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CHAPTER THREE

Why this text is to be ascribed to Thomas Manlevelt

As we have seen,¹ Manlevelt’s main biographer Lorenz is not sure if the commentaries on the old logic contained in manuscript Erfurt. Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek CA 4° 288 (also referred to as Erfurt, Bibl. Ampl. 288), the first part of which is edited here, are to be added to Manlevelt’s bibliography. That is to say, by lack of serious investigation of this text, Lorenz refrains from making a definitive statement on Manlevelt’s supposed authorship. Other possible additions to the list of works ascribed to Thomas Manlevelt by Lorenz: commentaries, to wit, on the Physics and De anima, will be discussed below. For the moment I will first investigate the candidature of the Questiones libri Porphirii itself as an authentic work by Manlevelt.

The very least that can be ascertained about the authorship of this text is that it is ascribed to Thomas Manlevelt, that there are no reasons beforehand to assume that this ascription would be incorrect, and that there is reason enough to take the ascription to be correct. The authenticity of the second part of our Erfurt manuscript, i.e. the commentary on Aristotle’s Categories automatically follows.

3.1. The manuscript

Even the circumstantial fact that the sole manuscript of the present text is to be found in the Bibliotheca Amploniana may not be entirely without meaning when we take a look at the doings and interests of its founder, Amplonius Rating de Bercka.² Amplonius was a representative of the group of Masters that around the year 1400 travelled from one university to the next, lecturing as they went, and obtaining their own collection of books while en route.³

¹ Introduction, 2.1.
³ The Bibliotheca Amploniana in Erfurt, obtained as a gift made by Amplonius in 1412.
The works collected by Amplonius in his Erfurt library centred mainly around philosophy in all its branches, with special interest in logic, mathematics and philosophy of nature as well as medicine, and works on theology, and juridical works on private law and church law. Seeing its founder’s interest in logic, there seems to be nothing improbable about his wandering off to Louvain and buying a commentary on the Old Logic by Thomas Manlevelt there.

This then, is the context in which the only remaining manuscript of this commentary on the *Isagoge* by Porphyry has been preserved. There is no positive proof or even a hint that this commentary or its twin commentary on the *Categories* in any way entered the logical curriculum at Erfurt University, but Manlevelt’s works on the *parva logicalia* did indeed. Already in 1420 not only the logical works by Aristotle were commented upon in Erfurt, but also the *parva logicalia*. In modern logic, which tended to develop into a ‘logic of language’, an important role was played by the *termini mentales*. In this connection Manlevelt’s views were treated alongside those of John Buridan, Marsilius of Inghen and others. The meagrest of conclusions to be drawn from this then would be that probably a set of commentaries on the Old Logic by precisely Thomas Manlevelt would find a home there.

A word on the coherence between these two commentaries on the old logic first. Above I have already hinted at the doctrinal agreement and the similarity of tactical approach in the two commentaries. On this evidence alone, the more than tentative conclusion can only be that the author of our commentary on the *Isagoge* was the same one that composed the commentary on the *Categories* studied by Andrews. The connection between the commentaries is established right away by the

and still enlarged during the 15th century, is today one of the most important collections of manuscripts in Germany, and the biggest preserved medieval collection of a late-medieval scholar in the world. The Bibliotheca Amploniana may also give us some insight into the late-medieval teachings at the University of Erfurt, founded in 1392, of which Amplonius was the founding master and second rector. From the very start this university was held in high esteem, and around the middle of the fifteenth century had proven itself as a worthy champion of the nominalist cause of the ‘via moderna’ against the realists of the ‘via antiqua’. Again, see Speer 1995.

4 On this, see Markowski 1995, esp. 40, 51, with a reference to the *Puncta materiarum librorum quasi omnium que pro baccalariatus gradu Erfordie leguntur et examinantur*, Erfurt, 8a, cms Qu 241.

5 Markowski 1995, 40. Manlevelt’s views are treated in the *Puncta materiarum librorum quasi omnium que pro baccalariatus gradu Erfordie leguntur et examinantur*, 31ab.

6 Introduction 1.1.
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First *questio* of the commentary on the *Isagoge*, which is concerned with the necessity of knowing something about genus and species etcetera (the subject matter of the *Isagoge*, that is) before turning one’s attention to the categories. A distinction on equivocation made in the fifth *questio* is said to serve for the commentary on the *Categories* as well. The 22nd *questio* of the commentary on the *Isagoge* takes up a theme normally reserved for treatment in a commentary on the *Categories*: whether there are ten highest genera and no more and no less than ten. Moreover, apart from the many implicit references, in for example the 33rd and 43rd *questio* of the commentary on the *Isagoge* there are explicit references to the commentary on the *Categories* that is to immediately follow. That the two commentaries are in fact to be looked upon as the two chapters of one continuing story, is visualized by the table of contents that rounds off the manuscript. Without any hint of a subdivision, the table of contents, filling the last few folios of the manuscript, does not even make a distinction between the two parts in the enumeration of the *questiones*. The *questiones* on *Isagoge* and *Categories* are simply numbered through there.

From this safe starting ground let me now see if it can be ascertained that Thomas Manlevelt and none other is the name to be attached to these two commentaries. In fact it is the name, and the only name, actually attached to the manuscript.

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7 Q. 1, 1\textsuperscript{19–15}: ‘Queritur circa initium Porphirii, utrum necesse sit aliquem scire quid genus sit et quid species etcetera ad cognitionem predicamentorum habendam.’

8 Q. 5 Dist. 2, 5\textsuperscript{4}: ‘(...) et totum istud presuppono usque ad *Questiones de predicamentis*.’

9 Q. 22, 20\textsuperscript{4–22}: ‘Utrum tantum sint decem genera et non plura, neque pauciora.’

Deo volente I will go into this matter on a later occasion, and compare Manlevelt’s view of the number of categories with the views expressed by Albert the Great and John Duns Scotus, who indeed take up this theme in their commentaries on the *Categories*, and with those by Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham, who take up this theme in other works, but then, did not compose a commentary on the *Categories*. John Buridan did also shine his light on the number of categories, but seems to have worked in quite another direction than our author did; see King 1994. For the views of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus on this matter, see Bos and Van der Helm 1998.

10 Q. 5 Dist. 2, 5\textsuperscript{4}, Q. 8 Concl. 7, 7\textsuperscript{b}, among many others.

11 Q. 33 Concl. 4, 33\textsuperscript{a}: ‘Sed de isto plus patebit *supra Predicamenta*.’ Q. 33 Concl. 6, 33\textsuperscript{a}: *supra Predicamenta* diffusius patebit de ista materia. Q. 43 Ad 7, 43\textsuperscript{b}: ‘Et hoc diffusius pertractabitur *Supra Predicamenta*. Q. 43 (Ad secundum in oppositum), 41\textsuperscript{b}: ‘Qualiter vero compositum ex subiecto et accidente fit in predicamento, et qualiter non, patebit *Super Predicamenta*, quia ibi potius habet locum.’ See also Q. 5 Concl. 5, 5\textsuperscript{a}, and Q. 6 Ad 3, 6\textsuperscript{a}. 
According to the catalogue edited in 1887 by W. Schum, the text stems from the middle of the fourteenth century, and its author is identified on the cover of the manuscript itself as Thomas Manlevelt: 'Item questiones optime Thome Manlevelt super veteri arte.' 12

The ascription to Thomas Manlevelt is corroborated by a line of text, supposedly added in the late fourteenth century at the top of the recto-side of the first folio: 'Hec questiones fuerunt compilate per Thom. Manlevel Anglicum doctorem solemnem.' 13 This compilating must be understood, not as a gathering together of materials from different sources, but in a technical sense. 14 A compilating commentary, then, is a revised version on the basis of reports jotted down by students during lectures. Frequently the compilating version was accepted as an edited text and used for further copies. Such a compilation was usually made by the master himself, or in some cases by one of his pupils. 15 There being no explicit mention here of the name of a student making the compilation, seems to suggest that this compilation of questiones on the Isagoge was done by Manlevelt himself. This would mean that the manuscript edited here is either an autograph of Thomas Manlevelt, or a copy based on it.

This seems to leave little doubt about Thomas Manlevelt really being the author of the present text. One last word of caution may be warranted, however. The manuscript, of course, was bound in its cover many years after the text was written down, while even the line of text at the top of the first page – if the dating by Schum is correct – was only added decades after completion of the manuscript. Seeing that the text of the commentary itself does not make any mention of its compiler (nor of the place or date of its compilation, for that matter), there seems to remain then – notwithstanding the name of Thomas Manlevel(t) being added twice later on, and although there is no clear counter-evidence – room for at least a shadow of doubt on its authorship. 16

12 Schum 1887, 528f.
13 Schum, ibid.
14 An explanation on the technical term ‘compilatus’ is to be found in Flüeler 1999, 513f., where Flüeler also gives a list of compiled versions of Buridan’s commentaries.
15 Flüeler, 1999, 511ff., presents a case where the compilation of one of Buridan’s commentaries is not made by Buridan himself, but by one of his students, sitting in front of him.
16 For a complete description of the ms, see below, chapter 6.
It would seem wise then, to look a little deeper into the evidence about the authorship of the present text, and about its place and date of compilation.

**3.2. Comparison with other texts**

It will be worthwhile to compare the works that are without any doubt genuine Manlevelt – in as far as the present state of knowledge about these parva logicalia allows us – with the *Questiones libri Porphirii*, to establish whether this text can be taken as genuine Manlevelt as well. At first sight, this comparison seems to indicate that the attribution to Thomas Manlevelt is correct. That is to say, doctrinal concurrence is demonstrable and there are no clues leading us to conjecture that the early attribution of this text to Manlevelt would be false.

There is one reference to a tract, Manlevelt’s authorship of which is undisputed: *De suppositionibus*. The doctrinal point in question, in the context of which this reference is made, is vintage Ockhamist nominalism, namely that ‘man in general’ is nothing but a universal term: ‘“homo in communi” nihil aliud est quam terminus universalis.’ Here, as elsewhere in our commentary, the sparse things that Manlevelt has to say about supposition are completely in line with the theory on supposition unfolded in his tract devoted to it. For example, the main division of supposition in material, personal and simple division, as expounded in the 15th *questio*, is the same that we find in the tract *De suppositionibus*: ‘Suppositio dividitur in suppositionem materialem, simplicem et personalem.’ And so, although there is only one reference to the tract *De suppositionibus* in this commentary on the *Isagoge*, this one reference is interesting enough, for it supports our conjecture that the commentary on the *Isagoge* was composed by Manlevelt after he had finished his theoretical tracts on the parva logicalia.

Unfortunately, there are no other references to *De suppositionibus* or any of the remaining tracts on the parva logicalia. What we do have, however, are references to two of his own works that have hitherto

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17 Q. 25 A 3., 25*; ‘“homo in communi” nihil aliud est quam terminus universalis, sicut diffusius in tractatu *De suppositionibus* est declaratum.’
18 Q. 15 (Distinction), 14*; ‘In ista questione presupponitur distinctio de suppositione materiali et personali et simplici.’
19 Cited after a draft of the forthcoming edition by Kann c.s.
never been listed among the titles of Thomas Manlevelt. The first is a commentary on *De anima*, referred to not only in the commentary on the *Isagoge*, but in the commentary on the *Categories* as well. The second must be a commentary on at least one of the books of Aristotle’s *Physics*, for in the 23rd *questio* there is mention of a *Questio de tempore sive quarto Physicorum*. And in the 24th *questio* there is mention of a *Questio de infinito*, commenting on the third book of the *Physics*. Which brings me to the conclusion that if the *Questiones libri Porphirii* is to be genuinely attributed to Thomas Manlevelt, then two more titles have to be added to his bibliography as well: *questiones on De anima* and on *Physics*. Of course, these additions will remain of a highly hypothetical character only, as long as no texts are found to give body to this compartment of Manlevelt’s supposed bibliography.

3.3. Geographical circumstances

A remarkable geographic indication which is to be found in the pages of our present commentary on the *Isagoge* should not be left unmentioned:

Et in ista significatione tota multitudo Romanorum dicitur genus Romanorum vel Romanum a principio productivo, scilicet, Romulus, et tota multitudo Brabantiorum a principio contentivo circumscriptive, scilicet Brabantia (…) 

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20 Q. 26 AD 2., 26**: ‘ut patet in questione de ista materia super secundum De anima’. Q. 14 CONCL. 10, 14**: seems to contain such a reference as well: ‘de quo apparebit tertio De anima’. Other possible references to these *Questiones super De Animae* are in Q. 4 CONCL. 5, 4**, and AD 3., 4**.

21 *Questiones super Predicamenta*, Q. 2 AD 5., 46**: ’Et de ista materia haberetur quoddammodo diffusius in questionibus secundi *De anima*, ubi tractaretur de speciebus representationis.’

22 Q. 23 DIST. 2, 22**: ’de quo alibi diffusius patet, utpote in *Questione de tempore sive quarto Physicorum*. ‘

23 Q. 24 CONCL. 3, 24**: ’et de longitudinibus gyrationis que sunt infinite quoddammodo extensive, habentur multe conclusiones scientifice, sicut patet in questione tertii *Physicorum De infinito:’

24 *De anima* was heavily studied and commented upon in Manlevelt’s days and intellectual environment. It would be interesting to compare his Ockhamist-hued *questiones on De anima*, if ever these were to be found, with the psychological *expositio’s and questiones* that have originated from the so-called ‘School of Buridan’ in mid-fourteenth century Paris, i.e. John Buridan, Nicole Oresme, Marsilius of Inghen, and Albert of Saxony. On these, see Marshall 1983.

25 Q. 5 CONCL. 1, 5**
Brabantia, of course, is the duchy of Brabant, which in Thomas's days encompassed the present day Belgian provinces Brabant and Antwerp, as well as the Dutch province Northern Brabant. Why would the duchy of Brabant and its inhabitants come to be mentioned in a medieval text on logic, or on any subject, for that matter? Of course, it would be stretching our point too far, if we would link this mentioning of the duchy of Brabant directly to the background of our Thomas himself, and claim that he must have been a Brabantian, like the once infamous philosopher who has been given the name of this very province: Siger of Brabant (1240–1281). On the other hand, it would seem equally unwise to deny any possible connection between the mentioning of this specific duchy, which never plays even the slightest role in logical history, and the background of this specific manuscript. If not the philosopher himself is to be pointed out as the linking pin, either as someone born there or as someone teaching there, then maybe it is the copyist who was born or raised in Brabant, or whatever other link one can think of.

In fact, the mentioning of the duchy may really be meaningful. There does exist at least one other manuscript in which the name of Thomas is linked directly to the duchy. The text concerned is an exposé by Thomas on the fallacies, and the manuscript is to be found in Erfurt. The text ends: 'Explicit tractatus fallaciarum lectus Lovanii per mag. Thomam Anglicum, dictum Manlovel.' There is no doubt about Thomas's authorship of this tract on the fallacies. So there seems to be no reason for doubt about his lecturing in Louvain, as reported in the manuscript of this tract, either. The city of Louvain in Belgian Brabant in Thomas's days was still

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26 Brabant, of course, is also the homeland of Siger of Brabant, the philosopher who was the target of Thomas Aquinas's severe criticism during his lifetime, but who in his afterlife was rehabilitated by Dante, who placed him in the Fourth Sphere of Heaven, the Sun, home of theologians and fathers of the church, and who put benevolent words about him in the mouth of his guide there, none other than the very same Thomas Aquinas. (Paradiso x, 133–138): 'Questi onde a me ritorna il tuo riguardo./è l'luce d'uno spiro che 'n pensieri/gravi a morir li parve venir tardo: // essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri,/che, leggendo nel Vico de li Strami,/silotizzò invidiosi veri.' ('This, whence to me returneth thy regard,/The light is of a spirit unto whom/In his grave meditations death seemed slow. // It is the light eternal of Sigier,/Who, reading lectures in the Street of Straw,/Did syllogize invidious verities.' tr. Longfellow) See Krop's introduction to Siger of Brabant 1992, 8, 16 on Siger's relationship to Dante and to Brabant, respectively. On Siger, Thomas Aquinas and Dante: Ebbesen 1998, 273.

27 Reference to this text is made by Lorenz 1996, 157 n. 48.
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awaiting the foundation of its university. Lorenz’s guess is that Thomas was probably lecturing in the School of St. Petri there.28

To further substantiate the claim that Thomas Manlevelt was indeed lecturing in Louvain and did compose his commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* there, let us take a look at the anonymous tract already mentioned above,29 the *Defensorium Ockham*. The *Defensorium Ockham*, a fierce defence of the radical reductionism of William of Ockham, offers, according to its editor Andrews, a rare glimpse of how Ockham’s theories began to transform the mindset of his immediate successors, showing how Ockham’s theories exhibit an immediate plausibility, and how his strategies were enthusiastically adopted.30

Ebbesen is quite sure that the anonymous author must have been working in Denmark.31 He points out that the geographical examples in the text are only two, namely Denmark (four times) and Rome (five times). When the two localities are used in conjunction, it is to indicate two distinct places: here and there. Now tradition prescribes that ‘here’ is the place where the speaker and his audience are, and ‘there’ is a well-known place far away, usually Rome. Thus, in his *Summa logicae*, William of Ockham uses England or more specifically London to indicate the ‘here’. That Denmark is used in the *Defensorium Ockham* instead of Ockham’s English examples, leaves room for only one explanation: the ‘here’ for the author of the *Defensorium Ockham* is Denmark.

Mutatis mutandis, the fact that Thomas Manlevelt makes mention of Brabant and its inhabitants in *Questio* 5 of the present text leaves room for just one explanation, viz. that the author and his audience must be placed in precisely this duchy. And the reason for this is exactly the same as the reason why the author of the *Defensorium Ockham* must be placed in Denmark. In both cases Rome is the standard well-known place far away,32 the ‘there’, and Denmark and Brabant respectively are the ‘here’.

The very least that can be said about Brabant for being in all likelihood the place of origin of this commentary on the *Isagoge* is that it does in no way contradict Lorenz’s assumption that Manlevelt must have been drawn from Paris to pre-university Louvain. In fact, the one fits in quite nicely with the other.

28 Lorenz 1996, 150f.
29 Introduction 1.1, n. 4.
31 Ebbesen 2000, 277.
32 Q. 2 CONCL. 3, 210: ‘tu scis quod Roma est pulchra civitas, quia tu credis dicentibus.’
Ebbesen calls the case of the *Defensorium Ockham* unique. For no other known work may be claimed to have originated in the teaching of philosophy among Nordic Franciscans. Thomas Manlevelt's case seems to be quite as unique. For what other mature work in philosophy is known to have originated in pre-university Louvain?

So what we have on the one hand is a manuscript of a text which is certainly by Thomas, in which he is said to have lectured in Louvain, Brabant. And on the other hand we have a text which is probably by Thomas, in which the highly uncommon geographical example of Brabant is used, and which for that reason can safely be taken to have originated there. It seems to be warranted, then, to look upon this coincidence as a piece of circumstantial evidence that the present commentary on the *Isagoge* really is by Thomas. And if this is so, the present text may in its turn be taken as complementary, if not superfluous proof that Thomas indeed did lecture in some school in Louvain.

3.4. *The dating of the Questiones libri Porphyrii*

A *terminus post quem* is not hard to establish for our text, even by the most cautious of standards. If its author is working on the continent, as seems obvious from the references to Brabant, and if he is even in the widest sense a follower of Ockhamist doctrines, the *terminus post quem* of the *Questiones libri Porphyrii* is to be assumed around 1330. That year is generally taken to mark the beginning of the rapid spread of Ockham's doctrine and method in Paris. Above, we have seen that Courtenay advanced an *ante quem* dating of Manlevelt's tract on supposition around 1360. Following this dating of Manlevelt's *Tractatus de suppositionibus*, and supposing that the

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33 Ebbesen 2000, 277. I will go deeper into the Franciscan connection below, section 3.5.
34 Above, in section 3.1, attention was paid to the sense in which these *Questiones libri Porphyrii* are to be understood as a compilation. Namely as a revised version of a reported work. According to Flüeler, 1999, 513, such compiled commentaries were made especially in Paris. This is not to say that compilations were not made elsewhere as well. Manlevelt had been teaching in Paris before coming to Louvain, and may very well have continued this practice there. So this text being a compilation is in no way inconsistent with my supposing that it originated in Louvain.
35 Courtenay 2008, 130 makes mention of Ockham's *Summa logicae* being studied and intellectually digested in Paris by 1329.
36 Introduction 2.2.3.
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_Questiones libri Porphirii_ were composed still somewhat later than that, the present text would at least share this *ante quem* dating around 1360. This *ante quem* dating does not conflict with my provisional adherence to Lorenz’s biography of Thomas Manlevelt. As I have explained, by lack of a *post quem* dating of any of Manlevelt’s works running against the otherwise feasible biographical framework laid out by Lorenz, we should stick to this biographer’s hypothesis that Thomas Manlevelt worked in Paris around 1330, and left for Louvain not too long afterwards, by the end of the 1330s. Fitting the present commentary in with Lorenz’s tentative biography of Thomas Manlevelt leads me to assume that the _Questiones libri Porphirii_ were composed in Louvain in the late 1330s or 1340s.

Manlevelt’s fame did not rest on the commentary on the _Categories_ treated by Andrews, nor on the commentary on the _Isagoge_ edited below. Otherwise than would have been the case with almost any other philosopher, this lack of fame on account of his commentaries on the Old Logic was not due to their status as works of youth. In fact, while most philosophers did their work on the _Isagoge_ and the _Categories_ at the start of their academic career, in all probability these commentaries were not works of youth at all, but are samples of Manlevelt’s mature thinking, written after his Parisian _parva logicalia_. In the foregoing I have explained my reasons for sticking to Manlevelt’s biographical framework as put forward by Lorenz, according to whom Manlevelt spent most of his active academic life in Paris in the 1320s and 1330s, and later went to Louvain.37 For one thing, the reference made in the _Questiones libri Porphirii_, supposedly written in Louvain, to an earlier tract _De suppositionibus_, being one of Manlevelt’s Parisian _parva logicalia_, fits in well with this tentative biography by Lorenz. On the hypothesis then that the _Questiones libri Porphirii_ must chronologically be placed after the completion of his renowned logical treatises, and after he had left Paris for a place of considerably less intellectual splendour, Louvain, the only reason conceivable for their lack of general renown is precisely that they were written in the by then outlying intellectual district of pre-university Louvain, far from the Parisian centre. Otherwise it would be hard to understand why Manlevelt’s sound but unspectacular logical treatises on supposition, confusion and consequences were lastingly used and commented upon all over the Continent, while our commentary

37 See above, subsection 2.2.1.
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on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* and its accompanying commentary on Aristotle’s *Categories* seem to have had little or no impact at all, in spite of the highly original and adventurous character of both these commentaries. Had works like these seen the light of day in the Parisian centre of intellectual activity, they could not have failed to make a stir. If not endowing their author with everlasting fame, they would at least have caused considerable scandal.

But is there not another *terminus ante quem* to be found, that would support a more definite dating of our text than that provided by Courtenay’s?

It is generally acknowledged that 1330 marked the beginning of the rapid spread of Ockham’s doctrines and method in Paris. This makes its University a favourable surrounding for a thinker like Manlevelt, building on the philosophical groundwork laid out by Ockham, be it as only a follower, or as an innovator in his own right. Unpleasant things however were bound to happen some ten years later, around 1340, when philosophy in an Ockhamist vein became the target of repression in Paris. Adhering to Manlevelt’s biography as reconstructed by Lorenz, one must reckon that our author had already left Paris for Louvain by then. Kindred spirits like Autrecourt and Mirecourt had been working in Paris shortly before the trouble began (Autrecourt, 1335–1337) or would be working there shortly after (Mirecourt, 1344–1347). But what shape did these troubles exactly take? The order of events unfavourable to Parisian Ockhamism is meticulously unfolded by Thijsen in his study on *Censure and Heresy at the University of Paris 1200–1400.*

On December 29, 1340, the masters of the faculty of arts at Paris issued a statute prohibiting the dissemination of six listed errors. The final paragraph of the 1340 statute alludes to previous legislation concerning ‘the doctrine of William called Ockham’ (*de doctrina Guillelmi dicti Ockham alias statuimus*). The Ockhamist hermeneutics is allegedly based on the idea that texts have an objective, literal meaning, independent of the subjective intention of the author. It appears to assume that this objective literal sense of texts could be grasped by virtue of the properties of speech (*proprietates sermonis*). The authors of the 1340 statute criticize the Ockhamists for ignoring other important hermeneutical clues for

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38 Thijsen 1998. On this crisis over *virtus sermonis*, see also Courtenay 1984a.
interpreting texts, such as the author’s intention (*intentio auctoris*) and
the context of discourse (*materia subjecta*). In short, the Ockhamists
were reproved for employing too narrow a concept of the literal sense
of texts, one that suffocated the authorial meaning and neglected the
context of discourse. 40

The Statute is, and aimed to be, of considerable doctrinal importance.
The issue it addresses – the interpretation of the Bible and of other
authoritative texts – was of major importance in the intellectual climate
prevalent in the middle of the fourteenth century. The text of the Statute,
although it is anti-Ockhamist, is directed not against Ockham personally
but against his followers in Paris. 41 In Ockham’s own supposition theory,
the distinction of propositions for making their possible readings explicit
may be said to be a key element. 42

In the light of this Statute of December 29, 1340, the view to be distilled
in a certain text on the (non-)distinction of propositions may give a
*terminus ante quem* for the date of this text. The Faculty of Arts had in
the third article of this Statute condemned the view that no proposition
should be distinguished. So, if an author flatly denies that a proposition
should under any circumstance be distinguished, we may be sure that
this particular text of his stems from before the issuing of the Statute in
1340. Van der Lecq and Braakhuis have in fact used this device to date a
certain text by John Buridan. 43

Unfortunately, the Statute is of no help in determining a more exact
*terminus ante quem* for the *Questiones libri Porphyrii* than that provided
by Courtenay, as its author throughout the text feels free to make distinc-
tions. 44 He is an Ockhamist alright, but certainly not one in the dogmatic
sense of the Statute.

40 But of Ockham himself this is simply not true. Ockham is *always* talking about
‘distinguishing’ propositions. Moreover, Ockham himself is *always* saying things like
‘what Aristotle really meant is …’, thus clearly considering the *intentio auctoris*. In
this sense it could even be argued that the 1340 statute actually is rather Ockhamist
in spirit.

41 Braakhuis 2000, 94 approvingly cites these conclusions from a 1994 article by
Kaluza.

42 Dutilh Novaes 2008, esp. 378–383, draws attention to the fact that the phrase
‘propositio est distinguenda’ occurs countless times in Ockham’s *Summa logicae*.

43 Introduction to John Buridan, 1994; see also Braakhuis 2000.

44 E.g. Q. 25 Dist. 2, 25*: ‘ista propositio “plures homines sunt unus homo” est
distingueda eo quod poterit accipi in sensu proprio vel in sensu transsumptivo’;
Q. 29 Dist. 1, 29*: ‘ista propositio (…) est distinguende penes amphiboliam: in sensu
proprio falsa est; in sensu transsumptive secundum quod iam expositum est, est
vera. Et ista distinctio in ista materia maxime est necessaria, quia Porphyrius et alii
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3.5. The Franciscan context

What is interesting about the manuscript of the *Tractatus de suppositionibus* used by Courtenay, apart from its role in providing a *terminus ante quem*, is the Franciscan context it constitutes for Thomas Manlevelt's text on supposition. The manuscript is kept in a Franciscan monastery and contains mainly tracts by Franciscan writers. A question may come to mind: was Thomas himself a Franciscan as well? And was he, or was he not, a theologian as well as a logician? These same questions have been raised about an equally unknown thinker from roughly the same era and comparable intellectual background: the author of an anonymous Ockhamist treatment of the categories, brought to attention and later edited by Andrews under the title ‘Defensorium Ockham’. I will have a look at the answers given to these questions, and then try and answer the same questions concerning Thomas Manlevelt.

When sketching the spiritual silhouette of the otherwise unknown early Ockhamist author of the *Defensorium Ockham*, Andrews comes to the conclusion that he was probably a Franciscan. He sums up the following criteria in support of this conclusion: the author's model in Ockham; his Franciscan position on divisive issues as the univocity of being and the plurality of forms; a verbatim passage from John Duns Scotus, as well as the Subtle Doctor's being mentioned directly and indirectly; his cavils about Ockham's theories, similar to those of Walter Chatton.

Applying these same criteria to the author of the text to be edited below, I find that he meets the bulk of them. Manlevelt clearly has his model in William of Ockham; while not advancing an opinion on the plurality of forms, he definitely adheres to the univocity of being; while never directly being referred to, the Subtle Doctor forms is constantly...

doctores in ista materia loquitur transsumptivae potius quam proprie; Q. 30 dist. 3, 30°: ‘ista propositio “hoc accidens est inseparable” in communi locutione stat loco istius “hoc accidens ab aliquo subiecto est inseparable”, et ideo, si cui placeat, potest distinguiri secundum amphiboliam; Q. 40 concl. 6, 38°: ‘distinguendo predictam propositionem secundum ampliationem sensus proprius est falsus, sicut predictum est; sensus vero transsumptivus in quo dicit eam auctor, est verus’ More about Manlevelt's distinguishing of propositions below, subsection 3.5.1.

45 Andrews 1997 and Andrews 2000, respectively. See above, section 3.3.
46 Andrews 2000, 190.
47 Q. 21 concl. 2, 20°; “ens” predicatur de pluribus univocè.
present on the background of Manlevelt’s discussions, if only under the realists’ guise of the ‘antiqui’ so regularly rejected; a certain argument in our text, brought forward by way of an ‘opinion’ about three propositions containing the same subject, two of which are dubious and one of which is known with certainty, might very well be a verbatim citation from John Duns Scotus;\(^49\) cavilling Ockham – whether or not our author is guilty of such a thing – seems to me the least of all possible hallmarks of the Franciscan mind.

On the basis of the criteria applied, one cannot but assume that if the author of the *Defensorium Ockham* was a Franciscan, our author of the *Questiones libri Porphirii* was a Franciscan as well. And if we may add the overwhelming attention paid to the individual in its individuality as an extra criterion, the case for our author being a Franciscan becomes even stronger. After all, from Roger Bacon onward, the individual was the key subject of Franciscan thought.\(^50\)

One of the few philosophers cited by name in the *Questiones libri Porphirii* is Robert Grosseteste,\(^51\) virtually the founding father of the Franciscan school in England.\(^52\)

There is no lack of circumstantial evidence of our author’s Franciscan hue, either. For example, one of the oldest transcripts of a text by Thomas Manlevelt is to be found in a manuscript from Göttingen, \(1364\), transcribed by one Nicolaus in Erfurt.\(^53\) This Nicolaus himself was probably

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49 q. 21 opinio 2, 19\(^{th}\); ‘Aliqui arguunt sic: quandocumque alique tres propositiones sic se habent quod in dubio sunt due, et tertia certa sive (sic) cita, et quod habent idem subiectum, tunc aluid est predicatum propositionis scite a predicato propositionis dubie; sed sic se habent iste tres propositiones: “ista quantitas est substantia”, “ista quantitas est accidentis”, “ista quantitas est ens”; nam prima et secunda aliciu sunt dubie, et tertia est eidem scita; igitur alius est predicatum in mente propositionis scite a predicato alciuus aliarum propositionum. Et per consequens unus est conceptus entis distinctus a conceptu substantie et conceptu accidentis. ’ On this type of argument, which is to be found in exactly the same manner somewhere in the *Quaestiones super Praedicamenta* by John Duns Scotus, see Honnefelder, 295.

50 Bérbü 1964, 14: ‘l’École franciscaine se fera le champion de l’intellection de l’individuel.’

51 q. 44, ad argumentum in oppositum: ‘secundum Lincolniensem, primo *Posteriorum capítulo de per se*, homo est risibilis ratione suorum principiorum essentialium, ita quod talibus principiis simul unitis sic videoliet quod homo existat, Deus non posset facere quin homo esset risibilis.’

52 See Bérbü 1964, 14 on ‘son influence prépondérante dans la formation de l’École franciscaine d’Angletre.’

53 On this manuscript, see Pinborg 1967, 146, n. 23. Also, 2.2.3 above.
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a Franciscan,\textsuperscript{54} in any case the manuscript contains several texts of Franciscan origin, and the manuscript belonged to the Franciscan monastery in Göttingen.

\textbf{3.6. The theologian background}

If the author of the \textit{Questiones libri Porphirii}, Thomas Manlevelt, was a Franciscan, the further question that comes to mind is: was he a theologian as well?\textsuperscript{55}

Once again I turn to the author of the \textit{Defensorium Ockham}, who explicitly refused to address theological problems,\textsuperscript{56} and about whom the same question was asked. To Ebbesen it was unclear whether he was a theologian.\textsuperscript{57} This author did explicitly state that in logical matters he did not want to be a theologian. But after all, this statement lends itself to opposing interpretations. Either he was a theologian who wanted to theologize in his theological works only and not in a treatise devoted to logical matters, or he wanted to say that he was not a theologian and that as a logician he was of the opinion that theological matters were not to be touched upon in a logical context. Anyway, to Ebbesen it was less than obvious how the treatise could fit into the arts course of a university; there were too many references to theological matters for an arts faculty work.

For an arts faculty work on logic, there is an abundance of references to God and theological matters in Manlevelt’s text as well. Not only is

\textsuperscript{54} Pinborg, op. cit., 145, n. 22.
\textsuperscript{55} A curious remark in the second question of our author’s commentary on the \textit{Categories} is a token of his keen awareness of the difference between laymen and clergy, although laymen and clergy are alike in their knowledge of things in the world without necessarily having knowledge of the concepts by which they know these things: ‘(...) conceptus se ipso concipitur confuse tantum et remisse. Propter quam confusionem et remissionem laici non possunt se intelligere tales conceptus, nec etiam clerici, nisi ex consequenti et argumentative, facta diligentius inquisitione qualiter intellectus se habet in concipiendi rem extra.’ (\textit{Questiones in Predicamenta} q. 2, reply to the third argument of the last string of ‘ad oppositum’ arguments; 46\textsuperscript{r}). What Manlevelt seems to mean is that not only laymen, but also the generally well-educated clergy tend to go by imperfect knowledge. One is vaguely reminded of Buridan fighting the ‘theologizantes’. On this, see De Rijk 1997. It would be a matter of further study to determine if Manlevelt would have joined Buridan in his fight.
\textsuperscript{56} ‘quia in logica nolo esse theologicus’; see Andrews 2000, 191.
\textsuperscript{57} Ebbesen 2000, 276.
God the subject matter of the 35th questio, where God’s place within the Porphyrian Tree is discussed, but He is brought into the discussion in many other questiones as well. Right in the first questio the nature of God’s knowledge is compared to human knowledge; the truth of faith is set off against the truth of reason. Logical rules are explicitly stated to not always hold in theological matters. Theologians do get their say in our text. What the theologians have to say does not necessarily tally with what the logician or the natural philosopher has to say. But when it comes to crossing the boundaries between logic and theology, our author adheres to the same ambiguous stance as the author of the Defensorium Ockham. In questio he touches upon the subject matter of the unity of the Son of God and His assumed nature, and says explicitly that such matters are to be decided elsewhere.

So we do not come to a decisive answer to the question whether Thomas Manlevelt may have been a theologian. We are left just as empty-handed as Ebbesen was concerning the anonymous defender of Ockham. In conclusion I have to admit then that Manlevelt’s taking holy orders can neither be confirmed, nor denied. However, the range of Manlevelt’s ideas as well as the sort of problems he is prone to tackle, very neatly fit in the outline of the Franciscan worldview. After all, this freely bringing up God and matters divine in a logical context, while at the same time drawing of an intransgressable line between natural knowledge and logic on the one hand and theological knowledge on the other hand – which, incidentally, we also see in the commentary on the Categories that forms

58 Q. 35: ‘Utrum hec differentia “immortale” sit constitutiva Dei.
On the closely related problem for medieval philosophy concerning the inclusion of God within the framework of the Aristotelian categories, see Tabarroni 2003. For an overview of diagrammatic representations of the Tree of Porphyry in texts of the Arts Faculty, 1200–1500, none of which containing a branch for God, see Verboon 2010, 57–78.
59 Q. 1 DIST. 1, 11a–119.
60 E.g. Q. 42 CONCL. 5, 40b–49a.
61 Q. 29 CONCL. 2, 29b; ‘omne quod ab alio differt, potest conclaudi ab eodem differre per aliquod medium, quod est accidentes separabile. Et hoc precise verum est in materia naturali; quod dico propter personas in divinis in quibus forte ista conclusio non haberet locum.’
62 E.g. Q. 14 CONCL. 2, 13a for the theologian’s view on the nature of angels; Q. 24: on the divisibility of the continuum; Q. 25 and 27: on human nature.
63 In Q. 42 CONCL. 5, 40b it is conceded that ‘primum mobile non move tur’ is possible according to the theologians.
64 Q. 43 DIST. 1, 41th: ‘isti duo modi unitatis proprieisms dicuntur unitates per se, quia sunt maxime unitates qua fiunt ex distinctis rebus excepta sola unitate filii Dei et nature assumpte, de qua nihil ad presens quia alterius existit speculationis.’
the sequel to our text – is a defining feature of Franciscan, if not more specifically, Ockhamist thought.

I am going to conclude this chapter of my investigation in a moderately confident tone. I have not proven anything about the life and career of Thomas Manlevelt. While I do feel confident that my findings fit in quite well with the biographical framework laid out by Lorenz, and that these findings thus give further acceptability to Lorenz’s tentative biography of Manlevelt on the one hand, and sufficient plausibility to the *Questiones libri Porphyrii* forming part of Manlevelt’s – somewhat extended – bibliography on the other hand.

For this reason I feel warranted to present this text as Thomas Manlevelt’s.