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Introduction: Special Issue on Baroque Scholasticism

Petr Dvořák and Jacob Schmutz

Over the last two decades, few areas in the history of Western philosophy have enjoyed such a renewal of scholarly attention as has been the case for early-modern scholasticism. We have experienced a growing interest in authors hitherto barely known as footnotes to the traditional heroes of the early-modern period, such as Descartes, Leibniz or Spinoza. This has progressively led to two small revolutions in our common practice of the history of philosophy: first, the paradigm of a “long scholastic” age, stretching from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, is now imposing itself as an alternative to the classical narrative of the early-modern scientific and philosophical “revolution”; second, the canon of the history of philosophy is deeply transformed, with new names imposing themselves as forgotten giants of thought.

This tradition has been known under many names, among which the most common are “second scholasticism,” “post-medieval scholasticism,” “early-modern scholasticism,” “baroque scholasticism,” and “academic philosophy and theology.” It should in no case be identified with a specific order or confession, as it was itself divided into many often competing traditions, both in Catholic and Protestant lands. It was also one of the first truly global intellectual movements, European colonization imposing its language and method in colleges and universities from South America to Asia.

Although restricted to figures active in Catholic lands, we are delighted that the contributions in this volume all illustrate in their own way the new trends of research into this tradition. We wish to highlight two aspects in particular.

First, recent research has been increasingly attentive to the *continuity* of scholastic thought between the Middle Ages and the early-modern period. But the early-modern scholastics liked to recall the humanistic saying that the medieval references enshrined by their respective orders (such as in particular Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus) should not be seen as “rulers” (*dux*) but as a “light” (*lux*) for the understanding. Medieval thought thereby became

a huge reservoir of arguments that often led early-modern commentators to considerably modify the doctrine of their supposed medieval models.

Several articles in this issue admirably illustrate this creative reading of medieval authorities in the early-modern tradition. Igor Agostini's article ("The Knowledge of God's *Quid Sit* in Dominican Theology: From Saint Thomas to Ferrariensis") shows that Renaissance commentators such as Silvester of Ferrara and Cajetan were in no way "returning" to the "true" doctrine of Aquinas ruling out a quidditative knowledge of God, but actually adopted the critical insights of fourteenth-century Dominicans Hervaeus Natalis and Durandus of Saint-Pourçain. Equally, Tomáš Machula ("Theology as Wisdom: Renaissance and Modern Scholastic Commentaries on Aquinas") shows the long tradition of Dominican commentators on article 6 of question 1 of the *Prima pars*, regarding whether theology can be called wisdom, with testimonies from Cajetan, Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Zumel, Domingo Báñez, Francisco de Araujo, and João Poinset (or John of Saint-Thomas), down to late eighteenth century theologians such as Vincenzo Luigi Gotti. Sydney Penner ("Early-Modern Scotists and Eudaimonism") turns to the powerful Franciscan Scotist tradition and tries to understand why the appreciation of Scotistic ethics in the seventeenth century was very different from that developed by twentieth-century historiography: while we often tend to see Duns Scotus as a proto-Kantian critique of Aristotelian eudaimonism, early-modern commentators such as Francesco Lychetus, Francisco Macedo, Juan de Rada, Sébastien Dupasquier, and Claude Frassen did not see in Scotus an unbridgeable dilemma between following justice or following our own advantage. Petr Dvořák ("Vázquez's Anselmian Response to Wycliffian Deterministic Arguments") also illustrates this argumentative conception of medieval authorities in the vexed question of the reconciliation of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. He points out that the Alcalá Jesuit Gabriel Vázquez has made a creative use of the classical distinction between antecedent and subsequent necessity, thereby showing that the "pre-scholastic" thought of Anselm of Canterbury was also very creatively used in early-modern scholasticism.

A common traditional misrepresentation of the early-modern scholastic tradition was that it returned to the "old doctrines," as opposed to the more innovative approach of the Renaissance and later *novatores*. On the contrary, another series of contributions in this issue illustrates the intellectual creativity of the early-modern scholastics in framing old questions in new ways, and sometimes even asking new questions that had never been asked by medieval scholastics. This is particularly true in strictly philosophical topics. Lukáš Novák ("How Pure a Potency? Prime Matter in Post-Medieval Thomism") reconstructs the way early-modern Thomists have understood hylomorphism and in particular the concept of prime matter, providing a reading of a wide array of early-modern authors: Domingo de Soto, Diego Mas, Francisco de Araújo, Francesco Manca de

Prado, Pedro de Cabrera, the Complutenses, João Poinset, and Raffaele Aversa. He also shows how a long line of Dominican commentators from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were still very much part of the debate—Hervaeus Natalis again, John Versor, Petrus Niger—and how the debate with the Scotist tradition was essential in the construction of their own doctrine. Jean-Pascal Anfray (“A Jesuit Debate on Modes of Union: Francisco Suárez vs. Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza”) addresses another aspect of hylomorphism: namely, the ontological status of the entity in charge of uniting matter and form, called a “mode of union” to avoid calling it a third thing. Again, the medieval authorities are far from being restricted to Aquinas, but include John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Gregory of Rimini. Rudolf Schuessler (“Scholastic Social Epistemology in the Baroque Era”) provides an innovative reading of the famous post-Tridentine debate between probabilism and anti-probabilism: here again, he stresses in particular the innovative character of early-modern scholastics, by claiming that they were the first to fully take into account the way a person’s beliefs rely on the beliefs of others. Our moral universe is largely a socially constructed universe, in which we can act only if we rely on the beliefs of others: it is therefore essential to construct a framework to understand which beliefs or opinions are worthy of authority or acceptance, which is what early-modern probabilism was about.

Finally, the *novatores*—those scholastics who largely fall outside of constituted school traditions—are not absent in this volume: Tomáš Nejeschleba (“Metaphysica Valeriani Magni: The Doctrine on God and the World for Those Who Love God”) provides a new reading of the work of the Italian-born but Prague-based Capuchin Valeriano Magni (†1661), who constructed a non-Aristotelian metaphysics more compatible with his vision of Christianity. Here again, the creative use of patristic and medieval authorities, in particular Bonaventure, was central.

The original name of this journal, called *The New Scholasticism* from its inception in 1927 until 1999, was itself a tribute to the study of early-modern scholasticism: the German Jesuit Joseph Kleutgen (1811–1883), one of the pioneers in the recovery of this tradition, had popularized the expression *neue Scholastik* to designate the generations of Suárez and Juan de Lugo, thereby also underlining their specific role in the emergence of neo-scholasticism (*Neuscholastik*) in the nineteenth century. We are therefore extremely grateful to David Clemenson, the Editor of the *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, for keeping alive this precious tradition of learning, and for giving us the honor of organizing and editing this thematic issue. To him and to Heidi M. Giebel, Managing Editor, we give our warmest thanks for their kindness, their support, and their professionalism in the publication of this volume.