

Medieval Metaphysics, or is it “Just Semantics”?

Proceedings of the Society for Medieval
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Volume 7

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Medieval Metaphysics, or is it “Just Semantics”?

Edited by

Gyula Klima and Alexander W. Hall

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Volume 7

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION*

ALEXANDER W. HALL

The *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* (PSMLM) collects original materials presented at sessions sponsored by the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics (SMLM). Founded by Gyula Klima (Director), Joshua Hochschild (Secretary), Jack Zupko and Jeffrey Brower in 2000 (joined in 2011 by Assistant Director, Alexander Hall) to recover the profound metaphysical insights of medieval thinkers for our own philosophical thought, the Society currently has over a hundred members on five continents. The Society's maiden publication appeared online in 2001 and the decade that followed saw the release of eight more volumes. In 2011, PSMLM transitioned to print. Sharp-eyed readers of these volumes will note the replacement of our (lamentably copyrighted for commercial use) lions, who guarded the integrity of the body of an intellectual tradition thought to be dead, with the phoenixes that mark our rebirth. Friends of the lions will be happy to note that they remain at their post, protecting PSMLM's online proceedings at <http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/SMLM/>.

Medieval semantic theories develop out of Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, in which he notes that "Spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds."¹ The medieval commentary tradition elaborates on Aristotle's theory in light of various epistemological and metaphysical commitments, including those entailed by the doctrine of the transcendentals that emerges from the tradition in the writings of Philip the Chancellor (d. 1236). Transcendental attributes such as unity, truth and goodness (properties that figure into most if not all accounts of the transcendentals) characterize every being as such, and

* These writings first appeared in volume seven of the *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* (<http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/SMLM/>), the colophon of which appears as an appendix to this book.

¹ *De Interpretatione*, tr. J. L. Ackrill, in *The Collected Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1 (OUP, 1984), 25.

hence the doctrine of the transcendentals promised some knowledge of God. This hope, together with the general medieval consensus that the cognitive acts by which we grasp extra-mental entities are veridical (i.e., in most cases, these acts represent what the cognizing subject takes them to represent) encouraged medieval thinkers to devote considerable effort to discerning how concepts latch onto reality. The essays in this volume follow these attempts as concerns the signification of theological discourse in general and Trinitarian semantics in particular, the proper object of the intellect, and what is signified through quidditative or essential definition.

Paul Thom's *Trinitarian Semantics in Gilbert of Poitiers* treats Poitiers's account of the Holy Trinity, an account that dates to a tradition of thought going back to Saint Augustine's *De Trinitate*, which models the doctrine of the Trinity into an ontology that is partly derived from Aristotle's *Categories*. Gilbert's account is fundamentally of the same type as Boethius's, which aims at making the doctrine of the Trinity intelligible—to the extent that it can be grasped by human intelligence. Though Gilbert agrees with much in Boethius's account, he goes beyond Boethius in three ways, by: developing a theory of abstraction to account for distinctness of the Persons, disagreeing with Boethius on the nature of divine simplicity, and deepening the notion of substantial predication. Novelty in Gilbert's views led Bernard of Clairvaux to draw up a 'confession of faith' at Rheims in 1148, to which Pope Eugene III required Gilbert should conform his commentary on Boethius. Thom outlines a semantic framework within which Gilbert's account can be compared with Boethius's, and can be assessed as a piece of ontological theorizing.

Duns Scotus maintained that we can possess concepts univocal to God and creatures such that one and the same concept may be referred without alteration to either. We acquire these concepts by considering creaturely traits apart from the limitations attendant on their instantiation in creatures. The 'purified' concept is univocal to God and creatures and, inasmuch as it prescind from considerations unique to either, is termed 'confused'. The confused concept may be referred to God when joined with the additional concept of God's infinite being. Scotus's notion of univocity has been criticized as obscuring the distance between God and creatures and his immediate followers split over whether Scotus intended a weak sense of univocity that would preserve God's transcendence at the expense of our knowledge of God's essence. Alexander Hall's *Confused Univocity?* contends that Scotus was neither apophatic nor idolatrous in his theology. Rather, Scotus's discussions of univocity suggest a mind continually at

work over a vexing issue, and the phrase ‘confused univocal concept’ aptly connotes the difficulties he faced.

Duns Scotus develops his theory of the univocity of theological discourse in the belief that analogical terms cannot ground the validity of discursive inference. Though Scotus develops his theory of univocity to debunk Henry of Ghent, Scotus’s doctrine nonetheless calls into question Thomas Aquinas’s claim that analogical terms can ground valid inference in theological discourse. In *Cajetan on Scotus on Univocity*, Joshua Hochschild examines how Scotus’s understanding of univocity shapes the development of Cajetan’s theory of analogy in the latter’s capacity as the Chair of Thomistic Metaphysics at the University of Padua. One lesson of Hochschild’s analysis is that criticism of Cajetan’s theory of analogy as “conceptualist” is misplaced. Whereas Cajetan is concerned to answer particular problems raised by Scotus, Cajetan eschews and criticizes key semantic assumptions behind Scotus’s position. Furthermore, Cajetan’s response confirms that he saw that the Thomistic disagreement with Scotus could not be addressed only at the semantic level but depended ultimately on distinctions at the level of metaphysics.

Duns Scotus and Robert Pasnau take Thomas Aquinas to restrict the proper object of the human intellect to material *quiddities* and contend that Aquinas thereby restricts our cognitive access to a subset of reality. If correct, the charge would seem to deny Aquinas a way of accounting for either the beatific vision (as God does not fall under the simple and proper concepts of intellects proportioned to material *quiddity*) or the science of metaphysics (as the scope of metaphysics extends beyond material *quiddities*). Brendan Palla’s *Aquinas on the Object of the Intellect* argues that Aquinas distinguishes two related meanings of the proper object of the intellect: (1) what it is that the intellect is adequate to by its own operation of abstraction from sensible phantasms and (2) what is first, albeit perhaps confusedly, understood by any intellect. It is in sense (2) that we have a non-trivial grasp of being and truth in general, and hence Aquinas’s account does not rule out either the capacity of the human intellect to experience the beatific vision or the possibility of the science of metaphysics.

Adam Wood’s *Aquinas, Scotus, and Cajetan on “Horseness is Just Horseness”* concerns the history of the discussion of common natures as this discussion unfolds in the writings of Avicenna, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham and Cajetan. Whereas Cajetan and Scotus agree that Aquinas’s

account of what sort of being it is that common natures have leaves certain questions unanswered, Cajetan considers Scotus's way of answering these questions unacceptable and advances an account that answers questions left behind by Aquinas's treatment while avoiding the problematic features of Scotus's position.

In *Aquinas vs. Buridan on Essence and Existence*, Gyula Klima contends that, although Anthony Kenny's objections to Aquinas's "*intellectus essentiae*" argument for the real distinction of essence and existence in creatures are quite easily answerable in terms of a proper reconstruction of the argument, the argument thus reconstructed is still open to a fundamental objection offered by the fourteenth-century nominalist philosopher, John Buridan, in his *Questions on Aristotle's Metaphysics*. The discussion of how Aquinas could handle this objection will show that the conflict between their judgments concerning the validity of the argument rests on a fundamental difference between Aquinas's and Buridan's conceptions of how our concepts latch onto things in the world.

TRINITARIAN SEMANTICS IN GILBERT OF POITIERS*

PAUL THOM

The account of the Holy Trinity given by Gilbert of Poitiers (c.1085-1154) in his commentaries on Boethius's theological tractates belongs to a tradition of thought going back to Saint Augustine's *De Trinitate*, a work which models the doctrine of the Trinity into an ontology that is partly derived from Aristotle's *Categories*. Gilbert's account is fundamentally of the same type as Boethius's, and even retains some of the elements of Boethius's account. At the same time, it introduces new elements, and it is these which account for the censures that befell Gilbert in his own time. In the present paper I outline a semantic framework within which Gilbert's account can be compared with Boethius's, and can be assessed as a piece of ontological theorising.

Boethius

Boethius (following Augustine's *De Trinitate*) aims at making the doctrine of the Trinity intelligible – to the extent that it can be grasped by human intelligence. His aim is to show the compossibility of the following four propositions:

- A. there is one and only one God;
- B. each of the Persons of the Trinity is substantially God;
- C. the Persons of the Trinity are really distinct from one another;
- D. God is utterly simple.

* This paper is reprinted with the kind permission of Fordham University Press. A re-worked version of the paper forms a chapter in Paul Thom, *The Logic of the Trinity: Augustine to Ockham* (Fordham University Press 2011).

The key element in his account (as it had been in Augustine's) is the notion of substantial predication. John Marenbon remarks that predications of the type which Boethius called substantial record 'the fundamental way the world is set up', and likens the impossibility of their denial to 'what some contemporary philosophers call "metaphysical impossibility"'.¹ I shall propose a formal semantics that captures this notion.

Boethius treats the three Persons of the Trinity as belonging to the Aristotelian category of relatives. According to Aristotle,

...those things are relatives for which being is the same as being somehow related to something²

This definition is standardly expounded through examples such as "A father is a son's father" and "A son is a father's son". According to Boethius, whatever is predicated as a relative is not predicated substantially. Accordingly:

Hence neither Father, nor Son, nor Holy Spirit, nor Trinity is predicated substantially of God, but only relatively, as we have said. But God, truth, justice, goodness, omnipresence, substance, immutability, virtue, wisdom and all other conceivable predicates of the kind are said of the divinity substantially.³

He notes that while the substantial predicates apply equally to all three Persons of the Trinity, the 'relative' ones do not: the Father, for instance, is truly wise and great but cannot truly be called Son.⁴

Semantics

A semantic analysis of Trinitarian language has to begin by assigning values to the name 'God', as well as to the names of the divine Persons 'Father', 'Son', 'Holy Spirit', and the names of divine perfections such as 'great' and 'good'. If we wish to represent Boethius's notion of substantial

¹ John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London: Routledge 2007) p.40.

² *Categories* 7, 8a31-32. Ackrill translation.

³ Quo fit ut neque pater neque filius neque spiritus sanctus neque trinitas de deo substantialiter praedicetur, sed ut dictum est ad aliquid. Deus vero veritas iustitia bonitas omnipotentia substantia immutabilitas virtus sapientia et quicquid huiusmodi excogitari potest substantialiter de divinitate dicuntur.

Boethius, *Utrum Pater et Filius* 62-68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-40.

prediction, we will have to go beyond the simple assignation of values to these terms. We need, not just a way of identifying what a term is true of, but also a way of identifying what it is essentially true of. This can be achieved as follows. Given any term '*t*' we distinguish among beings that are *t* those that are *essentially t*. Of special interest is the case in which the class of beings that are essentially *t* is identical with the class of beings that are *t*. This case is exemplified in the created world by any term, such as 'horse', that names a species or genus: there are no horses that are not essentially horses. Let's call terms like this essential terms.

Now, it turns out that only essential terms are terms which Boethius takes to be predicated substantially. In order for a term '*t*' to be predicated essentially of a term '*t*', it is necessary and sufficient that whatever is *t*' is *t*, and '*t*' is an essential term, but '*t*' is not an essential term. To say what something is substantially is to state a metaphysical foundation for its existence.

This notion of substantial predication has application in the created world. The Morning Star and the Evening Star are both substantially Venus. 'Venus' is an essential term, and whatever is either the Morning Star or the Evening Star is Venus, but neither 'Morning Star' nor 'Evening Star' would be counted within an Aristotelian metaphysics as an essential term, any more than 'Socrates in the morning' and 'Socrates in the afternoon' are essential terms.

Boethius argues that neither 'Father' nor 'Son' nor 'Holy Spirit' is predicated substantially of God.⁵ That which is God is not essentially Father etc. But surely if that which is God is not essentially Father, nothing is essentially Father. Using this reasoning we can now introduce a sophistication into our basic semantics, whereby we specify for each term, not only the individuals of which the term is true, but also those of which it is essentially true. In the following matrix the terms 'God', 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' are respectively abbreviated '*d*', '*p*', '*f*', '*s*'. The matrix shows '*d*' as an essential term, but shows the names of the Persons as not essential. The matrix indicates that each of the Persons is substantially God.

⁵ Boethius, *Utrum Pater et Filius* 14ff.

Boethius _A	*	
<i>d</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>x</i>	—
<i>f</i>	<i>x</i>	—
<i>s</i>	<i>x</i>	—

This matrix gives metaphysical as well as semantic information about the four terms with which it deals. For each one of those terms, it shows which individuals the term applies to, and which individuals the term applies essentially to. It also shows of which terms any of the four terms is predicated substantially. Such a matrix I call foundational.

Boethius thinks that the particular way in which substantial predications are configured in the semantics of the Trinity is not replicated anywhere in the created world:

But if a relation of this kind cannot be found in all other things, this is because of the otherness natural to all perishable, transitory objects.⁶

However, we may doubt that he is right about this in the light of the Morning and Evening Star example. We will return to this question.

Boethius takes divine simplicity to imply that God is the same as Divinity and as the divine perfections:

But the Divine Substance is form without matter, and is therefore one, and is its own essence.... Wherefore that is truly one in which is no number, in which nothing is present except its own essence.⁷

VII. The being of every Simple is one and the same as that which it is.⁸

⁶ Quod si id in cunctis aliis rebus non potest inveniri, facit hoc cognata caducis rebus alteritas.

Boethius, *De Trinitate* VI:22-24. Stewart, Rand & Tester translation.

⁷ Sed divina substantia sine materia forma est atque ideo unum et est id quod est.... Quocirca hoc vere unum in quo nullus numerus, nullum in eo aliud praeterquam id quod est.

Boethius, *De Trinitate* II:29-42. Stewart, Rand & Tester translation.

⁸ VII. Omne simplex esse suum et id quod est unum habet.

This doctrine is represented in the following matrix, where ‘*m*’ stands for ‘great’ and ‘*b*’ for ‘good’.

Boethius _B	* ^		
<i>d</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>

Ontology

From this semantic analysis we can read off what entities Boethius’s analysis of the Trinity commits him to. This ontology is very sparse. The only essential being is God (who is identical with the divine perfections). The Persons exist, but not as essential beings: their being reduces substantially to that of God. The divine relations of Paternity etc. receive passing mention in Boethius, but there is no fully developed analysis of them. In Figure 1, essential beings are represented by filled circles, non-essential beings by unfilled circles. Correlatives are joined by a double arrow marked ‘ad’. Substantial predication is represented by an arrow marked ‘est’.

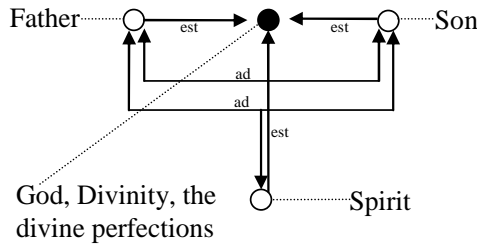


Figure 1. The ontology of the Trinity according to Boethius

Boethius’s account of the Trinity is only partially successful. It succeeds in showing the compossibility of (A), (B) and (D), but it does not succeed in giving a clear justification for (C) – the distinctness of the Persons. It gives us a way of distinguishing the Persons from God but not a way of distinguishing the Persons among themselves. Boethius thinks that the

Persons are distinguished by the ways in which they stand to one another, but he offers no theoretical account of what this means.

Gilbert

Gilbert agrees with much in Boethius's account. He goes beyond Boethius in three ways. He develops a theory of abstraction which allows him to give an account of the distinctness of the Persons; he disagrees with Boethius on the nature of divine simplicity; and he deepens the notion of substantial predication.

Semantics

Abstraction

Gilbert devotes considerable attention to the semantics of abstraction, especially through his distinction between subsistents (*quod ests*) and subsistences (*quo ests*).⁹ Marenbon emphasises that for Gilbert all beings, both *quod ests* and *quo ests*, are singular. This implies that we can think of the extension of an abstract name as comprising a set of singular subsistences (*quo ests*). Marenbon also emphasises the interdependence of *quo ests* and *quod ests*.

...as their meanings suggest, *quo ests* and *quod ests* have a correlative, causal relationship. There can be no *quod ests* without the *quo ests* which make them what they are ..., and no *quo ests* exist in act apart from a *quod est*¹⁰

Gilbert believes that in the Trinity there is enumeration of subsistents (*quod ests*) but repetition of subsistences (*quo ests*):

When the words 'God, God, God' are used, applying in turn to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, then those which are God are enumerated, that by which they are God is repeated.¹¹

⁹ Cf. Boethius, *Contra Eutychen* III.

¹⁰ Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* 153.

¹¹ Cum uero dicitur "Deus Deus Deus" – primum de Patre secundum de Filio tertium de Siphritu sancto. Quod et ipse aperit dicens: "Deus Pater Deus Filius Deus Spiritus sanctus" – eorum quidem, qui sunt Deus, numeration facta est: eius uero, quo sunt Deus, repetitio.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,3,37.

He believes that the Persons are distinguished by their properties:

Now he wants to show by natural arguments that those same ones, whose essence is none other than simple, are different by different properties.¹²

Thus, his semantics of God and the Persons can be represented by the following foundational matrix, in which the letters ‘*t*’ to ‘*w*’ stand for the singular beings that are respectively divinity, and the abstracts of the Persons.

Gilbert _A	*	^
<i>d</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x t</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>x</i>	— <i>u</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>x</i>	— <i>v</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>x</i>	— <i>w</i>

In this matrix each of the Persons is represented as having a distinct abstract (the divine relations of Paternity, Filiation and Connexion); each of those abstracts is represented as being different from the Person whose abstract it is; and divinity is represented as being different from God. These ways of representing Gilbert’s doctrine of the Trinity are consistent with the content of the charges brought against him at Rheims in 1148:

1. That the divine nature, which is called the divinity, is not God but the form by which God is, just as humanity is not man but the form by which man is.
2. That when Father, Son and Holy Spirit are said to be one, they are understood to be only by one divinity; but this cannot be converted, so that one God or one substance or one something may be said to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. That the three Persons are three by three unities and three distinct properties which are not those Persons but are three distinct eternal

Translation from John Marenbon, ‘Gilbert of Poitiers’, in John Marenbon, *Aristotelian Logic, Platonism, and the Context of Early medieval Philosophy in the West* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2000) XIV:345. Cf. Boethius, *De Trinitate* III:29-40.

¹² Nunc diuersis proprietatibus esse diuersos eosdem, quorum non nisi singularis ac simplex est essentia, naturalium rationibus uult demonstrare. Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,3,34.

things numerically different from one another and from the divine substance.¹³

That these are indeed Gilbert's views is clear. The distinctness of the divine relations from each other is necessary if the distinctness of the Persons is to be based on those relations.

That Gilbert does not think the Father is identical with Paternity is clear from the prologue to his commentary on Book 2 of Boethius's *De Trinitate*, where he writes:

But some people of little understanding, hearing that God is simple, take Him and any of the diversity of names said of Him (such as 'God', 'one', 'eternal', 'Person', 'principle', 'author', 'father', 'Son', 'Connection' and others like this) to be of the same nature and *ratio*, so that God is both the essence by which He is said to be and the unity by which he is said to be one and the eternity by which He is said to be eternal and similarly for the others, and likewise the Father himself is paternity and the one unity and the eternal eternity and conversely, and in the same way for all the other things that for whatever reason are predicated of Him; and because of all this, the same Boethius writes to Deacon John the Roman particularly about what is predicated by the names 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit'.¹⁴

¹³ 1. Quod divina natura, que divinitas dicitur, Deus non sit, sed forma, qua Deus est, quemadmodum humanitas homo non est, sed forma, qua est homo.

2. Quod cum Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus unum esse dicuntur, nonnisi una divinitate esse intelligantur, nec converti possit, ut Deus unus vel una substantia vel unum aliquid Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus esse dicatur.

3. Quod tres persone tribus unitatibus sint tria et distincte proprietatibus tribus, que non sunt ipse persone, sed sunt tres res eterne et ab invicem et a divina substantia numero differentes.

Lauge Olaf Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: a study of Gilbert Poreta's thinking and the theological expositions of the doctrine of the incarnation during the period 1130-1180* (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1982) p.34.

¹⁴ Quia tamen aliqui sensu paruuli – audientes quod Deus est simplex – ipsum et quicumque de eo nominum diuersitate dicuntur – ut: Deus unus eternus persona principium auctor Pater Filius Conexio et huiusmodi alia – eiusdem nature eiusdemque rationis esse ita accipiunt ut et essentia qua dicitur Deus sit et unitas qua unus est et eternitas qua eternus est et similiter cetera: et e conuerso ipse etiam Pater sit paternitas et unus unitas et eternus eternitas et conuersim: et eodem modo in aliis omnibus que de ipso quacumque ratione predicantur, scribit idem Boecius Iohanni romano diacono de illis specialiter que nominibus his "Pater Filius Spiritus sanctus" predicantur.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* II,2,prol.

Divine simplicity

That Gilbert takes Divinity to be distinct from God is also clear. His understanding of divine simplicity differs from that of Boethius, who takes divine simplicity to imply that God *is* the perfections that He has. Of the divine substance Boethius that it “est id quod est”;¹⁵ and he contrasts God with non-divine things, where the attribute differs from its subject, which depends for its being on something other than itself.¹⁶ Subject and attribute are divided in non-divine things, but conjoined and united in God.¹⁷

We can distinguish two types of integration that together comprise Boethius’s notion of divine simplicity. On the one hand there is the vertical integration of God with the divine attributes (Divinity, divine Goodness etc.), so that God is the same as God’s attributes. On the other hand there is the horizontal integration of all the divine attributes with one another: God’s greatness is the same as God’s goodness etc. The horizontal integration follows from the vertical. If each of God’s attributes is the same as God then all are the same as one another. It is worth observing, however, that the reverse implication does not necessarily hold.

Gilbert endorses the horizontal but not the vertical integration of the divine perfections. He holds that divinity is the same as divine greatness, divine goodness, etc.; but in commenting on Boethius’s analysis of divine simplicity¹⁸ he denies that God is divinity, or is the divine essence, except in the following sense:

Whence also there is a linguistic usage such that it may be said of God not only that He is but also that He is the essence; and rightly indeed. For if it is said of someone who is not only wise but also coloured and great and many other things of this sort, from an abundance of wisdom before all others, “Howsoever great you are, you are all wisdom” – as if there is nothing other that confers being on him except wisdom alone – much more properly “the essence” is said of God, on whom different things do not confer His being; and the same for other names like “God is his own essence, his own wisdom, his own strength” and others like this’.¹⁹

¹⁵ See note 9 above.

¹⁶ Boethius, *De Trinitate* II:31-40.

¹⁷ Boethius, *De Trinitate* IV:26-28.

¹⁸ Boethius, *De Trinitate* II:29-42, quoted earlier.

¹⁹ Unde etiam usus loquendi est ut de Deo dicatur non modo “Deus est” uerum etiam “Deus est ipsa essentia”. Recte utique. Si enim de aliquo qui non modo sapiens sed etiam coloratus et magnus et multa huiusmodi est, ex sapientie pre ceteris omnibus habundantia dicitur: “Tu quantus quantus es, totus es sapientia” –

This passage does allow that there is a manner of speaking according to which we may rightly say that God is his own essence; but it describes that as a manner of speaking. For Gilbert, divine simplicity consists in two facts: firstly that everything *by* which God is, is divinity (the divine essence), and secondly that everything *whence* divinity is, is the fact of God's being. Even though God is not the same as Divinity, there is nothing other than Divinity by which God is, and Divinity is only because God is from it.²⁰ He states:

The simplicity of God is expressed thus: "If someone says of what is truly simple that it 'is', and again says that it 'is something', no one should understand that the second sentence predicates of it something differing by any property from what the first predicated."²¹

Marenbon calls this the 'perfect unity of *Deus* and *divinitas*'.²² A formal representation of Gilbert's position on the divine perfections is shown in the following matrix.

Gilbert _B	* ^		
<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>t</i>

tamquam nichil aliud sit quod sibi esse conferat nisi sola sapientia – multo proprius Deus, cui diuersa non conferunt ut sit, dicitur "ipsa essentia" et aliis nominibus idem ut "Deus est ipsa diuinitas sua, ipsa sua sapientia, ipsa sua fortitudo" et huiusmodi alia.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,55.

²⁰ Non enim est a diuinitate aliud quo Deus sit. Nec est unde diuinitas ipsa sit nisi quod ea Deus est.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,89.

²¹ Si quis de eo quo uere est simplex dicat "est" et idem dicat "est aliquid", nullus intelligere debet quod secunda oratione predicauerit de ipso aliquid proprietate aliqua diuersum ab eo quod predicauerat in prima.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Hebdomadibus* 1,62. This is Gilbert's exposition of Boethius's Rule 7 ('Omne simplex ...') quoted earlier.

²² Marenbon XIV:343.

Substantial predication

Gilbert's semantics for the divine persons and perfections implies that even though the Persons are distinct, their distinctness is not due to any distinction in what substantially underlies them. They are distinguished by their three different properties, but what underlies them is one deity. If what underlies is the metaphysical reality, a doubt could arise as to whether metaphysically the Persons are after all distinct from one another. Such a doubt would be reinforced for a modern philosopher who had accepted the analogy of Morning and Evening Star. Metaphysically, there is only one reality in these cases. Plurality arises only in accidental ways: the time at which the reality is visible.

Concerns of this type must have occurred to Gilbert too. For he accepts, as a principle governing the natural world, that things which are really distinct must be distinguishable at the fundamental metaphysical level, i.e. in their *quo ests*.

Just as the *properties* of numerically different things are different, so also the *subsistences* are numerically different.²³

He gives several alternative formulations of the principle:

A subsistence is not singular unless it makes a subsistent one in number, as it's not just Plato's and Cicero's *accidental* properties that are different but also their *substantial* ones by which they are e.g. different bodies or men.²⁴

Any singular property that makes Plato to be a body or a man makes nothing else to be the same.²⁵

Matrix Gilbert_A, however, is inconsistent with this principle since it represents three really distinct Persons (distinguished by their abstracts)

²³ Sicut numero diuersorum proprietates diuerse sunt ita quoque subsistentie numero sunt diuerse.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,6,prol.

²⁴ "Una singularis subsistencia non nisi unum numero faciat subsistentem" ut Platonis et Ciceronis non solum accidentales proprietates uerum etiam substantiales, quibus ipsi sunt uerbi gratia uel diuersa corpora uel homines, diuerse sunt.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,6,prol.

²⁵ Et quecumque singularis proprietas Platonem corpus esse uel hominem, eadem nullum alium idem esse facit.

Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,7,prol.

resting on a single *quo est*, namely Divinity. There are two conceivable options for resolving this inconsistency – namely, to revise the matrix, or to reject the principle in theological contexts. Gilbert believes that the first option cannot be adopted without falling into heresy. If we revise the matrix so that the Persons are not distinct, we fall into Sabellianism. If we revise it so that there are three *quo ests*, one per Person, we fall into tritheism. And so he feels compelled to restrict the principle’s application to the natural order. There, different *quod ests* must have different *quo ests*, but in the theological realm distinct *quod ests* can have a single *quo est* and Matrix Gilbert_A is acceptable as it stands.²⁶ It displays a situation in which (A), (B) and (C) hold simultaneously. And taken together with Matrix Gilbert_B it displays a situation in which (D) also holds. However, the divine simplicity which it represents is one in which the divine perfections are integrated horizontally but not vertically.

Ontology

Gilbert’s ontology of the Trinity is shown in Figure 2, where relationships between a concrete and its abstract are shown by an arrow marked ‘ab’.

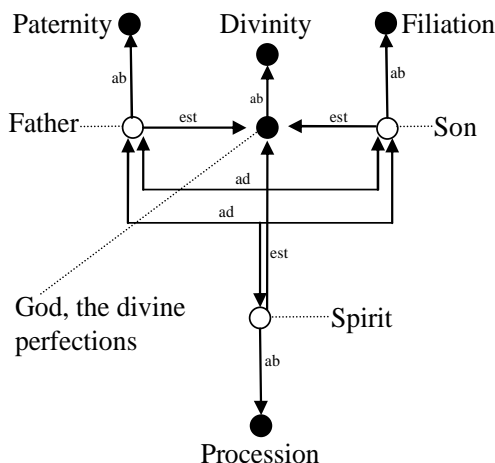


Figure 2. The ontology of the Trinity according to Gilbert of Poitiers

Gilbert doesn’t tell us what the relationship is between Paternity and Divinity. However, we can see that it must be the same as the relationship

²⁶ Gilbert of Poitiers, *De Trinitate* I,2,8,prol.

of Justice to Humanity, since the just are substantially humans, and the just are just by Justice, and humans human by Humanity. Now, Justice inheres in humans, and humans are human by Humanity; so we can see that the relationship is the relative product of inherence and abstraction.

Figure 2 should be compared with Figure 1, which shows Boethius's ontology of the Trinity. Gilbert's ontology is less sparse than Boethius's; however, by allowing for extra ontological complexity Gilbert finds himself able to demonstrate the compatibility of (A)-(D). The most serious problem facing that demonstration appears to be the *ad hoc* exemption of the theological realm from the requirements of the natural principle.

Bernard

Gilbert's account of the Trinity should be contrasted with the one implied in the 'confession of faith' which Bernard of Clairvaux compiled at Rheims in 1148 in his attempt to have Gilbert's views condemned. In so far as it concerns the Trinity, Bernard's credo is enshrined in the following three propositions which rebut the three allegedly heretical propositions with which Gilbert was charged:

1. We believe that the simple essence of divinity is God, and that it cannot be denied in any orthodox way that divinity is God and God divinity. And if it is said that God is wise by wisdom, great by greatness, eternal by eternity, one by unity, God by divinity and so on, we believe that he is wise only by that wisdom which is God Himself, great only by that greatness which is God Himself, eternal only by that eternity which is God Himself, one only by that unity which is God Himself, divine only by that divinity which is God Himself; that is, that He in His own essence is wise, great, eternal, indivisible God.
2. When we speak of three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we understand them to be one God and one divine substance; and conversely, when we speak of one God or one divine substance we profess that one God and one divine substance is three persons.
3. We believe that only God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is eternal, and that no things whatsoever, whether they are called relations or properties, singularities or unities or anything of the kind exist and have existed eternally in God, unless they are God.²⁷

²⁷ Credimus simplicem naturam divinitatis Deum esse nec aliquo sensu catholico posse negari, quin divinitas sit Deus et Deus divinitas. Sicubi vero dicitur Deum

Thus in place of the Gilbertian matrices it seems that Bernard poses the following:

Bernard _A		*	^
<i>d</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>x</i>	-	<i>x</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>x</i>	-	<i>x</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>x</i>	-	<i>x</i>

Bernard _B		*	^
<i>d</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>x</i>

Ontology

The ontology of Bernard's credo is even more economical than that of Boethius. The following diagram shows that not only God, and Divinity, the divine perfections are ontologically one, but also the Personal relations.

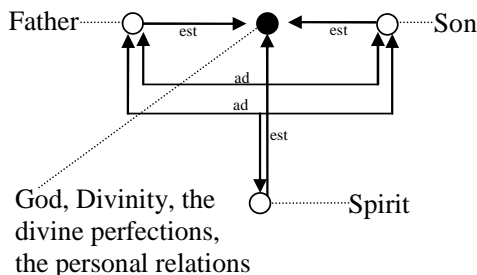


Figure 3. The ontology of the Trinity according to Bernard of Clairvaux

sapientia sapientem, magnitudine magnum, eternitate eternum, unitate unum, divinitate Deum esse et alia huiusmodi, credimus nonnisi ea sapientia, que est ipse Deus, sapientem esse, nonnisi ea magnitudine, que est ipse Deus, magnum esse, nonnisi ea eternitate, que est ipse Deus, eternum esse, nonnisi ea unitate unum, que est ipse, nonnisi ea divinitate Deum, que est ipse, id est se ipso sapientem, magnum, eternum, unum Deum.

Cum de tribus personis loquimur Patre, Filio, Spiritu Sancto, ipsas unum Deum, unam divinam substantiam esse fatemur. Et e converso, cum de uno Deo, una divina substantia loquimur, ipsum unum Deum, unam divinam substantiam esse tres personas profitemur.

Credimus solum Deum Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum eternum esse nec aliquas omnino res – sive relationes sive proprietates sive singularitates vel unitates dicantur et huiusmodi alia – adesse Deo, que sint ab eterno et non sint deus.

Marjorie Chibnall, *John of Salisbury's Memoirs of the Papal Court* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1956) p.24. Chibnall translation.

Because these matrices identify God with Divinity, and each of the Personal relations with the Divinity, they cannot distinguish between the Persons. Thus, if Bernard's account is to be capable of distinguishing between the Persons, it must be represented in a semantics that is more sophisticated than anything considered thus far in this paper.

Politics

The outcome of Gilbert's trial at Rheims was that he was required by Pope Eugene III to change his commentary on Boethius in any way that was needed in order to make it consistent with Bernard's declaration of faith. The Pope left it to Gilbert to determine whether and to what extent such changes were needed.

John of Salisbury gives us an account of how Gilbert saw his doctrine as being already consistent with Bernard's credo.²⁸ According to John, Gilbert saw the first of Bernard's propositions as being directed against those who deny God's simplicity; Gilbert, however, does not deny divine simplicity, since he holds that God has no parts, and is not subject to any substantial or accidental forms.²⁹ Bernard's second proposition was interpreted by Gilbert as being directed against 'those who, out of consideration of the persons, divide the unity of the divine substance, or, in contemplating one simple and singular nature, no less insanely confuse the persons of the Trinity'.³⁰ Gilbert, on the other hand, is one of those who steer a path 'between the Scylla of those who divide and the Charybdis of those who confound'.³¹ Bernard's third proposition is interpreted by Gilbert as being directed against those who think that there are eternally existing things extrinsic to God. Gilbert, however, does not think this, even though he maintains that 'there are certain everlasting principles, which have had no beginning and will have no end, and are so much an essential part of truth that even if the whole world perished they would remain'.³² He instances the truth that if a man exists a substance exists; this, he says, is knowable and would still be something even if the things did not exist. Similarly, he says that there are properties which are had by the divine persons eternally – although we should not imagine that the persons have these properties in the way that 'colour is present in a

²⁸ Chibnall pp.29-41.

²⁹ Chibnall pp.29-30.

³⁰ Chibnall p.30.

³¹ Chibnall p.31.

³² Chibnall p.31.

body or greed or justice in a mind, so God is determined by accidents or substantial forms which are the cause of His existence, so that he may justly be held not to be the cause of all things'.³³

To me it seems that if John's account is reliable, Gilbert failed to address the first and the third of Bernard's propositions. What is affirmed by the first proposition, as I read it, is not just divine simplicity, but the particular version of divine simplicity that involves vertical as well as horizontal integration of the divine attributes. Thus, Gilbert's doctrine (which affirms only horizontal integration) is not consistent with Bernard's demand for both vertical and horizontal integration. Bernard's third proposition is that the properties *are* the persons; but Gilbert interprets the proposition as merely denying that the properties are *extrinsic* to the persons. Thus, if the dispute were to be judged purely on the logic of the rival arguments, Gilbert's response should be judged as inadequate. This, however, is not to say that Bernard's analysis of the Trinity is superior to Gilbert's as a piece of theo-ontology. It is indeed a more elegant analysis; but its elegance is bought at the price of leaving everything about the Trinity mysterious. Gilbert's account, while more cumbersome, explains how (A)-(D) can be held simultaneously – though it too leaves some things unexplained (the relation between the divine relations and divinity, and the reason why distinct *quod ests* in the godhead do not need distinct *quo ests*). But then, was it really either logic or theology that was at stake at Rheims in 1148?

Nielsen, in his monograph on twelfth-century theology and philosophy, argues – plausibly I think – that what was at stake was politics. That is to say, what was at issue was the effect which certain speech-acts would have on the interests of the various parties. He explains:

When the *Curia* got wind of the step Bernard had taken, a protest was immediately made to Eugene, pointing out that Bernard's tactics in this case, as in the case against Abelard, was [sic] to compel the Pope to a decision without consulting the *Curia*. By calling a meeting Bernard had, in the opinion of the *Curia*, procured for himself the possibility of threatening a schism, in the event of Gilbert's denunciation failing to materialize.³⁴

It was in this context that the Pope at once refused to denounce Gilbert as a heretic, and required him to revise his commentary in line with

³³ Chibnall p.38.

³⁴ Nielsen p.37.

Bernard's credo. And it is in the same context that we must understand Gilbert's response to that credo.

For the Pope, what was at stake was maintaining the unity of the Church against the threat of schism putatively posed by Bernard's declaration of faith; and this may well have mattered more to the Pope than the correctness of Gilbert's Trinitarian theology. For the Cardinals of the *Curia*, what was at stake was Bernard's increasing power over the Pope: a papal denunciation of Gilbert would further increase Bernard's power and weaken theirs. For Gilbert himself, what was at stake was to protect his theology, which he truly believed and believed not to be heretical, from the stigma of papal denunciation; and to defend those beliefs he was prepared to use arguments that sidestepped Bernard's accusations.

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CONFUSED UNIVOCITY?

ALEXANDER W. HALL

Scotus's belief we possess concepts univocal to God and creatures is problematic within the context of Aristotle's categorial metaphysics. *Prima facie* Scotus's doctrine is fairly straightforward, allowing that our ideas of certain traits initially discovered in creatures can pick out formally distinct features of the divine essence (i.e., elements of the divine essence that are, at least conceptually, distinct from one another), after these traits are conceived as both stripped of any limitation attendant on their creaturely instantiation, and conjoined with God's infinite being. The core concept, however, namely our concept of a trait as prescinding from any imperfection, is univocal to God and creatures, as it may be referred without alteration to either.¹ Scotus thus avoids what he takes to be Henry of Ghent's reliance on a species of analogy that vitiates theological discourse.² Scotus's solution requires experience to provide real concepts of a diverse creator. That is, if we have natural knowledge of God, concepts univocal to God and creatures must tell us something of his nature. There are many reasons to deny this is possible, especially within an Aristotelian metaphysics where the claim that we possess a concept of being univocal to God and creatures threatens to make being over into a genus above both. Genera descend to particulars by means of differences that mark one species from another, but any difference capable of differentiating being must itself be a being (otherwise how could it specify being). And if the differences are beings, then each substance is a being

¹ See, for example, *Ordinatio* (*Ord.*), I, d. 3, q. 2, nn. 26, 40; d. 3, n. 40; d. 8, q. 3, n. 113; and d. 8, q. 4, n. 17. For clear summaries of Scotus's doctrine of univocity in the secondary literature, consult Richard Cross, "Where Angels Fear to Tread," *Antonianum* 76 (2001): 7-41; James Ross and Todd Bates, "Duns Scotus on Natural Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. Thomas Williams, 193-237 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity is True and Salutory," *Modern Theology* 21, no. 4 (2005): 575-85.

² For Scotus's criticism, see, e.g., *Ord.*, I, d. 3, pars 1, q. 2, n. 20, 26; and d. 22, q. un.

twice over, once through the subsistent difference, and again through being itself. Again, if being is univocal to God and creatures, how do we account for the distance between creator and creation absent something added to God's being, which addition would then violate divine simplicity?

As Steven Marrone suggests, in the end, Scotus himself may have held serious reservations concerning univocity;³ and Stephen Dumont notes, Scotus's disciples were split over what would constitute a real, experiential concept of a diverse entity.⁴ Some believed Scotus intends a weak sense of univocity, preserving divine transcendence by sacrificing concepts that map onto God's essence, while others held to real concepts, and thus had to explain why this did not violate God's real diversity, and these hermeneutics persist. Catherine Pickstock, for instance, holds that Scotus's notion of univocity renders God "an absolute void of mystery,"⁵ while David Burrell diagnoses Scotus's claim that we grasp the formal *ratio* of divine perfections as a "failure to appreciate just how problematic our conceptual access to mystery must be."⁶ This paper contends Scotus was neither apophatic in his theology nor unaware of the limits that circumscribe the wayfarer intellect. In fact, Scotus may never have felt satisfied with his attempt to show that we have real, experiential concepts of a diverse creator. His discussions of univocity suggest a mind continually at work over a vexing issue, and the phrase 'confused univocal concept' aptly connotes the difficulties he faced.

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³ "The Notion of Univocity in Duns Scotus's Early Works," *Franciscan Studies* 43 (1983): 347-95, at 394.

⁴ "Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists," in *Topoi* 11, no. 2 (1992): 135-48.

⁵ "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance," *Modern Theology* 21 (2005): 543-74, at 563. For Pickstock, it is our positive concept of being univocal to God and creatures that itself renders the divine essence a mystery: "God is deemed 'to be' in the same univocal manner as creatures . . . [but] the univocity of Being between God and creature paradoxically gives rise to a kind of equivocity, for the difference of degree or amount of Being disallows any specific resemblance between them" (*After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 122-23). Pickstock's appraisal of Duns Scotus on univocity is controversial. Cross, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, and Williams, *The Doctrine of Univocity* offer sound criticism.

⁶ "John Duns Scotus: The Univocity of Analogous Terms," *Monist* 49, no. 4 (1965): 639-58, at 658.