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Medieval Trinitarian Theology from the Late Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries

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Abstract and Keywords

This article examines Trinitarian theology during the period from around 1250 until around 1500. It outlines some of the major positions and identifies their most important adherents. It describes two distinct ways of talking about the constitution of the divine persons, one based on relations and the other on emanations. It discusses the contributions of John Duns Scotus and highlights two important fourteenth-century developments: the denial that the Trinitarian mystery can be explained in any significant sense and innovations in Trinitarian logic.

Keywords: Trinitarian theology, divine persons, relations, emanations, John Duns Scotus, Trinitarian mystery, Trinitarian logic

□ In the present chapter my purpose is to give an overview of aspects of the Trinitarian discussion from around 1250 until around 1500, outlining some of the major positions and identifying their most important adherents, and indicating how the discussion changed over time. In the process, I hope to give an impression of the richness of later-medieval Trinitarian theology, as well as of the argumentative and systematic rigor with which theologians from the period approached the subject. The chapter is arranged in four parts. The first part describes two distinct ways in the late thirteenth century of talking about the constitution of the divine persons, one based on relations, the other on emanations; the second part focuses on some of John Duns Scotus' contributions; the third sketches two important fourteenth-century developments, Praepositinianism (the denial that the Trinitarian mystery can be *explained* in any significant sense), and innovations in Trinitarian logic; the fourth part looks briefly at the still mostly uninvestigated fifteenth-century Trinitarian theology.

Late Thirteenth-century Trinitarian Theology

For the university-trained theologians throughout our entire period, the central fact in Trinitarian theology, given by the faith and confirmed by Church councils from Nicaea to Lateran IV, was that God is three and one. There are three persons, really distinct among themselves, yet truly identical in the one, common divine essence. All our theologians (p. 198) could agree on this. Nearly every other issue was up for discussion. For example, by far the most common view among our theologians was that each divine person was constituted, i.e. took on his own personal being, on account of a characteristic known as a 'personal property' that is unique to that one person and makes that person distinct from the other two. On this view, then, the three divine persons share everything—they are 'essentially identical'—apart from each their own personal property bringing about the real distinction between the persons. We will see below (§3) that in the fourteenth century several theologians rejected the whole idea of personal properties and personal constitution. But already in the thirteenth century, one of the most heavily disputed questions concerned the nature of the personal properties: are they *relations* or are they *emanations*? In brief, a group of primarily Dominican theologians, following Thomas Aquinas on this issue, claimed that the personal properties are relations, whereas another group, mostly composed of Franciscans, developed in the course of the later thirteenth century an explanation of the Trinitarian mystery focusing on emanations. These views were grounded in quite divergent ways of thinking about the constitution of the divine persons, and hence in two very distinct approaches to Trinitarian theology. (On late thirteenth-century Trinitarian theology, see Friedman 2010: 5–75; Friedman forthcoming: chs. 1–5).

The relation account of divine personal distinction claims that, for example, the Father and the Son are personally distinct since a Father is only a Father because he has (in this case) a Son. If the relations between them are real and not mere mental constructs, then Father and Son must be distinct in some way—not distinct essentially (since they share everything else and are one God) but distinct as persons. During our period, defenders of the relation account of personal distinction laid a stress upon the fact that not only are these relations that constitute the persons real, they are also *opposed*. Thus, it is because paternity and filiation are opposed to each other that they are the constituting properties of Father and Son; *mutatis mutandis* the same is true concerning passive spiration's being the constitutive property of the Holy Spirit, although active spiration does not constitute a person in its own right since it is shared by the Father and the Son.

The emanation account takes a different point of departure. 'Emanation' is the term the medieval scholastics used to describe how the divine persons are put into being or

originated. On the emanation account of the distinction of the persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the very same divine essence in three irreducibly distinct ways, the way that each one emanates or originates. Thus, the Father is the divine essence in a fundamentally different way than the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is the very same divine essence in a third totally different way, these three different ways being how each one originates or has being. Specifically, the Father has the divine essence from no other (the Father is unemanated), the Son has the divine essence naturally by the emanation 'generation' (the Son is emanated by way of nature), and the Holy Spirit has the divine essence voluntarily by the emanation 'spiration' (the Holy Spirit is emanated by way of will). Thus, three irreducibly distinct emanational properties account for the fact that the three divine persons are emanationally distinct, yet essentially identical.

After around 1250 theologians began to consider these two Trinitarian explanations to be mutually exclusive, such that holding one of them more or less ruled out holding (p. 199) the other. Thus, after around 1250 one can trace the development of two mutually opposed complexes of Trinitarian positions—what I call Trinitarian traditions: one centring on relations, the other on emanations. As mentioned, one tradition was predominantly Dominican in composition and, following Thomas Aquinas, adopted the relation account to explain the distinction of the persons and played down the significance of the emanations. A predominantly Franciscan tradition, on the other hand, championed the emanation account, and viewed the relations as being of lesser importance. It was in the late thirteenth century and early fourteenth century that these two Trinitarian traditions stabilized—and this is visible in the works of such Franciscan theologians as John Pecham (d. 1292), William de la Mare (d. after 1282), Matthew of Aquasparta (d. 1302), Roger Marston (d. 1303?), and William of Ware (fl. c.1300), as well as in the works of Dominicans and those who follow a basically Dominican line, from major figures of the late thirteenth century like Giles of Rome (d. 1316), Thomas of Sutton (d. after 1315), and Godfrey of Fontaines (d. 1307?), to such diverse early fourteenth-century theologians as Hervaeus Natalis (d. 1323), Durand of St Pourçain (d. 1334), and John of Naples (d. c.1350).

As the two Trinitarian traditions, the Dominican and the Franciscan, gradually coalesced in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the particular differences between the emanation account and the relation account came to the fore in several 'flashpoints', loci in the Trinitarian debate where an emanational conception of the personal properties and a relational one were fundamentally at odds. Specifically, these flashpoints arose because on the Dominican interpretation of the relation account the persons are constituted in opposed pairs (Father in opposition to Son, Father and Son in opposition to Holy Spirit), whereas on the Franciscan interpretation of the emanation account persons

are (or at least could be) constituted singly on the basis of their unique emanational property.

One of these flashpoints had to do with the constitution of the Father. The Franciscans made the claim that the Father's innascibility, the fact that the Father is not from any other (i.e. is unemanated), was the way that he was the divine essence. (To be more precise: as most of the later-medieval theologians in the Franciscan Trinitarian tradition recognized, it is most proper to speak of the *first person* being constituted by innascibility, since a Father is a Father on the basis of having a Son through generation.) Innascibility thus played a crucial role in Franciscan Trinitarian theology, being an indispensable factor in the Father's constitution. Innascibility did not play so crucial a role in Dominican Trinitarian thought: for the Dominicans, the Father and the Son only have being in relation to each other; it is precisely because the Father has a Son and the Son has a Father that they are distinct from each other. Thus, the Dominicans held that innascibility played basically no role in the constitution of the Father as a person distinct from the other two.

A second flashpoint in the later-medieval Trinitarian debate was over the Son's role in the spiration of the Holy Spirit. The issue is as follows: would the Son and the Holy Spirit be distinct if they each emanated from the Father alone, as the Franciscans maintained; or are the Son and the Holy Spirit distinct only if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son (p. 200) and the Father together, so that there are opposed relations between the Son and the Holy Spirit, as the Dominicans held? Since, for the Franciscans, the way in which each person took being is the distinctive property of that person, on the Franciscan view whether the Holy Spirit emanates from the Son or not, the Holy Spirit could still be distinct from the Son, because they each could emanate in different ways from the Father alone. This is only to say that each of the three divine properties is irreducibly distinct from the other two on its own account. The Dominicans rejected this entirely. For the Dominicans, only the Holy Spirit's emanating from the Son (and the Father), and hence the existence of directly opposed relations between them, could explain their distinction. Of course, the Franciscans were well aware that one of the issues that stood between the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches was the *Filioque* clause, the Greeks contending that the Holy Spirit in fact does not proceed from the Son; hence the Franciscans were always careful to stress that the question of the Holy Spirit's not proceeding from the Son was a purely counterfactual one and that the Holy Spirit does in fact proceed from both Father and Son (on this flashpoint, see Bruce Marshall's chapter in the present volume).

A special position in the early Franciscan Trinitarian tradition was held by Henry of Ghent (d. 1293). Henry was not a Franciscan—he was unaffiliated with a religious order—but his Trinitarian theology can only be understood as part of the Franciscan Trinitarian

current. For instance, Henry stresses that innascibility is a crucial factor in the Father's constitution. Further, he maintains that the Holy Spirit would be distinct from the Son, even if the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, since they would be distinct on the basis of their disparate ways of emanating from the Father. In general, Henry stresses the emanational character of the properties constitutive of the persons and de-emphasizes the relational aspects. While supporting these typically Franciscan views, Henry also injects a new element into Franciscan Trinitarian theology: he claims that the emanation of the Son is the emanation of a mental word (*verbum*) or concept from the paternal intellect, and that the emanation of the Holy Spirit is the emanation of zeal (*zelus*) from the will of the Father and the Son. In this way, Henry moves Augustine of Hippo's psychological model of the Trinity into the heart of his Trinitarian theology, something that his contemporaries in the Franciscan Trinitarian current had not done. (See, on Henry's Trinitarian thought, Friedman 2010; Friedman forthcoming: esp. ch. 4; Williams 2010.)

In his *De Trinitate*, Augustine had given a clarification of the way that the Son relates to the Father, in his attempt to make sense of the opening of John's Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. The 'word' that John was talking about was a mental concept, according to Augustine, and the relation between the Son and the Father is in some way parallel to the relation between a mental word and the knowledge from which the word comes. Thus, the word is an exact likeness of the prior knowledge, differing only because the word is formed or given birth by the intellect. In just this way the Father and the Son are identical essentially, differing only on account of the Son's generation, his receiving the divine essence from the Father. Augustine extended this 'psychological model' to include the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is spirated as Love. Henry of Ghent overlaid onto the Franciscan tradition's (p. 201) emanation account of personal distinction the Augustinian psychological model of the Trinity. Capitalizing on the fact that in medieval philosophy the intellect was commonly considered a 'natural' faculty (i.e. when presented with an object it necessarily functioned), Henry linked in a stronger and more elaborate way than had been done previously the Son's procession by way of nature with the Word's procession by way of intellect. For Henry, the Father is unemanated, the Son is emanated by way of the divine intellect as a Word or Concept, and the Holy Spirit is emanated by way of the divine will as Zeal. Thus, Henry claimed that it is the very fact that the Son's emanation is an *intellectual* emanation that explained why the Son is distinct from both the Father and the Holy Spirit. Likewise with the Holy Spirit's voluntary emanation: this very fact explained why the Holy Spirit is distinct from both the Father and the Son. Henry went on to say that, because the divine attributes of intellect and will are the sources of the divine emanations, it is the merely rational distinction between these attributes that is the ultimate basis for the distinction between the emanations and hence the persons. In

general, Henry stressed a tight link between the divine attributes and the divine emanations: the Son's generation is literally an intellectual emanation; the Holy Spirit's emanation is literally an emanation by way of will.

Henry's linking of the emanation account of personal distinction with a rather literal interpretation of the psychological model became a standard part of Franciscan Trinitarian theology beginning in the 1280s, and it remained highly important for some forty years, after which its significance waned, without ever disappearing. Franciscans of the period, then, often strictly identified the Son's emanation as an intellectual emanation of a concept or Word, and the Holy Spirit's emanation as a voluntary emanation of Love. Dominican theologians, on the other hand, from Henry's day and on were highly sceptical of a literal use of the psychological model of the Trinity: the Son is a Word, certainly, but not because he is emanated literally by way of the intellect; the Holy Spirit is Love, but not because he is emanated by the divine will. And this Dominican rejection of Henry's literal acceptance of the psychological model is simply a facet of the more general Dominican stress on relations: for them, Father and Son are constituted in opposition to each other on the basis of the relations paternity and filiation; while the Holy Spirit is constituted in opposition to both Father and Son on the basis of the relations active and passive spiration. In general, the Trinitarian traditions were a fundamental part of the later-medieval Trinitarian discussion.

John Duns Scotus

One of the giants of later-medieval theology, Scotus (d. 1308) worked at Oxford and Paris around the turn of the century, leaving behind a tremendous number of theological writings, including a highly coherent and creative reformulation of later thirteenth-century Franciscan Trinitarian theology. It was indeed a *reformulation*, since it is rare that Scotus makes a really radical departure from the core ideas of this Franciscan (p. 202) Trinitarian tradition; with few exceptions his own contribution was a 'fine-tuning' of ideas already laid out. After he made them public, Scotus' ideas on the Trinity became a building block for later thinkers, and in this way his Trinitarian theology functioned as a type of conduit from the late thirteenth-century Franciscan tradition to the broader scholastic Trinitarian discussion of the fourteenth century and beyond (on Scotus' Trinitarian theology, see Cross 2005; Friedman 2010: 50–115, 141–2; Friedman forthcoming: ch. 6).

Scotus' most remarkable addition to the Trinitarian debate was the suggestion of a near total rejection of the relation account. Earlier Franciscans had downplayed the importance of relation in the constitution of the divine persons, but they had always

maintained some space in their Trinitarian theories for relation and relational persons. Scotus' rejection of relation was far more categorical. Although later in his career he backed away from it, early on Scotus suggested that relation played no part at all in the constitution of the persons; the persons were *absolutes*, constituted by absolute origin. This view had been defended even before Scotus by, for instance, William of Auvergne (d. 1249) and Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253), as well as by the Franciscan Peter of John Olivi (d. 1298) and the Augustinian Hermit James of Viterbo (d. 1308), but after Scotus suggested it, it became closely associated with his name. Why are the persons not relative? Scotus basically argues that there are insurmountable problems connected with maintaining that the properties constituting the persons are relatives, and given these problems it is better to claim that the properties are absolutes, and more particularly that the properties are the origin of person from person. Scotus employs several lines of argumentation in favour of this view. First, he claims that one thing refers to another *through* relation, and therefore without two pre-existing things there is no relation. This is just to say that what refers through relation is at least logically prior to the relation itself; therefore relation cannot constitute the things related. A second argument that Scotus uses is that, given that we know the Son to be generated, then there must be a supposite that generates the Son, and this supposite has to have existence 'prior' (logically, not chronologically speaking) to the relation between Father and Son. It is not merely the case that the Father has the Son as a correlative, rather the Father originates or produces the Son, and according to Scotus, if relation were that which constitutes the persons, then there would be no origin of the Son from the Father. Correspondingly, the person who is produced must be produced as an absolute 'prior' to his being related to the person producing. Production comes 'first', relation 'follows'. Finally, Scotus has an argument based upon his own view of the metaphysics of relation. For Scotus, relations are things, having quiddities or natures of their own, and thus a divine relation and the absolute divine essence are two different things with two different quiddities; consequently, Scotus contends that, if each divine person included both essence and relation, then each of the persons would be a sort of accidental unity composed of these two quiddities, rather than a *per se* unity. Scotus makes a great deal of this last point, and it leads him to conclude that what is constitutive of the persons has no quiddity of its own that could cause composition in the persons.

Although Scotus hedges his bets in various ways, nevertheless appealing to these and other arguments, he says that the relation account of personal divine distinction involves (p. 203) too many difficulties to be defended. He suggests instead that the persons are absolute, constituted by absolute properties, and he identifies the absolute properties as non-quidditative origin, corresponding, he tells us, to an efficient cause in creatures. To put this in another way, the constitutive or distinguishing feature of each produced person is the very production of that person, and this production has no quiddity or

nature of its own (Scotus stresses that the unproduced Father is constituted not by the relative property innascibility but by some absolute property). This plays a role in Scotus' model of the constitution of the divine persons as the individuation of a particular member of some natural kind. For Scotus, the divine essence is a nature or a quiddity (i.e. a second substance); personal property is the act individuating the person, making this person an individual of the divine nature distinct from the other two persons; and the divine person is first substance or individual supposite. Throughout his Trinitarian theology, Scotus will rely heavily on this distinction between first and second substance: the divine essence is nature or second substance or quiddity, the persons are first substance and are constituted 'quasi-efficiently' by non-quidditative absolute origin. Indeed, some of his further arguments for the persons being absolute hinge on this distinction. We know that first substance is most properly substance, and since it does not involve any imperfection it should be posited in God. But the persons would especially be first substance, since they exist *per se* (i.e. they subsist). Relation, however, could not formally constitute a subsistent thing or first substance. Therefore the persons are constituted by absolutes. Further, second substance indicates the entire quiddity of first substance; but if the quiddity of relation—different from the quiddity of the essence—were involved in the constitution of the persons, then the persons would not solely have the quiddity of essence.

One thing that should be noted about Scotus' ideas on absolute persons is that, although radically stated, they were in line with the Franciscan Trinitarian tradition's emphasis on emanation and origin. In his later works, Scotus retreats from his suggestion concerning the possibility of absolute persons, but he nevertheless maintains that we are in no way able to *demonstrate* the persons to be relative (as opposed to absolute): we must take this on faith due to the preponderance of evidence for its truth from Scripture and Church tradition. This appeal to the faith as the only reason to hold the persons to be relative is taken up by several important fourteenth-century authors like Francis of Meyronnes (d. 1328) and William of Ockham (d. 1347). Indeed, the position that the persons are absolutes was not very successful in the period after Scotus: it appears that only the little-known Michael of Massa, OESA (d. 1337), and the Franciscan John of Ripa (*fl.* 1358) would make the theory their own.

The unmistakable relationship of Scotus' ideas on absolute persons to earlier Franciscan Trinitarian thought is borne out in many of the other Trinitarian views that Scotus holds. Thus, as seems clear from his suggestion of absolute persons, central to Scotus' Trinitarian theory is the fact that the productions or emanations are the most basic sources of the distinction between the divine persons. More specifically still, Scotus maintains that the produced persons are distinct because of the way that they originate, and this is traced back to the distinction between the sources of the emanations, intellect

and will, and more particularly to the irreducibly distinct ways that intellect and will (p. 204) work, naturally and freely, respectively. Thus, the reason that the Son is a person distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit is because he emanates naturally by way of intellect and the reason that the Holy Spirit is distinct is because he emanates freely by way of will. In line with all this, Scotus will argue that the Holy Spirit would still be distinct from the Son if the former did not proceed from the latter (on this last issue, see Marshall's chapter in this volume).

With regard to the psychological model of the Trinity, a foundational claim of Scotus' is that that intellect and will are *formally* distinct both from each other and from the divine essence, and in this way they serve as the foundation for the distinction between the emanations and further the persons. Here Scotus appeals to his famous *formal distinction* or *formal non-identity*, a distinction in something prior to any act of the intellect, yet less than a fully real distinction (like that between two human beings). Because he thinks that merely rationally distinct attributes could not suffice to ground the real distinction between the persons, Scotus maintains against Henry of Ghent that the divine attributes must be more than rationally distinct from each other; in fact, according to Scotus, they must be formally distinct from each other in order to explain how they can act as sources of irreducibly distinct emanations: one absolutely undifferentiated essence, according to Scotus, could not produce in two irreducibly distinct ways. Arguing along these lines, Scotus intends to support a strong use of the psychological model of the Trinity: the Son literally is a Word emanated by way of the divine intellect, the Holy Spirit literally is Love emanated by way of the divine will, and this is only possible if intellect is formally distinct from will. Moreover, Scotus spells out in some detail the relationship between the formally distinct essence, intellect, and will in the emanation of the second and third persons, respectively. Thus, in the Son's intellectual emanation, the divine intellect in the Father, with the divine essence present to it as an intelligible object, is a productive source of generated knowledge, i.e. the Word. In the Holy Spirit's voluntary emanation, the divine essence, present as the loved object to the infinite divine will as it is in the Father and Son, is a productive source of infinite and subsistent Love.

All in all, John Duns Scotus passed on to the fourteenth century and beyond an extremely detailed and internally consistent Trinitarian theology in which the clear motivation was to explain as much as possible.

Issues in Fourteenth-Century Trinitarian Thought

Throughout the fourteenth century there was a lively discussion of Trinitarian theology, and both the Dominican and the Franciscan Trinitarian traditions and their relation and

emanation accounts of personal distinction were represented. Indeed, all through the century there were theologians influenced by Scotus' version of Franciscan Trinitarian (p. 205) theology. Thus, men like Henry of Harclay (d. 1317), William of Alnwick (d. 1333), and Francis of Meyronnes tended to take their starting point in Scotus' ideas and even words. A similar fourteenth-century phenomenon can be seen with regard to the Trinitarian theology of Thomas Aquinas. This is not to say that the later theologians were slavish imitators of the great masters; indeed, they often developed and modified (and sometimes explicitly rejected) elements in the Trinitarian theologies of the masters. But Scotus and Aquinas, respectively, were central to their theologies. There were also a good number of theologians whose Trinitarian thought is not Scotistic or Thomistic in any significant sense but whose interests and techniques were clearly in continuity with the earlier period. Included in this category were two of the great minds of the Franciscan order, Peter Auriol (d. 1322) and William of Ockham. In the remainder of this section, however, I want to emphasize two major developments that appear to set apart fourteenth-century Trinitarian thought from thirteenth-century: Praepositinianism and developments in Trinitarian logic.

Several thinkers from the mid-fourteenth century held a view that can be labelled 'Praepositinianism', after Praepositinus of Cremona (d. after 1210), whose name was most often associated with the view in later-medieval texts. The view involved two major points: (1) there is nothing more than a grammatical distinction between a divine person and its property, for example between the Father and his paternity, since they are perfectly identical; (2) because there are no properties in any way distinct from the persons, properties cannot be appealed to in explaining the distinction of the persons, and hence the persons are distinct from one another 'in and of themselves' (the Latin term is *se ipsis*). The view, then, entails the rejection of both the relation and the emanation account of personal distinction, since in order to explain personal constitution both those accounts rely on properties in some sense distinct from the persons. Although there were never many adherents of the view, in the mid fourteenth century they included major theologians like Walter Chatton (d. 1343) and Robert Holcot (d. 1349) at Oxford, and Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358) at Paris. There are two major points to be stressed about fourteenth-century Praepositinianism. First, the main motivation behind it is to maintain the strictest form of divine simplicity possible, such that there could be no hint of any distinction within a divine person. This motivation is made explicit in the arguments most often used in favour of the view, for example, that each divine person must be as simple as the divine essence itself, and therefore subject to no distinction whatsoever; or that, if a person were constituted from common essence and personal property, then the person would not be absolutely simple. The second point to be stressed is that, beyond the two basic claims about person and property being merely grammatically distinct and the persons being distinct in and of themselves, as well as

arguments against more elaborate Trinitarian theories, Praepositinians largely eschewed Trinitarian explanation, limiting themselves to restating the most indisputable Trinitarian dogma: that the one God is three really distinct persons. This comes across most clearly in Praepositinian responses to criticisms of their position developed in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, when basically all theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus, and William of (p. 206) Ockham had condemned the view. Thus, one argument against the Praepositinian view relied on the fact that persons and properties do not neatly coincide, e.g. the Father has two properties, paternity and active spiration, while the Father and the Son share the property of active spiration, and hence person and property could not be strictly identical as the Praepositinian view required. Adherents of Praepositinianism rejected this sort of move by denying that there was even a problem: the Father just is paternity and active spiration, the Son just is filiation and active spiration, and Father and Son spirate the Holy Spirit. There is no genuine explanation here, merely the Roman Catholic view of the Trinity placed into a Praepositinian framework. (On later-medieval Praepositinianism, see Friedman 2010: 133–70; Friedman forthcoming: chs. 11 and 12.)

No discussion of fourteenth-century Trinitarian theology would be complete without a mention of the innovative developments in Trinitarian logic that took place especially in the first half of the fourteenth century. Although logical issues were important in several loci in the Trinitarian discussion, nevertheless the most interesting developments are found in discussion of the Trinitarian paralogisms, places where reasoning, as represented by Aristotelian logic, seemed simply to conflict with the doctrine of the Trinity. The most famous example of this is the case of the so-called expository syllogism, for example: the Father is this essence; this essence is the Son; therefore the Father is the Son. According to Aristotelian logic, this syllogism is valid, that is to say, it should yield a true conclusion. But its conclusion is, according to the Catholic faith, false, since the Father is a different person from the Son. For scholastic theologians, trained from the first in logic, this presented a paramount challenge, because if there was something wrong with Aristotelian logic in this case, the question would have to be asked whether there is a problem with it in all cases, and that question involved implications for the scholastic project in general. There were two basic ways of tackling this issue. The first was to say that Aristotelian logic is in fact universally valid and then to find a reason within Aristotelian logic itself as to why the syllogism does not work in precisely this case; the second was to say that Aristotelian logic is not universally valid, being unable to handle a case like this, and perhaps further to postulate a special non-Aristotelian ‘logic of faith’ to deal with the Trinitarian paralogisms. The second way was not particularly popular in the fourteenth century, although it is found in the *Centiloquium theologicum* (previously attributed to William of Ockham but more likely written by the Dominican Arnold of Strelley (*fl.* 1325)), and (less clearly) in Robert Holcot's theology. But the first

way was a major source of interesting logical innovations, made with an eye towards defusing the Trinitarian paralogisms. John Duns Scotus provided the fourteenth-century starting point. According to Scotus the problem with the syllogism above is that it fails to take into account the formal distinction that obtains between person (or property) and essence. It is true that the divine essence is the Father essentially, but there is nevertheless a formal distinction between them—the Father is not purely or absolutely identical with the essence. The same is true of the Son: Son and essence are the same essentially, but there is a formal distinction between them. On account of the formal distinction, then, the syllogism does not conclude, since the ‘fallacy of accident’ arises and blocks the syllogism. Hence, Scotus believed that the formal distinction (p. 207) safeguarded both the doctrine of the Trinity and Aristotelian syllogistic logic: there was a perfectly good reason that the syllogism did not result in a true conclusion. Although William of Ockham thought Scotus’ formal distinction to be unintelligible, nevertheless he accepted that person and essence are formally distinct precisely because he could see no other way to guarantee the universality of Aristotelian logic. Dissatisfied with this ad hoc solution, thinkers coming after Ockham, like Adam Wodeham (d. 1358) and Gregory of Rimini, appealed to other Aristotelian logical tools in order to save the universality of syllogistic logic even when dealing with the Trinity. The discussion continued into the later fourteenth century with such scholars as Pierre d’Ailly (d. 1422) and further into the fifteenth. It has been suggested that theologians in Vienna at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries became convinced that the Jews living in the town would never convert to Christianity precisely because they could see the logical problems raised by the Trinity; thus the Trinitarian paralogisms seem to have had real world consequences. (On logic and the Trinity in the later-medieval period, see Gelber, dissertation, 1974; Shank 1988; Hallamaa 2003; Kärkkäinen 2007: esp. articles by Knuuttila, Maierú, Marshall, and Nielsen.)

The Fifteenth Century

The theology of the fifteenth century is not well researched at present, but already there are some indications of a few major figures and characteristics. A recognized trait of fifteenth-century thought is its tendency to consciously revisit and even defend the thought of earlier masters. One sees this clearly in the Trinitarian theology of several of the century's major figures, for example John Capreolus (d. 1444), who based his *Sentences* commentary on Thomas Aquinas’ own commentary on the same work. Peter of Nugent (fl. 1403–4) and William of Vorillon (d. 1463) appear to have done something similar with respect to John Duns Scotus’ Trinitarian theology. Finally, Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), best known for having been read by Martin Luther, tells us explicitly that his

purpose in his *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum* is to capture the meaning of Ockham's *Sentences* commentary in abbreviated form. (On Biel, see Friedman 2003.) Finally, one should mention Denys the Carthusian (d. 1472), whose immense *Sentences* commentary presents a spectrum of scholastic figures in discussion with one another on many issues, including the Trinity.

A second important tendency of the fifteenth century is the differing ways in which both artists and theologians read Aristotle: a nominalist way, harking back to William of Ockham (among others), and a realist way, harking back to Albert the Great (d. 1280), Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. The *Wege Streit*, or dispute between these ways, became bitter at many fifteenth-century universities, and it influenced Trinitarian theology. Thus, nominalistic-leaning theologians were more inclined to say that the Trinity was not amenable to Aristotelian analysis, and, even when such analysis was defensible, it was founded on a parsimonious nominalistic understanding of Aristotelian metaphysical (p. 208) categories (e.g. of relation); realists, on the other hand, were more sanguine about the use of Aristotle, and understood Aristotle in a more concrete, realist way (Hoenen forthcoming). The influence of the nominalist/realist divide upon Trinitarian thought is to be seen already in the late fourteenth century with the Trinitarian theology of John Wyclif (d. 1384), a strong realist on the issue of universals, who conceived of the divine essence as a universal nature and the persons as particulars of that nature (Lahey 2006: 127–65).

Although it is true more generally about all later-medieval Trinitarian theology, from the late thirteenth century and on, nevertheless the thought produced in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is particularly under-studied, and there is a large amount of source material waiting to be integrated into our picture of this extremely rich theological tapestry. As we come to grips with this material, it is sure to deepen our historical picture of later-medieval thought and to inject a voice of philosophical and theological sensitivity and rigor into our own discussion of the Trinity.

Suggested Reading

The following are recommended: Cross (2005); Friedman (2010); Kärkkäinen (2007).

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