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MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 17th CENTURY

NOTES ON A RECENT BOOK BY SVEN K. KNEBEL

Claus A. Andersen

Summarius: A.D. 2021 liber novus Svenii K. Knebeli de scientia media e prelo prodiit, quod opus scientificum maximi est momenti, scholarium diligentissima dignum attentione. Praeter longam, variis ex tractationibus constantem introductionem liber editionem continet quarti libri operis imperfecti de theologia scholastica auctore Luca Waddingo, Hiberno e Societate Iesu theologo. In hisce adnotatis primo doctrinae de scientia media origines eiusque significatio historica breviter exponuntur. Deinde Knebeli liber et Lucae Waddingi vitae curriculum introducuntur. Deinceps auctor de loco tractat quem Waddingi opus in Iesuitarum de 'concordia' discursu teneat, necnon de eius ad Molinismum habitudine. In sequentibus porro capitulis auctor nonnullas quas Waddingus defendit doctrinas explorat. Quae continent Waddingi de disiunctiva necessitate sententiam, doctrinae quae 'conexionismus' dicitur modificationem propriam, diversorum distinctionum in theologia applicationem. Loco conclusionis auctor criticam libri Knebeli proponit existimationem, ubi praeter omnimodam quam confert laudem ab opinione Knebeli dissentit de mala studiorum hodiernorum condicione: mox quaesituri sumus, non cur antea scholastica moderna minime investigari solita sit, sed cur a recentioribus tantopere investigetur.

Abstract: The year 2021 saw the publication of Sven K. Knebel's new book on Middle Knowledge. It is an exceedingly important research publication which deserves scholarly attention. The book contains a long introduction (consisting of various studies) and an edition of the fourth book of the Irish Jesuit theologian Luke Wadding's incomplete work on scholastic theology. This present review article first recapitulates the origins and historical significance of the doctrine of Middle Knowledge. Then Knebel's book as well as the career of Luke Wadding are introduced. I then discuss the place of Wadding's work in the Jesuit discourse of 'concordia' and its relation to Molinism. In the subsequent sections, I investigate various doctrines defended by Wadding. These include his view of disjunctive necessity, his variant of the doctrine known as 'connectionism', and his use of various kinds of distinctions in theology. The study concludes with a critical assessment of Knebel's publication. Despite all praise, I disagree with Knebel's all too pessimistic view of the research landscape: We will soon be pondering over why Early Modern scholasticism has received so much attention in recent scholarship, rather than why it did not do so in the past.

Keywords: Middle Knowledge; Sven K. Knebel; Molinism; Luke Wadding, SJ

SVEN K. KNEBEL

Scientia Media. Der Molinismus und das Faktenwissen

Mit einer Edition des Ms. BU Salamanca 156 von 1653

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Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2021

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1. FROM MIDDLE KNOWLEDGE TO POSSIBLE WORLDS

The doctrine of Middle Knowledge originated in Jesuit teaching in Coimbra and Évora in the early/mid-1560s. Famously, both Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599) and Luis de Molina (1536–1600) claimed authorship of the doctrine. Molina, however, was first to present the doctrine in a printed work  his *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia*, or in short *Concordia* (Lisbon, 1588), he introduced a third kind of divine knowledge in addition to God's natural and free knowledge. With His *natural* knowledge, God knows the essences of things and their relationships to one another, though only in the indifferent state of possibility, i.e., before any decree has been made as to which possibilities will be transferred into actual existence. God's *free* knowledge, on the contrary, is based on God's free and absolute decrees regarding the future realization of possible things. This broadly accepted distinction between two aspects of divine knowledge leaves room, in the middle, for a special kind of higher comprehension in God's own essence of any free will and what it, under any set of circumstances, i.e., in any of the infinitely many possible orders of things, will choose to do, given that it could as well freely choose to do the opposite.¹ Molina explains that this latter kind of knowledge does

¹ Luis de Molina, *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia*, pars 4, disp. 52, n. 9, ed. Iohannes Rabeneck (Oña: Collegium Maximum S.I.–Madrid: Soc. Edit. Sapientia, 1953), 340: “*Tertiam denique mediam scientiam, qua ex altissima et inscrutabili comprehensione cuiusque liberi arbitrii in sua essentia intuitus est, quid pro sua innata libertate, si in hoc, vel illo, vel etiam infinitis rerum ordinibus collocaretur, acturum esset, cum tamen posset, si vellet, facere re ipsa oppositum*”. In this passage,

have something in common both with natural and free knowledge: with natural knowledge, because it is prior to any act of God's will; and with free knowledge, because any order of things under which the created will would make its free choice does depend upon God's free decisions.² Fonseca, in the posthumously published third part of his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* (completed in the mid-1590s), where he claims ownership of the doctrine, speaks of Middle Knowledge as 'mixed' (*mista*) and 'conditional' (*conditionata*).³ Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), treating the matter in his *De scientia Dei futurorum contingentium*, likewise emphasizes that Middle Knowledge has something in common with both other modes of divine knowledge. Since this is so, says Suárez, 'Middle Knowledge' is just a new name for something already well known that previously, in the long theological tradition, was discussed under other headings. With this remark, Suárez is not downplaying the significance of the doctrine of Middle Knowledge, for he adds that "new names are often invented in order to better explain things".⁴ Suárez's trick is to invoke tradition while at the same time fomenting innovation.

From the very onset, the doctrine of Middle Knowledge met strong opposition from Thomist authors, first and foremost from the Dominican Domingo Báñez (1528–1604). The polemics between the Jesuits and the Thomists over foreknowledge and predetermination soon resulted in the heated controversy *De Auxiliis*.⁵ Less well known is the fact that

the text of Rabeneck's critical edition is identical with the first edition of 1588. Cf. similarly Molina, *Commentaria in primam Divi Thomae partem*, q. 14, art. 13, disp. 14 (Cuenca: Ex Officina Christiani Barnabae Typographi, 1592), col. 577–578.

²Luis de Molina, *Concordia*, *ibid.*, n. 10 (ed. Rabeneck, 340).

³Pedro da Fonseca, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae libros tomus tertius*, lib. 6, cap. 2, q. 4, sect. 8 (Cologne: Lazarus Zetzner, 1604), 119a–121a.

⁴Francisco Suárez, *De scientia Dei futurorum contingentium*, lib. 2, cap. 3, n. 4 (ed. Vivès XI: 353a): "[S]aepe [...] inveniuntur nova nomina ad res melius explicandas."

⁵For a brief survey, see Thomas Marschler, "Providence, Predestination, and Grace in Early Modern Catholic Theology", in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology*, ed. U. L. Lehner et al. (Oxford University Press, 2016), 89–103, with references to further literature.

Franciscan authors, with some delay and less public attention, developed a competing doctrine of conditional knowledge based upon the teachings of John Duns Scotus.⁶ Recent scholarship has rediscovered how deeply the Protestant and Reformed milieus were affected as well.⁷ In the mid-1790s, more than two hundred years after the publication of Molina's *Concordia*, and at the other end of Europe, Professor Kant taught the following to his students at the University of Königsberg (the passage is from a transcript of one of his lectures on metaphysics; note that Kant taught traditional school metaphysics, rather than his own critical philosophy):

Middle Knowledge (*scientia media*) is the omniscience of God in regard to things that would be possible in another world. God can indeed imagine many other orders of things than the one He chose among all possible worlds, and in this one He knows every circumstance that would cause a new order; everything, both as possible in itself and in the world. Omniscience may [also] be called 'free,' because when God knows the present state of affairs, He knows it as a product of his own will, and since He is a free author thereof, so His knowledge, too, is free.⁸

⁶For the Franciscan doctrine, see Claus A. Andersen, "Decretum Concomitans: Bartolomeo Mastri on Divine Cognition and Human Free Will", in *Cognitive Issues in the Long Scotist Tradition*, ed. D. Heider and C.A. Andersen (Basel: Schwabe, 2023), 333–363, with references to further literature.

⁷See the volume, with numerous case studies, *Beyond Dordt and De Auxiliis. The Dynamics of Protestant and Catholic Soteriology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, edited by Jordan J. Ballor, Matthew Gaetano, and David Sytsma (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019).

⁸Immanuel Kant, "Metaphysik K₂", in *Kant's Vorlesungen*, vol. V (*Vorlesungen über Metaphysik und Rationaltheologie*), *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie-Ausgabe 28.2.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970), 804: "Die *scientia media* ist die Allwissenheit Gottes in Ansehung der Dinge, die in einer andern Welt möglich sein würden. Gott kann sich viele andre Ordnungen der Dinge sehr gut vorstellen, und unter allen möglichen Welten gewählt haben, und weiss in dieser jeden Umstand der eine neue Ordnung verursachte. Alles, was sowohl an sich als in der Welt möglich ist. – *Libera* heisst die Allwissenheit darum, dass, sofern Gott das Gegenwärtige erkennt, er es nur als Product seines Willens erkennt, da er also ein freier Urheber desselbigen ist, so ist auch seine Erkenntniss frei." Italics mine.

In Kant's understanding, divine Middle Knowledge is concerned with possible worlds, whereas free divine omniscience is focused on the actual world, the one that God freely chose to create, i.e., in a Leibnizian framework, the best of all possible worlds. Kant indeed goes on to explain to his students that "the will of God is a free will, God wants the Best and cannot do the opposite. God is free".⁹ God is free, and yet bound by goodness. God is indeed, as Kant says (using Latin terminology), a "*sum-mum bonum originarium*", and His creation correspondingly is a "*sum-mum bonum derivativum*".¹⁰ As for the conception of Middle Knowledge, a remarkable shift, and simplification, has taken place. Molina's motif of the infinitely many orders of things, which in his doctrine represent the conditions under which a created will exerts its freedom, has become the center of attention, rather than God's knowledge of individual created wills. In the passage from Kant's lecture, one finds no awareness that the doctrine of Middle Knowledge was invented in order to explain the relationship between human free will and divine foreknowledge. For the doctrine of Middle Knowledge, this seems to be the end of the journey.¹¹

To remain in the metaphor of travelling, one may wonder how far the doctrine of Middle Knowledge came among the Jesuits themselves. Sven K. Knebel's latest volume, *Scientia Media. Der Molinismus und das Faktenwissen. Mit einer Edition des Ms. BU Salamanca 156 von 1653* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2021), documents one stretch of the route. The book is, in all respects, an unusual publication, one that deserves serious scholarly attention. Let me therefore share some observations and working notes on the book.

⁹Kant, "Metaphysik K₂", 806: "Der Wille Gottes ist ein freier Wille, Gott will das Beste und kann nicht das Gegentheil thun. Gott ist frei."

¹⁰Kant, "Metaphysik K₂", 805.

¹¹The present-day interest in Molinism is not a continuation of the historical development; it is either purely historical research or has arisen out of modern systematical concerns.

2. LUKE WADDING: AN IRISH JESUIT THEOLOGIAN

Knebel's book consists of a series of introductory texts and an edition of the Latin text of one book, the fourth, of the Irish Jesuit Luke Wadding's unpublished work on theology, simply called *Concordia Divinorum et Humanarum* in the manuscript. Since it happens so rarely that manuscript material from Early Modern scholasticism sees the light of day, the publication of Wadding's text is notable in itself. The introductory part consists of a general introduction ("Einführung") properly speaking (IX–XX), as well as four separate studies. The first of these texts (1–26) is a long critical review essay of Sylvio Hermann de Franceschi's recent volume on the Early Modern Thomist theological tradition.¹² The second text (27–129), called "Die Systematisierung der Scientia Media im XVII. Jahrhundert", is a small dissertation in its own right and appears to be a thoroughly reworked and helpfully updated version of Knebel's own classical article "*Scientia Media* – Ein diskursarchäologischer Leitfaden durch das 17. Jahrhundert" from 1991.¹³ The third text (131–177), "Luke Wadding SJ. (1593–1651/52) und sein Traktat über Gottes Wissen vom kontingent Zukünftigen", is an original contribution to the volume; it introduces the central issues of Wadding's theology in the fourth book of his *Concordia*. The fourth text (179–184) was not written by Knebel; it reproduces, with a few corrections in Knebel's footnotes, Edmund Hogan's portrait article "Luke Wadding, SJ", originally published as one part of this author's series of articles from 1897–1898 portraying learned men from the Irish towns of Waterford and Tipperary. Whereas Hogan supplies the basic facts of Wadding's biography, Knebel provides profound insight into the milieu that constitutes the background of his thought. The volume concludes with an index of sources referenced by Wadding in the edited text

¹²Sylvio Hermann de Franceschi, *Thomisme et théologie moderne. L'école de saint Thomas à l'épreuve de la querelle de la grâce (xvii^e–xviii^e siècles)* (Paris: Lethielleux, 2018). Knebel's review essay was first published in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 65 (2018), 213–235.

¹³Sven K. Knebel, "*Scientia media*. Ein diskursarchäologischer Leitfaden durch das 17. Jahrhundert", *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 34 (1991): 262–294.

and a simple name index (431–440). (In the following, all use of italics in Latin quotes and their translations follows the edited text.)

Luke Wadding needs an introduction. He must not be mistaken for his much more famous elder cousin by the same name, the Observant Franciscan Luke Wadding, the well-known historian of the Franciscan Order and general editor of John Duns Scotus's *Opera omnia* of 1639. Our Wadding spent his entire career in colleges of his Order in Spain. He studied philosophy at Salamanca and theology at Valladolid (under Juan de Lugo SJ). He taught philosophy at Santiago de Compostella and theology at Valladolid, before he became a professor of theology, first at Valladolid and then at Salamanca. He was then installed as rector of the Order's College at Burgos and probably later held the same office at the Imperial College at Madrid, where he died in either 1651 or 1652 (137–140, 180–181). At Valladolid, he studied together with, and remained in contact with, such prominent Jesuit thinkers as Rodrigo de Arriaga, Juan Martinez de Ripalda, and Bernardo Aldrete (168). One of his own students was Gabriel de Henao SJ, who later became the first historiographer of the doctrine of Middle Knowledge (139, 170). The text edited in Knebel's volume testifies to the influence, in this milieu, of Diego Ruiz de Montoya SJ (134); for historical learning, Wadding time and again references this erudite theologian, even despite occasional disagreement over doctrinal issues.¹⁴ Suárez too plays a role. According to Knebel, however, the influence of Suárez among later Jesuits lies primarily in the tendency toward well-structured speculative synthesis, rather than in the adherence to any one particular doctrine of his (145–146). In the edited text, Fonseca is only referenced once, among a series of many other Jesuit authors (219). For Molina's influence, see below. The overall agreement with Thomas Aquinas, the "*scholarum princeps*" (363), is important

¹⁴ Cf. in particular chapters 25–27, 355–374, where Wadding draws on Ruiz's scholastic doxography of positions on the concord of divine foreknowledge and human freedom; and chapter 29, 379–380, where Wadding rejects Ruiz's view of the improbability of the divine will's eternal precedence over divine knowledge.

for Wadding, but he explicitly warns against forcing Aquinas's opinions upon people—persuasion through his words and positions works better (210; cf. Knebel's commentary 133). Wadding is always critical toward the preceding (post-Bañez) Thomist tradition; he even devotes his entire chapter 17 to a refutation of the view of future contingents of João Poinset (John of Saint Thomas). John Duns Scotus is frequently referenced, albeit without much interest. Three contemporaneous Scotists, Angelo Volpe, Filippo Fabri, and Hugo Cavellus, are referenced just once and without mention of their works (214); it seems that Wadding has simply taken over the reference from someone else, and as such it is just one example among many others of what Knebel calls his "secondhand" learning (134).

During his tenure at Salamanca in the 1640s, Wadding started composing his work on theology. Of ten planned books, only four were penned. Most likely, Wadding's plan did not materialize because preparing a huge manuscript by his fellow countryman Paul Sherlog SJ for printing kept him occupied. After Wadding's death, the four books that he did complete were readied for publication by Richard Lynch SJ, a distinguished intellectual figure in his own right. The work got as far as receiving the *imprimatur* in 1653, but it never reached the printing press. Knebel's edition is based on the single manuscript prepared for publication (BU Salamanca ms. 156). The text comprises 34 chapters and an appendix summarizing the argument of the first four books of Wadding's work; the edition additionally contains Lynch's preface to the work. A second manuscript exists (BU Salamanca ms. 155), the one that was submitted for *imprimatur*, but it has not been considered in the edition (176). Knebel surmises that the printing may have been called off at the last minute due to the rather poor literary quality of Wadding's text (174: "Waddings Stil, möchte man fast sagen, bestätigt die übelsten Vorurteile gegen das scholastische Latein") but admits there is presently no definite solution to this mystery (169–175). Let me here briefly, if only as a cheeky excuse for what follows, state that I absolutely agree with Knebel's critical view of Wadding's style; he indeed produced a difficult text. More on that below, but first let us have a look at some of Wadding's central doctrines.

3. MOLINISM AND THE DISCOURSE OF CONCORD

Wadding's work on theology is structured along the lines of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. As Knebel uncontroversially points out, this was standard in Jesuit scholasticism, and in this regard Wadding is just one among numerous others (133). He planned to focus exclusively on Middle Knowledge in his fifth book, not in the fourth one that has been edited in Knebel's volume. The fourth book, however, does touch on Middle Knowledge, as reflected in its original title:

On the knowledge of future contingents, according to a ratio common to both absolute and conditional [knowledge], and its concord with created freedom, in which it is also treated of knowledge of absolute [contingents].¹⁵

In the margin of the manuscript, the title has been corrected to:

On the quiddity of assumed consequence [*suppositionis consequentis*], on the nature of knowledge of future contingents, especially the absolute ones, and the concord with human freedom.¹⁶

"Conditional knowledge" (knowledge of what would happen under certain conditions), as opposed to "absolute knowledge" (knowledge of what will in fact happen), in the original title stands for Middle Knowledge. Wadding uses the two terms interchangeably (cf. 416). The second title signals that the *ex professo* treatment of this kind of divine knowledge only follows later, but at the same time it obscures the fact that general considerations pertaining to both absolute and conditional knowledge are in fact contained in the fourth book.

¹⁵"*De scientia futurorum contingentium secundum rationem communem ad absolutam et conditionatam, eiusque concordia cum creata libertate, ubi etiam in particulari agitur de scientia absolutorum.*" (191)

¹⁶"*De suppositionis consequentis quidditate, de scientiae futurorum contingentium, praesertim absolutorum, natura, et concordia cum humana libertate*" (191, apparatus).

The central key word in both versions of the title of the fourth book, and in the general title of the whole work (cf. above), is that of ‘*concordia*.’ Wadding’s work of course stands in the tradition of Molina’s *Concordia*. In his otherwise not particularly interesting preface, Richard Lynch draws on this concept, advertising Wadding’s “new, singular, and highly apt method of turning discord into concord” (“*nova quidem, et singulari, sed tamen apositissima methodo, nempe in concordia redigendo discordias*”; 187). Though this may be merely a rhetoric of advertisement, it does pay tribute to the centrality of the concept of concord in Jesuit theological discourse. The real concord that this discourse is about is of course that between divine foreknowledge—as well as grace, providence, predestination, and reprobation, to speak with Molina¹⁷—and human free will, or indeed any freedom on the part of the “created object” (cf. Wadding’s *prooemium*, 191, and similarly 410).

Molina thought he had solved this perennial problem with his doctrine of Middle Knowledge. Knebel, however, emphatically points to the continued discussion long after Molina’s death in 1600. The discourse on Middle Knowledge is, in his words, “the great dialectical construction site of the Early Modern period” (127: “die große dialektische Baustelle der Frühen Neuzeit”). Knebel indeed describes the development of this discourse as an intellectual collective effort, something that scholarship, with its over-emphasis on singular geniuses has completely overlooked (125–126). Correspondingly, he sees the worth of Wadding’s textual torso not so much in this particular author’s own insights, but rather in Wadding’s contribution to the overall development of the period’s central discourse. That is the rationale behind publishing Wadding’s fourth book, which only treats Middle Knowledge on a general level, as a piece of documentation of just that development. As for the subtitle of the volume, *Der Molinismus und das Faktenwissen*, Knebel does *not* claim that Wadding is a Molinist in the sense that he would adhere dogmatically to Molina’s version of the doctrine of Middle Knowledge—which

¹⁷ Cf. the full title of his *Concordia*, quoted above.

Wadding in fact does not even appear to be particularly enthusiastic about. Although Wadding's final position on Middle Knowledge remains unclear in his fourth book, he does contribute to that broader discourse that arose around the concept of Middle Knowledge. This is how I understand Knebel, when he at one and the same time speaks of Molinism in his book title *and* says that Wadding's text shows that there is more to Jesuit scholasticism than just Molinism (and Suarezianism) (145).

Already the first chapter of Wadding's text offers an example of his ambivalent approach to Molina. The chapter discusses whether God foreknows contingent future events in (or, through cognition of) their causes. Bañez and the new Thomists hold that he does. Molina and the Molinists opt against this view. Wadding describes Molina's view in terms of supercomprehension, a term not yet found in Molina but aptly employed by his followers to capture his conception of Middle Knowledge.¹⁸ The Molinist view, then, is that God supercomprehends the causes of future contingents; this supercomprehension, which itself is of infinite perfection and is founded in, or indeed is, the divine essence's representation of everything, works as the motivating *ratio* (*ratio motiva*) of God's cognition of all things that will come to be (that is God's absolute knowledge) as well as of all things that would come to be under certain conditions (conditional knowledge). Wadding agrees, but he is not fully satisfied. He is after something else.¹⁹ The question under dispute

¹⁸ Wadding simply refers to certain unnamed doctores (194). Wadding later (413) explains the difference between regular comprehension and supercomprehension: "[O]portet, ut Deus, antequam decernat per tale medium fieri actum, praesciat – non per scientiam necessariam, quae comprehendit medii naturam, sed per contingentem, qua supercomprehendit pertingens usque ad eventus contingentem ab illa orituros –, praesciat, inquam, quod, si tale medium ponatur, obtinebit finem liberi actus." In his footnotes, Knebel incidentally documents the use of the term 'supercomprehensio' in various Jesuit authors: Francisco Albertini (42), Antonio de Peralta (45), Rodrigo de Arriaga (71). For Molina's own terminology of a 'most high and inscrutable comprehension', see note 1 above.

¹⁹ "[N]ec favent huic sententiae Doctores asserentes, contingentia cognosci in supercomprehensa causa, ut loquitur Molina Prima parte q. 14 disp. 14, quia solum intendunt, supercomprehensionem causae, quae est infinita perfectio, qua divina essentia omnia repraesentat, esse rationem motivam cognoscendi omnia quae erunt, et quae essent, si poneretur aliqua conditio. Quod verum esse,

does not concern the motivating, but rather the determining *ratio* (*ratio determinativa*), as Wadding had already stated when explaining the sense of the question (192–193). In Knebel’s words, Molina’s conception is being “marginalized” by Wadding (145, 158). It is not directly rejected, but neither is it taken for the whole truth about God’s foreknowledge, not even the conditional part of it. Wadding’s own solution, his contribution to the quest for concord, rather centers on that notion of a determining object that, on his account, is missed in Molinism proper.

4. DETERMINATION, IMPEDIBILITY, AND DISJUNCTIVE NECESSITY

Wadding’s turn to the determining object is remarkable. As Knebel notes, this move reintroduces a predeterministic element into the debate over foreknowledge, something the Jesuits since the clash between Molina and Bañez had sought to avoid. The really remarkable point is that, on Wadding’s model, it is not the actions of free creatures that are being predetermined by divine foreknowledge, but rather God’s knowledge that is being predetermined by its object (149). Wadding clearly is not content with describing how God knows everything, including contingent future facts (cf. the second element in Knebel’s subtitle: *Faktenwissen*), through His own essence. He rather attempts to show how the content of God’s foreknowledge in fact comes about. For that purpose, any knowledge of contingent future facts in their causes is insufficient; they must somehow be grasped in themselves. In his sixth chapter, Wadding explains

probabimus capitibus sequentibus, non tamen, quod sit ratio determinativa ad unum cognitionis futuri contingentis” (194). I warmly thank Lukáš Novák for his observations on this passage; as Novák pointed out to me, Wadding may likely be drawing on the following lines in Molina, *Commentaria in primam Divi Thomae partem*, q. 14, art. 13, disp. 14, col. 579: “*Deus [...] ex altitudine suae scientiae naturalis, qua infinite superat singula, quae in se ipso eminenter continet, penetrat quid liberum arbitrium cuiusque creaturae, data hypotesi quod velit illud creare in hoc vel in illo ordine rerum cum his vel illis circumstantiis aut auxiliis, pro sua innata libertate sit facturum; [...]*”

that “a determining object of a cognition is one that not only determinately impels this cognition, but rather also does not presuppose any other determinate objective force upon it” (225: “*Determinativum’ autem obiectum cognitionis est non solum, quod determinate exigit illam, sed quod non praesupponit aliam determinatam exigentiam obiectivam illius*”). This, of course, excludes determinate cognition of contingent facts in their causes. Does the object then causally determine God’s knowledge? Not quite. Wadding rather says that owing to the determining force of the object, the divine essence determines *itself* to a cognition of future facts (225: “*divina essentia [...] se determinet causaliter ad futuri cognitionem*”).

The determining object is not itself determined; it is rather itself free from any predetermination. In the seventh chapter, Wadding explains what this means, namely that God is not essentially connected with any *malitia humana*; it is impossible that God should want, or decree, human beings to sin and thus not always leaves them with the possibility to freely act otherwise (228: “*nullum potest esse decretum Dei de futuro contingenti, quod non relinquat sufficientiam ad libere ponendum oppositum*”). God thus only knows sin because a created will, in spite of its freedom to choose otherwise, wants to sin (336: “*quia creata voluntas peccare vult*”; cf. similarly 339 and 409–410). In the tenth chapter, the consequence of the priority of the created object over divine foreknowledge is spelled out in clear words:

I reduce this priority to a most clear principle, namely, that divine foreknowledge does not depend on our free choice due to a dependence of *causality*, but one of *impedibility*, because it lies in our power of choice that God from eternity would have had foreknowledge of, e.g., our hatred, rather than love, for the exercise of hatred, rather than love, is constituted in our free choice.²⁰

²⁰ “*Ego prioritatem hanc ad clarissimum principium reduco, scilicet, divinam praescientiam a nostra libera electione pendere non dependentia causalitatis, sed impedibilitatis, quia in nostra potestate electiva est, quod Deus ab aeterno habuerit praescientiam nostri odii, v.g., potius quam amoris, cum in nostra electione libera constituatur odium potius quam amorem exercere*” (241).

Divine foreknowledge of contingent future facts depends on free human acts (similarly 254, 264, 326); and so it lies in the power of a human person whether God eternally knows that this person hates or loves. Crucial here is the kind of dependence in question. It is not causal, but rather one of *impedibility*. Knebel deems this concept to be a keyword of the whole work (153); he even goes so far as to call Wadding's project a "metaphysics of impedibility" (159). Determination through impedibility works like this: A free human act (it could be one of love) determines divine foreknowledge and by this impedes foreknowledge of the opposite extreme (an act of hate) (248). Later on, in the thirteenth chapter, we are told that this is obvious enough in regard to absolute foreknowledge, but the model can also be applied to conditional foreknowledge—in which case a created free will may impede divine foreknowledge, if it exists and acts under certain circumstances and is foreknown to be in these circumstances ("*quod arbitrium possit ipsam impedire, si existat cum talibus requisitis ad operandum, et quod sub eisdem requisitis obiectum a scientia affirmatum ponat in esse*"); for further explanation, Wadding refers to his unwritten fifth book (266). Wadding's metaphysics of impedibility thus can be translated into conditional language.²¹

If one wonders what the ontological status might be of that object which eternally determines God's foreknowledge, Wadding is quick to dismiss—as chimeric and obscure—the idea, endorsed by some Scotists, that it would have some eternal objective being (*esse obiectivum*) of its own (255–256).²² The object is rather constituted as an eternal presup-

²¹ In the same vein: in chapter 15, we learn that the objective truth of future facts consists in their ability to be cognized by a true cognition: "*obiectiva illorum veritas est cognoscibilitas per veram cognitionem*" (276). In chapter 19, this is quite exactly translated into conditional language: "*Futura ergo conditionata sunt conditionate cognoscibilia ob praesentiam aeternitatis, quam haberent, si poneretur conditio*" (310).

²² Note that Wadding does not, here, mention any Scotists (instead speaking of 'other people,' *alii*), and that one alternative view he also discusses, namely that *esse cognitum* is only an extrinsic denomination (denominated due to the object's relation to a cognizing intellect), was endorsed by some Scotists too; for the latter view, Knebel refers to Walter Chatton (256). For the discussion of this subject in early Scotism, see Richard Cross, "Esse

position of foreknowledge that itself is an “eternal quasi-dependence on the object” (*aeterna quasi dependentia ab obiecto*) (258, cf. similarly 269, 280). Wadding’s approach, here, strikes me as being a transcendental-like (Kantian) argumentation for an assumption of a mere presupposition. Wadding is explicit that the object of foreknowledge, due to its determining function, is said (or “denominated”) to precede its corresponding cognition, just like a *cognitum* is always said (“denominated”) to precede a cognition (255, 259). As Knebel points out, the late-medieval doctrine of extrinsic denomination is clearly operative in the background (150).

One further absolutely crucial aspect of Wadding’s dealing with divine foreknowledge needs to be addressed here, namely his distinction, drawn already in the first chapter, between determinate and disjunctive foreknowledge (192). One particularly rich passage of chapter 28 clarifies the connection between this motif and other central motifs of Wadding’s theology:

The *indifferent* decree, in which God must immediately concur with free future [choices] in us, is not only motivating, but also absolutely determining in regard to the free disjunctive knowledge, through which God knows what will come to be due to the force of this decree, unless it [i.e., free disjunctive knowledge] is impeded by its cause, and therefore that it is *necessary* that it will exist or that its existence will be impeded freely by a created cause. And this would not be necessary, if not God would decide so.

For if He would decide the opposite, since he could enact either that one extreme would determinately exist without a created freedom [working] against it or that none of the extremes of freedom [i.e., free choice] would exist, because God would not grant power to any of them, then it would neither lie in our power that something freely comes to be nor would it be known by God [to do so]. In the decree, therefore, in which God grants a creature free power to operate one

intentionale in Some Early Scotists: At the Origins of the So-called ‘Supertranscendental’”, and Francesco Fiorentino, “*Esse cognitum* and Divine Ideas in the First Two Centuries of Scotism”, both articles in D. Heider and C.A. Andersen (eds.), *Cognitive Issues in the Long Scotist Tradition*, 203–228 resp. 229–265.

of the two (and we have often said that its concept includes an essential disjunctive necessity to choose one or the other), God knows that one or the other extreme will come to be due to freedom, and consequently he knows about whatever [event] that it will be through the choice of a created cause, unless it is impeded by the same causes's choosing the opposite. And with this knowledge is absolutely and essentially connected an indifferent decree, through which God must concur in regard to free future [events].²³

The freedom enjoyed by free creatures is always limited to the choice between two alternative extremes. The outcome of “our” choice determines, by impediment of the other extreme, God’s foreknowledge. Before any choice is made, God’s foreknowledge is disjunctive and corresponds with His indifferent decree. It is this divine indifference that enables human freedom of choice. The indifferent decree does impose some necessity upon free creatures, namely an “essential disjunctive necessity,” by which creatures are predetermined to face the choice between two options (to do *either* x or $\neg x$). In chapter 30, we find an explicit statement that this kind of necessity “does not contradict freedom of [choosing between] extremes” (386: “*necessitas disiunctiva [...] extremorum libertati nequaquam repugnat*”). In the apparatus, Knebel quotes a lengthy passage from the first chapter of the second book of Wadding’s work, where the concept of disjunctive necessity is introduced. Wadding there explains

²³“*Decretum indifferens, quo Deus ad futura nobis libera concurrere immediate debet, est non solum motivum, sed etiam determinativum absolute ad scientiam liberam disiunctivam, qua Deus cognoscit, futurum vi talis decreti fore, nisi libere impediatur a sua causa, ac proinde necessarium esse, quod existat vel quod libere a causa creata impediatur eius existentia. Quod non esset necessarium, nisi Deus id statuisset. Si enim statuisset oppositum, ut posset decernendo, quod vel unum extremum determinate existeret sine creata libertate ad oppositum, vel quod neutrum extremum libertatis existat, eo quod ad neutrum Deus potestatem concedat, nil esset a potentia nostra libere futurum nec cognitum a Deo. In decreto ergo, quo concedit Deus creaturae liberam potestatem operandi unum e duobus – quam in suo conceptu, saepe diximus, includere essentialem necessitatem disiunctivam eligendi unum vel alterum –, cognoscit Deus, unum vel alterum libertatis extremum fore, et consequenter de quolibet cognoscit, quod erit per causae creatae electionem, nisi ab ipsa libere eligente oppositum impediatur. Et cum hac scientia absolute et essentialiter connectitur decretum indifferens, quo Deus ad futura libera concurrere debet*” (377).

that disjunctive determination makes it impossible that a pair of opposite extremes should fail to exist: either loving or hating must occur; however, the indifference of the divine decree prevents it from being predetermined by God which one of them will actually occur (387). In chapter 34, the last chapter, we finally learn that Wadding deems his conception of non-causal determination compatible with the notion of concord (4II: “*convenit tota ratio concordiae*”). He clearly thinks that his own model, which combines the notions of determining object, impedibility, and disjunctive necessity, is a key to the ever-problematic relationship between divine foreknowledge and human free will.

5. CONNECTIONISM AND DISTINCTIONS

Wadding’s focus on the determining object of divine foreknowledge does not exclude a commitment to the traditional scholastic view that God knows everything through his own essence. Though this is not suitable exactly as an explanation of foreknowledge, Wadding even supports an extreme version of this doctrine, one that may be said to constitute the very ontological foundation of his theology and, hence, deserves to be highlighted. In his introduction, Knebel references Jacob Schmutz’s work on a group of Jesuits headed by Antonio Pérez,²⁴ whose “connectionist” metaphysics centers on the essential *connection* between God and creatures (165–167).²⁵ The following statement from Wadding’s seventh chapter inclines in this direction:

And even if this decree would *not* exist, it would still be essential to the divine essence that, if there were such a decree, it would follow one or the other extreme of freedom [i.e., free choice], because the

²⁴ Antonio Pérez (1599–1649) was slightly younger and died slightly earlier than Wadding (1593–1651/52).

²⁵ Cf., e.g., Jacob Schmutz, “Bartolomeo Mastri et la mouche”, in *Rem in seipsa cernere: Saggi sul pensiero filosofico di Bartolomeo Mastri (1602–1673)*, ed. Marco Forlivesi (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2006), 469–520, regarding Pérez especially 486–490.

divine essence necessarily becomes connected with every eternal essential truth, and in fact itself *is* all essential truth.²⁶

Any decree issued by God, here in particular His indifferent decree, necessarily “becomes connected” (*connectitur*) with the divine essence. The reason why God’s decrees, clearly as representing their own truths, enter this connection is that the divine essence itself is *identical* with all and any essential truth. What Wadding hints at here is only unfolded in a longer passage of chapter 20. There, we learn that “no essential truth—and the same goes for goodness and being—can be distinct from God”. The transcendentals are thus essentially identical with God, and everything included under them as well. Modal concepts play an important role, too: God Himself *is* the essential possibility of (created) things and the impossibility of impossible things. Wadding does not here speak of individual items, but rather of species that have definable essences. He takes the Aristotelian definition of a human being as an example: The essential truth that human beings are rational animals cannot have its foundation only in the contingent fact that such beings exist, but must rather owe itself to, or in fact exist in, a being that exists through its own essence. This does not make God identical with all essences, but only with the “indefectibility” of the truths stated about these essences. Wadding concludes the passage with the following succinct statement: “Just as only He is being through essence, so also is only He truth through essence. But all essential truth is truth through essence.”²⁷ Wadding’s ontology

²⁶ “*Et licet non existat hoc decretum, erit essentiae divinae essenziale, quod, si detur tale decretum, secuturum sit vel unum vel alterum extremum libertatis, quia essentia divina connectitur necessario cum omni aeterna veritate essentiali, immo Ipsa est omnis essentialis veritas*” (233).

²⁷ This remarkable passage from chapter 20 deserves to be quoted in full: “*Quod ulterius potest confirmari ex eo, quod nulla essentialis veritas – sicut nec bonitas nec entitas – distincta esse possit a Deo, qui ab omni tempore absolutus est utpote aeternitate mensuratus. Unde ipse est essentialis rerum possibilitas essentialisque impossibilium impossibilitas – haec enim est realis veritas et entitas –, constituitque essentialem omnium essentiarum statum. Hae enim nullum in se praedicatum habent, quod absolute essenziale sit, cum per nullum praedicatum illis sit essenziale esse in se ipsis. Cum ergo status essentialis vere detur a parte rei, necesse est illum non constitui*

may be understood as a modally radicalized metaphysics of participation. How exactly it relates to other “connectionist” models of metaphysics in his own milieu would merit scrutiny.

At this place, I should finally like to draw attention to the converse side of any strong conception of identity like the one we have just seen, namely the distinctions employed to analyze it. Somewhat surprisingly, in the edited text, we find no sign of interest on Wadding’s part in the contemporaneous discussion of kinds of *precisions*, a discussion that otherwise holds a prominent place in Baroque scholastic discourse on distinctions.²⁸ Instead, we find an interesting usage of two kinds of virtual distinction. These are explained in chapter 33. Whereas an *intrinsic virtual distinction* holds between predicates that are actual opposites (i.e., they contradict one another and hence cannot exist at one and the same time in one real thing), an *extrinsic virtual distinction* holds between predicates that are only opposites “*secundum esse extrinsecum*”, namely due to a variety

praedicato aliquo identificato cum entitate essentiae creatae, sed constitui per essentialem necessitatem – seu necessitatem essentialiter existentem – ad hoc, ut, si detur homo, v.g., identificetur cum animali rationali. Cum ergo haec essentialis necessitas absolute existens essentialiter debeat in aliquo essentialiter existente esse nullumque huiusmodi sit nisi Deus, sequitur, cum ipso omnes essentialia veritates identificari. Quod non est, essentias rerum identificari cum Deo, sed indefectibiles earum veritates – seu indefectibilitatem veritatum, quae de ipsis enunciantur – identificari cum Deo. Nec tamen ideo negamus, praedicata aliqua ut distincta a Deo esse aliquibus subiectis essentialia, et aliqua indefectibiliter per se ipsa exigere identificationem cum aliis praedicatis. Sed dicimus, hanc essentialem et indefectibilem exigentiam talem esse in creaturis ex suppositione non absolute necessaria, sed contingenti, et consequenter, absolute contingens esse, quod existat exigentia et identificatio hominis, v.g., cum animali rationali; ac proinde, necessitatem absolute indefectibilem et essentialiter existentem identificationis humanorum praedicatorum non esse entitatem neque existentiam hominis – quae idem sunt –, sed aliquid ab homine distinctum. Quod est ens per essentiam et veritas essentialis. Et sicut solus Ipse est ens per essentiam, ita solus Ipse est per essentiam veritas. Omnis autem essentialis veritas per essentiam veritas est” (314).

²⁸ Cf. Claus A. Andersen, *Metaphysik im Barockscotismus. Untersuchungen zum Metaphysikwerk des Bartholomaeus Mastrius. Mit Dokumentation der Metaphysik in der scotistischen Tradition ca. 1620–1750* (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2016), 820–839, with references to further literature. For an example from Jesuit scholasticism of the generation following upon Wadding, see Tirso González de Santalla, *Disputationes in Metaphysicam et libros De Anima, De anima*, disp. 10, ed. Sven K. Knebel (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: Grüner, 2011), 343–344.

of cognitions occasioned by one and the same thing (i.e., a created intellect projects a plurality of predicates onto some real thing, even though these predicates are not distinct in the thing) (408). Wadding now says that while all intellections and volitions may be distinguished by means of an extrinsic virtual distinction, the intrinsic virtual distinction is not applicable in all cases. In particular, we may assume (or rather: construct) an extrinsic virtual distinction between God's absolute foreknowledge of some future fact and God's own predefinition thereof (a predefinite fact being one that is effectively caused by God), even though there is no corresponding intrinsic virtual distinction between God's will and knowledge in this case, since there is no contradiction between what God foreknows and what He wills (408: "*Nullam enim video rationem, quae probet, conceptus sciendi et volendi in genere ita esse oppositos, ut revera contradicentia praedicata secum afferant*").

Already in chapter 29, Wadding had proceeded in a similar fashion. There, we learn that any foreknowledge, or knowledge of future facts, necessarily must be virtually distinct from the decree upon which it follows. This, however, does not hold for all divine cognition of that decree. The reason given is that God knows His own decree independently of, and by reason or nature prior to, that future fact which follows upon His decree (384: "*Deus independenter a futuro, quod aeternitate consequetur in tempore ad suum decretum indifferens, et prius ratione aut etiam natura, quam illud cognoscat, cognoscit suum ipsum decretum*"). To be precise, Wadding says that in the latter case, the case of God's cognition of His own decree, there is no *intrinsic* virtual distinction (*ibid.*: "*nec virtualiter intrinsece ab illo distingui*"). Moreover, this cognition is essentially connected ("*essentialiter connectitur*") with the existence of God's own (indifferent) decree—which is just a complicated way of stating that, in this case, there is essential identity between divine volition and cognition (but in the case of God's determinate foreknowledge following, via impediment, upon a creaturely will's free choice, there is no such identity). Before God's foreknowledge has been determined, there is no foundation for an *intrinsic* virtual distinction, but rather only for an *extrinsic* one

introduced into reality by some human mind trying to grasp the formalities contained in God's eminence by drawing a distinction similar to one that would hold in created affairs:

Before this, therefore, we say that God knows his decree in Himself and that there is no foundation for this knowledge to be virtually and intrinsically distinguished from the decree itself, because there are no opposing predicates, of which one necessarily and in reality would pertain to the decree itself and the other to knowledge. It is thus only distinguished from knowledge through our reason and with an extrinsic virtual distinction, in which case the opposing predicates pertain to the knowledge and the decree not according to their intrinsic, but rather according to their extrinsic being, which they have in our reason, which yields some foundation for their formalities in the divine eminence, where they are equivalent to really [realiter] distinct created objects and acts of knowledge.²⁹

Wadding's talk of formalities contained in God's eminence is interesting. We find that too in chapter 33, where he says that in the case of God's foreknowledge of predefined facts, God's willing and knowing are "one and the same intrinsically indivisible formality" (408: "*eadem indivisa intrinsece formalitas*"; cf. similarly 337). Due to this "intrinsic formal indistinction", there is nothing in God's knowledge that is not free (409: "*nulla est, cur scientia futuri efficaciter praedefiniti non sit formaliter libera, formaliter, inquam, per indistinctionem formalem intrinsecam a volitione libera*"). Wadding, however, readily concedes that from a human perspective, a formal non-identity, i.e., a formal distinction, is indeed warranted:

²⁹ "Ante hanc ergo dicimus Deum decretum suum in se ipso cognoscere, nullumque esse fundamentum ad hanc scientiam a decreto ipso virtualiter intrinsece distinguendam, cum nulla dentur opposita praedicata, quorum unum necesse sit re ipsa convenire decreto et alterum scientiae. Solum ergo distinguetur a scientia ratione nostra et distinctione virtuali extrinseca: qua scilicet opposita praedicata conveniant scientiae et decreto non secundum esse suum intrinsecum, sed secundum extrinsecum, quod in ratione nostra habent, fundamentum aliquod praebente divina illarum formalitatum eminentia, qua obiectis et scientiis creatis ad invicem realiter distinctis aequivalent" (384).

In our consideration, we concede that this knowledge is not formally free, for—in our reason—it is not formally identical with, but rather distinct from the concept of *free will*; for in our way of understanding, this is presupposed as its principle, because something is predefined, before it is known to exist. This, I say, is first in our way of understanding, though not first in reality.³⁰

From this human perspective, Wadding explains, one may use the term ‘*formaliter*’ both intrinsically and extrinsically (409). He uses ‘*formaliter*’ and ‘*virtualiter*’ interchangeably. In both cases, the purely extrinsic variant is one that is projected onto reality by a human mind grappling with things that “*in re*” are not distinct at all. Wadding’s terminology reveals a remarkably relaxed approach to the relationship between the virtual distinction, usually endorsed by Thomist authors, and its formal counterpart, usually endorsed by the Scotists. The traditional competition between the two models seems to have been dissolved into a highly flexible doctrine of two different modes of application of both kinds of distinctions.³¹ This would seem to demand a certain degree of caution when reading Wadding’s statements concerning distinctions and identity in God. Which mode is he now applying? It seems that Wadding usually

³⁰ “[I]n consideratione nostra, concedimus, hanc scientiam non esse formaliter liberam, quia – in nostra ratione – non est formaliter identificata, sed distincta a volitionis liberae conceptu: quia ex modo nostro concipiendi eam supponit ut principium sui, cum prius sit esse praedefinitionem quam cognosci, quod est. Hoc, inquam, est prius in nostro modo concipiendi, licet non sit prius in re” (409).

³¹ Again, it remains to be seen how exactly Wadding’s approach relates to the common practice in his milieu. At this place, let me just note that Tirso González de Santalla, *Disputationes in Metaphysicam et libros De Anima*, *Metaphysica*, disp. 6, ed. Sven K. Knebel (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: Grüner, 2011), 307 and 311, both attributes the division of the virtual distinction into two kinds to the Thomist tradition and says that the intrinsic virtual distinction is not really different from Scotus’s formal distinction. Since the latter may be said to hold prior to any act of an intellect, and the former is due to a virtual multiplicity in the thing, the difference between them comes down to a debate over words (“*solo nomine*”). Cf. further Knebel’s own classical study “*Distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*. Die scholastische Unterscheidungslehre vor dem Satz ‘A = A’”, *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 44 (2002): 145–173.

has the stronger variant in mind. Wadding's most important views on the subject include the following:

- God's foreknowledge is not formally free (327), or is not formally volition (338). There is indeed an intrinsic virtual distinction between divine knowledge and volition (338: "*divina scientia futurorum careat formali libertate, quod non sit formaliter volitio, sed virtualiter intrinsece distincta ab omni volitionis conceptu*").
- This distinction is explicitly applied to middle or conditional foreknowledge; this mode of divine foreknowledge is not formally volition and cannot be formally free. If God's conditional foreknowledge did express His will, then this would run counter to any concord between God's foreknowledge and human freedom. Also, it cannot be free, since it would then not constitute the *middle* between free and necessary knowledge (344).
- As we already know, however, according to Wadding, God's foreknowledge of predefined future facts *is* formally identical with God's will (408); we have also seen that he thinks there is a formal identity between God's cognition and His decree prior to the latter's determination through its object (384). That God's foreknowledge is not formally identical with His volition is thus not a universal rule, after all; or rather, some aspects of divine foreknowledge do defy the rule.
- God's absolute foreknowledge of contingent bad facts ("*futuri contingentis pravi*"), as well as good things that fail to be predefined, is not formally identical with God's volition (409). The contingent bad facts, of course, are human sins, and as we have already seen, these are known by God only when a human will wants to sin. God is separated from human sin by a formal distinction. Wadding's theodicy finds support in his view of distinctions; the same in fact goes for his whole discourse on divine foreknowledge.

6. CRITICISM

I have elsewhere expressed admiration for Sven K. Knebel's research into Early Modern scholastic culture,³² and I shall gladly do so again. Very few scholars in this field of research have, to any comparable extent, developed an easily recognizable voice and style of their own. In Knebel's work, style and method are two sides of the same coin. The most striking methodological feature of his research is a lack of interest in those usual dominant figures that otherwise attract most attention in work done on Early Modern philosophy. Knebel is, and has always been, absolutely critical of this predominating research paradigm: "Der ungebrochene Geniekult (Descartes! Kant!) hat zur Folge, daß gigantische Diskursformationen im historischen Bewußtsein veröden" (217),³³ one such "giant discourse formation" being the one concerning Middle Knowledge. Knebel's antidote to the cultivation of individual geniuses, the usual "giants", is precisely to focus on supra-individual discourses. From early on, his preferred method has thus been that of a Michel Foucault-inspired archaeology of discourse, as seen already in the programmatic postscript to his 1989 doctoral dissertation. There, in a work devoted to the tradition of the dictum "*In genere latent aequivocationes*" and not yet particularly focused on Early Modern scholasticism (though some such sources are already considered), we learn that archaeology of

³² Cf. my review of Sven K. Knebel, *Suarezismus: Erkenntnistheoretisches aus dem Nachlass des Jesuitengenerals Tirso González de Santalla (1624–1705). Abhandlung und Edition* (Amsterdam – Philadelphia, 2011), in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 121 (2014), 194–197.

³³ The same statement is found in Knebel's Habilitationsschrift, *Wille, Würfel, Wahrscheinlichkeit: Das System der moralischen Notwendigkeit in der Jesuitenscholastik 1550–1700* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2000), 29. Similar criticism of the dominating focus on individual geniuses is found in Sven K. Knebel, *Suarezismus. Erkenntnistheoretisches aus dem Nachlass des Jesuitengenerals Tirso González de Santalla (1624–1705). Abhandlung und Edition* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Grüner, 2011), 258 (referencing Kurt Flasch). Note that the disinterest in the usual suspects of Early Modern philosophy does not mean that they are not considered; they are considered as voices within a larger discourse. Cf., e.g., the references to Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy and Kant in the book under review (37, 70, 124).

discourse centers on the quasi-laws (“Gesetzmäßigkeiten”) that at the same time dictate and enable scholarly, artistic, and political expression.³⁴ These quasi-laws manifest themselves in reiterable practices, reiterability emerging as the very “Daseinsform” of the “archaeological fact” (“das archäologische Faktum”).³⁵ How does one study such regularities? Already from early on, Knebel has been committed to the study of the History of Concepts, better known under its German name *Begriffsgeschichte*, i.e., that philosophico-philological methodology cultivated (in principle, at least) throughout the monumental, multi-volume *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*,³⁶ to which Knebel himself has contributed many an article. Reiterable intellectual practices become tangible through the use of concepts, something that can be studied and documented.

This leads us to another distinctive feature of Knebel’s writing, his at first sight excessive, at any rate peculiar, use of footnotes. They are many, long, and full of Latin quotes. The principle is that it matters little who said what; what matters is that it was said.³⁷ Again, it is the discourse that is in focus. Footnotes are there to document a discourse, terminologies, and conceptual practice; not so much individual positions. In the book under review, this approach is best seen in the second introductory study (*Die Systematisierung der Scientia Media im XVII. Jahrhundert*, with almost 700 footnotes on just above one hundred pages). When introducing

³⁴ Sven K. Knebel, *In genere latent aequivocationes: Zur Tradition der Universalienkritik aus dem Geist der Dübärese* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms, 1989), 283: “Eine diskursanalytisch verfahrenende Archäologie erforscht die Gesetzmäßigkeiten dessen, wie etwas wissenschaftlich, künstlerisch oder politisch hat zur Sprache werden müssen, um überhaupt zur Sprache gebracht werden zu können.” The postscript bears the title *Tradition als archäologische Kategorie*. Knebel, *Wille, Würfel, Wahrscheinlichkeit*, 36, describes his method as a “diskursarchäologische Rekonstruktion eines Systems”.

³⁵ Knebel, *In genere latent aequivocationes*, 292.

³⁶ Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel, eds., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 13 vols. (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 1971–2007).

³⁷ Cf. Knebel, *Wille, Würfel, Wahrscheinlichkeit*, 38, explicitly stating that it is “nahezu gleichgültig, durch wen ein bestimmter Satz oder Gedankenschritt im Apparat belegt wird”.

Lucas Wadding's thought, attention to one particular author naturally becomes inevitable. But also there, Knebel is keen to emphasize how amateurish it would be to exclusively focus on, and summarize, this one author's thought (167). Wadding's thought is rather treated as an example of a tradition. Knebel's edition of Wadding's fourth book almost works like an extended footnote: it simply documents the state of the art, the art of Jesuit speculative theology, around the middle of the 17th century. As for Knebel's edition, clearly a better job could have been done at making the rather monolithic text more easily readable, e.g., through insertion of headings for smaller text sections, a practice common in medieval philology. The edition as such is barely more than a transcription. Important passages from Wadding's text are quoted *in extenso* in German translation in Knebel's introduction (the section on Wadding). I found these helpful, but I fear that many readers of Wadding will not find much support in that. Also, since scholars both from medieval and Early Modern studies may not be familiar with Early Modern scholastic manuscripts, it would have been interesting to see some photographic images of the source text.

Knebel cultivates an ambivalent relationship with his author. On the one hand, he praises the originality of Wadding's explanation of the object of divine foreknowledge that, according to Knebel, merits comparison with Johann Gottlieb Fichte's idealistic view of the relationship between subject ("das Ich") and object ("das Nicht-Ich") (163–164). On the other hand, Knebel is quite critical towards Wadding, both in regard to his doctrines (155: how can God's foreknowledge be predetermined without any causality?) and to his undynamic and repetitive style (175: "das Argument kommt [...] nicht recht vom Fleck").³⁸ Hardly any reader of Wadding's will protest this criticism of his style. Wadding's text demands an un-

³⁸Let me add my own impression of Wadding as a rather messy writer. For instance, in chapter 9 he lists a series of objections (237–238), then continues his discussion, and does not resolve the objections until chapter 14 (267–269). Wadding's text, with this very faint remnant of the classical *quaestio* structure, leaves its readers disoriented. Wadding's wavering view of the application of the intrinsic virtual distinction may also be taken as an example; he does not make much effort to show the consistency of his doctrine (cf. the section above).

usual amount of patience, even for late-scholastic standards; reading it is extremely time consuming. Some readers might then ask themselves whether the time spent on reading Wadding's unpublished, likely even discarded, manuscript would not have been better invested in reading definitely significant, yet understudied Jesuit authors, such as Diego Ruiz de Montoya or Sebastian Izquierdo, to name but two of a long list of Jesuit thinkers who deserve much more scholarly attention. I think the answer is that it probably would. There seem to be exactly two reasons why one would want to read Lucas Wadding SJ: either one is already familiar with the *vast* corpus of printed Jesuit theological manuals and just cannot wait to explore the forgotten treasures in the manuscript archive of the University Library of Salamanca and similar places (not many people fall into this category), or else one, despite all discomfort, cannot resist the pleasure of being guided through this unknown terrain by a pioneering scholar, Knebel, always generously dispensing his knowledge to his reader, including knowledge that one could hardly have picked up anywhere else (I find myself among this group).

One of the things that make Early Modern scholastic thought attractive as a research field is the possibility of contributing to a much-needed revision of our historiographical categories. The predominant historiography of philosophy tends to ignore any continuation of scholastic thought beyond the late Middle Ages, or else—at best—to unfairly downplay its significance. One cannot work on Baroque scholasticism without implicitly subverting our commonly presupposed notions of 'scholastic', 'medieval', and 'Early Modern'. In terms of career, however, this is a risky business, and Knebel has previously warned that with an area of specialization of this kind one will likely face problems on the job market for historians of philosophy: "Die meisten Philosophen heute zucken mit keiner Wimper, wenn sie, spätestens zum Zweck einer Stellenausschreibung, den [...] Sortiermechanismus 'Antike, Mittelalter, Neuzeit' in Gang setzen."³⁹

³⁹Knebel, *Suarezismus*, 255.

It is true that our academic departments are divided along the lines of an obviously skewed historiography. Knebel's documentation of the extensive discourse on Middle Knowledge, a discourse that one may indeed regard as a late culmination of the scholastic metaphysico-theological tradition, is one proof of the need for a revised historiography. Given the frustrating discrepancy between the vast scholastic material from the 17th century and the attention it receives in scholarship, one will readily forgive Knebel for his occasional rants at his contemporaries' incompetence (e.g., 126: "Völlig versagt hat die Philosophiegeschichtsschreibung"). Knebel is not only critical towards the over-cultivation of individual figures (cf. above), but also maintains that the broadly unquestioned historiographical divide between the Middle Ages and Early Modernity is upheld only as the result of a "Kulturkampf" (preface XVIII). Knebel does not really corroborate his analysis of the forces at work behind our historiographical conceptions. If I understand him correctly, what he means is that the humanities are characterized by a *status quo* between Catholics and Protestants: whereas the former got the Middle Ages (and their beloved Saint Thomas), the latter took the Early Modern world (and kept their no less beloved Kant). And this, supposedly, explains the lack of interest in Jesuit scholasticism. This analysis is interesting in its own right and would merit further substantiation. One aspect that I think should also be taken into consideration, in order to understand the limited interest in Early Modern scholasticism, is the methodological focus on manuscript material in medieval studies. The vast stock of *printed* post-Gutenberg, and hence post-medieval, scholastic material has long been methodically, even if unintentionally, sidelined. However, the picture is currently changing. To quote the editors of just one notable recent publication, "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."⁴⁰ My prophecy is that we will soon be

⁴⁰Petr Dvořák and Jacob Schmutz, "Introduction: Special Issue on Baroque Scholasticism", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 93/2 (2019): 187–189, here 187.

pondering over why it is that Baroque scholasticism has recently gained so much interest, rather than why it did not do so in the past.

In the preface to the book under review, we hear that Knebel as a young scholar, in the late 1980s, was explicitly warned (by Jacob Taubes, then a professor of philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin) against remaining too long in the field of scholasticism. The fruitful impulses Knebel received from Wolfgang Hübener (another professor of philosophy at the same institution) obviously worked in the opposite direction (preface XIX). This influence from Hübener must have been strong; anyone familiar with Hübener's work⁴¹ will easily recognize the overlap with Knebel's publications both in regard to topics and methodological preferences. Fortunately, Knebel remained stubborn. Also wonderful to see that the book series *Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie*, edited by Kurt Flasch, Ruedi Imbach, and Olaf Pluta (the fourth editor, Burkhard Mojsisch, passed away in 2015), continues to support publications on post-medieval scholastic thought. With two volumes by Knebel and a row of other monographs on 16th- and 17th-century scholasticism, all in theoretical philosophy, this cross-periodic book series has *de facto* emerged as an internationally important, almost unique, stage for such studies. Congratulations on that.

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⁴¹ I recommend the collection of essays, all of them still fresh and worthwhile reading, in Wolfgang Hübener, *Zum Geist der Prämoderne* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1985), collected and prefaced by Norbert Bolz, Stephan Meier-Oeser, and Sven K. Knebel. See also the useful bibliography in Michael Renemann "Wolfgang Hübener – Biographische Notiz und Liste der Veröffentlichungen".

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