (in that case: Thomas Manlevelt) may in some cases be substituted for the name of a lesser-known author (in that case: John Aurifaber).¹⁰⁹ May the tables in the case of the treatise on ‘incipit’ and ‘desinit’ not have turned for Thomas Manlevelt, resulting in the substitution of Thomas Bradwardine’s still better-known name for his?¹¹⁰

108 See above, subsection 2.2.5.

109 Pinborg 1967, 196 n.

110 And a well-known name ‘Bradwardine’ was indeed. We have already seen Siger of Brabant being honoured with a place in the Fourth Heaven of Dante’s *Paradiso* among the souls of the wise. Thomas Bradwardine was awarded a place in Literature’s pantheon hardly less honourable than Siger’s. In one of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale* verses 3240–3242, he was placed on a pedestal, on a par with St. Augustine and Boethius: ‘But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren/ As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,/ Or Boece, or the Bisshop Bradwardyn.’ (‘But I can not separate the valid and invalid arguments/ As can the holy doctor Augustine,/ Or Boethius, or the Bishop Bradwardyn.’) Chaucer, by the way, was the neighbour of Ralph Strode, himself an admirer of Thomas Bradwardine, and Fellow of Merton College in 1359–1360, thus belonging, as the reader may recall, to the stage of consolidation of British logical excellence, according to Spade’s measurement lasting from 1350 until 1400 – a time of sophisticated, but no longer especially original work. As Ralph Strode must have been very young when Thomas Bradwardine died in 1349, it is unlikely that the two Mertonians ever met in person. Ralph Strode was awarded his own philosophical praise in Book 5 of Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, verses 1586–1589: ‘O moral Gower, this book I directe/ To the and to the, philosophical Strode,/ To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to correcte,/ Of youre benignites and zeles goode.’ (‘O moral Gower, I address this book to you, and to you, philosophical Strode, that you may promise to correct it, where need is, of your righteous zeal and benignity.’) If any reader should find fault with this digression, let the writer of this Introduction be his sole target. If however one should take pleasure in these bits of literary lore, thanks must be given to Stephen Read, who put me on their track.