



Studi e ricerche sui saperi Medievali  
Peer e-Review annuale dell'Officina di Studi Medievali

Direttore  
Patrizia Sardina

Vicedirettore  
Daniela Santoro

Direttore  
editoriale  
Diego Ciccarelli



MEDIAEVAL SOPHIA 22  
(gennaio-dicembre 2020)



STUDIA

Laura SCIASCIA, <i>Una famiglia di guelfi siciliani nel secolo di Federico II: errori di gioventù e peccati di vecchiaia</i>	1
Marcello PACIFICO, <i>La crociata al tempo di Federico II: da bellum sacrum ad opus pacis</i>	13
Matteo SCOZIA, <i>Several Medieval Considerations Arising from Aristotle's Distinction between the Composite and Divided Senses</i>	29
Mario MIRABILE, <i>Le relazioni tra il cardinale Gil de Albornoz e gli ebrei in Spagna e in Italia</i>	47
Patrizia SARDINA, <i>Arti magiche, influenze diaboliche e malefici in Sicilia nei secoli XIV e XV</i>	67
Antonino CIACCIO, <i>L' "arte" della chirurgia in Sicilia: reti relazionali e trasmissione delle conoscenze nel XV secolo</i>	89

POSTILLE

Diego CICCARELLI, <i>Su fra Angelo, fantomatico ministro generale O. Min. di Sicilia nel 1319</i>	111
---	-----

LECTURAE 147

Maria Pia ALBERZONI, Roberto LAMBERTINI (a cura di), *Costruire il consenso. Modelli, pratiche, linguaggi (secoli XI-XV)*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2019, pp. 415 (*Ordines. Studi su istituzioni e società nel Medioevo europeo*, 9), ISBN 978-88-343-3866-7

Poggio BRACCIOLINI, *Historia disceptativa tripartita convivalis*, edizione critica, traduzione e commento a cura di Fulvio Delle Donne, Teodosio Armignacco, Giangaleazzo

Visconti, Firenze, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2019, pp. VI + 202 (Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini d'Italia, n. 50), ISBN 978-88-8450-899-7

Fulvio DELLE DONNE, *La porta del sapere. Cultura alla corte di Federico II di Svevia*, Roma, Carocci, 2019, pp. 270 (Frecce, 271), ISBN 978-88-430-9502-5

*Il LIVRO DEL GOVERNAMENTO DEI RE E DEI PRINCIPI secondo il codice BNCF II.IV.129*, edizione critica a cura di Fiammetta Papi, vol. I. *Introduzione e testo critico*; vol. II. *Spoglio linguistico*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS, 2016-2018, pp. 662 + 460 (Biblioteca dei volgarizzamenti. Testi 3.1; 3.2), ISBN 978-88-4674-684-9; 978-88-4675-208-6

Giovan Giuseppe MELLUSI, Rosario MOSCHEO (a cura di), *Kthma es aiei: studi e ricordi in memoria di Giacomo Scibona*, Messina, Società Messinese di Storia Patria, 2017, pp. 671, ISBN 978-88-87617-57-3

Albertino MUSSATO, *De gestis Italicorum post Henricum VII Cesarem (libri I-VII)*, a cura di Rino Modonutti, Firenze, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2019, pp. XLIV + 396 (Il Ritorno dei Classici nell'Umanesimo. IV. Edizione Nazionale dei Testi della Storiografia umanistica, n. 12), ISBN 978-88-8450-912-3

*Le TERME DI VITERBO tra Medioevo e Rinascimento. La trattatistica in latino: pseudo Gentile da Foligno, Girolamo di Viterbo, Evangelista Bartoli*, edizione critica, traduzione e commento a cura di Edoardo D'Angelo, Firenze, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2019, pp. IV + 146, ill. (Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini d'Italia, n. 51), ISBN 978-88-8450-902-4

ATTIVITÀ OSM gennaio-dicembre 2020 147

ABSTRACTS, CURRICULA E PAROLE CHIAVE 149

## Several Medieval Considerations Arising from Aristotle's Distinction between the Composite and Divided Senses

### 1. Introduction

In trying to show how the same text can inspire several and, sometimes, contradictory interpretations, I will present the solutions of a logical problem proposed by several medieval authors in their commentaries on Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the problem concerns the solution offered by Aristotle regarding the possibility of understanding a proposition such as "possibile *sedentem ambulare*".<sup>2</sup> According to Aristotle, the logical instrument to discern correct interpretation of this proposition is found in the distinction between the composite sense and the divided sense.

In presenting the modes in which this kind of proposition can be understood, Aristotle states:

Secundum compositionem autem huiusmodi, ut posse sedentem ambulare et non scribentem scribere. Non enim idem significat si dividens quis dicat et componens, quoniam possibile 'sedentem ambulare' et 'non scribentem scribere'. Et hoc similiter si quis componat 'non scribentem scribere'; significat enim quoniam habet potestatem ut non scribens scribat, si autem non componat, quoniam habet potestatem, quando non scribit, ut scribat.<sup>3</sup>

In Aristotle's opinion, the assumption of this proposition, according to the composite sense, produces a false result, because it means that a given subject realizes contrary events in the same instant. Aristotle argues that the divided sense is more helpful in analysing the proposition, as it permits the same subject to realize contrary events, but at different temporal instants, and in this sense reveals that the proposition is true. Aristotle proposes the distinction between the composite and the divided sense.

<sup>1</sup> For the rediscovery of this Aristotelian book see: B. G. DOD, «Aristoteles Latinus», in N. KREZMANN et alii (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600*, University Press, Cambridge 1982, pp. 45-79: 46-53 (doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521226059.004).

<sup>2</sup> ARISTOTELES LATINUS, *De Sophisticis Elenchis. Translatio Boethii*, in B. G. GOD (ed.), *Aristoteles Latinus*, VI.1-3, Brill-Desclée de Brouwer, Leiden-Bruxelles 1975, p. 9, Bekker 166a 26-27. For the full Aristotelian argumentation, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 9-10, Bekker 166a 23-38.

<sup>3</sup> ARISTOTELES LATINUS, *De Sophisticis Elenchis. Translatio Boethii*, cit., p. 9, Bekker 166a 24-31.

es to demonstrate the fallacy of the Sophistic proposition, which, by means of logical sophisms, has the specific purpose of affirming propositions against common sense.<sup>4</sup>

Recently, Terence Parsons has shown that medieval thinkers – all of whom started from the same philosophical sources, i.e. Aristotle's works – proposed new theories which sometimes diverge greatly from the original source.<sup>5</sup> In this way, an analysis of the logical problem of the composite sense and the divided sense could be an indicative proof. One can, in fact, find several logical analyses of this problem in the medieval commentaries on *Sophistical Refutations*.

Generally, the authors agree with Aristotle in considering the divided sense to be the sole correct and rational way to analyse the proposition “possibile *sedentem ambulare*”. Considering John Duns Scotus' solution, however, we can see clearly that he proposes a different solution, namely that this Sophistic proposition can be understood by the composite sense.<sup>6</sup> Scotus then uses this logical solution to solve several ontological and theological problems, e.g. the question regarding the contingency of created things.<sup>7</sup>

However, in this paper, I will primarily try to offer several logical considerations, rather than an ontological analysis.<sup>8</sup>

We can consider four different texts, written between the 13th and 14th centuries, in which the same problem is analyzed in different ways. This approach is useful in showing how the same text can inspire different philosophical interpretations. In particular, assuming the Aristotelian background, I will present the positions of an anonymous author (henceforth referenced in this paper as A.) – who probably lived in

<sup>4</sup> According to Paul Vincent Spade: «The use of the terminology of ‘sophisms’ itself, had something to do with the circulation of the newly available translation of Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* [...] the *Sophistical Refutations* prompted intense new interest in fallacies and in the kinds of distinctions frequently drawn in the *sophismata* literature, and while the study of that work contributed greatly to the newly developing theories of ‘properties of terms’ that were among the most characteristic features of medieval logic [...] medieval *sophismata* proceed according to a stylized ‘question’ format for disputation – the roots of which go back much earlier than the widespread availability of the *Sophistical Refutations* in Latin in the early twelfth century» (P. V. SPADE, «Sophismata», in R. PASNAU-C. VAN DYKE [eds.], *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, 2 vols., University Press, Cambridge 2010, vol. I, pp.185-195: 186-187 *passim*).

<sup>5</sup> T. PARSONS, *Articulating Medieval Logic*, University Press, Oxford 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones Super Librum Elenchorum Aristotelis*, in R. ANDREWS (ed.), *Opera Philosophica*, The Franciscan institute, St. Bonaventure (N.Y.) 2004, vol. II, *Quaestiones XXVI-XXVIII*, pp. 397-409.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera Omnia*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Civitas Vaticana 1966, vol. XVII, *Lectura I, Distinctio XXXIX, Q. V*, nn. 42-61, pp. 492-500.

<sup>8</sup> Antonie Vos (A. VOS, *Contingency and Freedom. Lectura I 39*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1994) and Simo Knuuttila (S. KNUUTTILA, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, London-New York 1993) have analyzed the logical problem of the composite and divided senses, showing the strict relations between Logic, Ontology and Metaphysics. According to these scholars, Scotus developed a rigorous logical discourse, in order for it to serve as the basis for the following theological analyses.



the 13th century<sup>9</sup> – and of Simon of Faversham,<sup>10</sup> in which we can find the same solution proposed by Aristotle, but with a more articulate demonstration. I will then present Scotus' solution and, by means of a short reference to the ontological application in the *Lectura*,<sup>11</sup> I will attempt to demonstrate the logical and ontological difference with respect to the Aristotelian solution. Finally, I will show Duns Scotus' reception in Richard of Campasall's work, in order to demonstrate the fortune of this new Scotistic approach.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The divided sense

In a question on *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, A.<sup>13</sup> asks: «Quaeritur circa primum modum huius fallaciae utrum ista 'sedentem ambulare est possibile' de virtute sermonis sit possibilis ad sensum compositum et divisum». <sup>14</sup> In his answer to this question, the author tries to explain that «haec oratio 'sedentem ambulare' et cetera de virtute sermonis non est possibilis ad sensum compositum et divisum sed tantum ad sensum compositum, qui est sensus falsus». <sup>15</sup> In particular, A. focuses on the potential condition of the subject, i.e. the one who is sitting:

Terminus igitur concretus qui est 'sedentem' aut significat solum formam accidentalem quae est sessio, aut subiectum cum forma accidentali; si primo modo, planum est quod propositio quolibet sensu est impossibilis, solum enim si sedentem supponeret formam accidentalem, et tunc ei attribueretur potentia ad ambulandum, quod est impossibile quia actus ei numquam conveniet; si autem si sedentem significet subiectum cum forma accidentali, aut significat subiectum per rationem subiecti aut per rationem formae accidentalis; si primo modo, tunc

<sup>9</sup> Cf. INCERTORUM AUCTORUM, *Quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, S. Ebbesen, Hauniae 1977, Q. 829, pp. 336-342.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. SIMON OF FAVERSHAM, *Quaestiones super libro Elenchorum*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1984, Qq. XXIII-XXIV, pp. 89-97.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera Omnia*, cit., L. I, D. XXXIX, Qq. I-V, pp. 481-510.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. RICHARD OF CAMPASALL, «Notabilia de contingencia et presencia dei», in E. A. SYNAN (ed.), *The Works of Richard of Campasall*, 2 vols., Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 1982, vol. II, pp. 38-43.

<sup>13</sup> INCERTORUM AUCTORUM, *Quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, cit., Q. 829, pp. 336-342. According to the critical editor, this commentary was composite between 1270 and 1280 by Peter of Auvergne (cf. INCERTORUM AUCTORUM, *Quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, cit., XXXIV-LIX). Peter lived between 1240 and the beginning of 1300. He was Thomas Aquinas' student and a Master of Theology in Paris. In Ebbesen's opinion, starting from the two manuscripts upon which the critical edition is based, we can know just the period of composition, but the work probably was written previously. Again, in Ebbesen's opinion, Peter is not the author, but just a compiler (*seulement un compilator*), i.e. the final transcriber.

<sup>14</sup> INCERTORUM AUCTORUM, *Quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, cit., p. 336, v. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338, vv. 49-52.

dicendo ‘homo sedens’ esset nugatio quia inutilis repetitio unius et eiusdem secundum eandem rationem et ex eadem parte; si secundo modo, tunc li sedentem subiectum ipsum sub ratione formae accidentalis supponet, ei autem ut sic non est potentia ad ambulandum, quia etsi subiecto sessionis aliquando possit inesse actus ambulandi, ei tamen ut est sub forma sessionis numquam inerit actus ambulandi, nisi duo actus oppositi simul inessent.<sup>16</sup>

According to A., an analysis of the proposition yields two possible solutions. First, in considering the term *sedentem* as an accidental form that can be assumed by a subject, the proposition is false in both senses (*quolibet sensu est impossibilis*). In fact, a proposition cannot contain in a truthful way contrary terms, and in this particular case *sedentem* means a form which cannot ever support a contrary property like *ambulare*. Second, it is possible to analyze the proposition in considering the subject, i.e. a sitting person. In this case, the only possible solution is to assume the divided sense, because the subject can assume different accidental forms in different times. Therefore, we should understand the proposition *sedentem ambulare* in terms of a phrase such as “a sitting person can walk”. This phrase means that there is at present a sitting person who has the power to assume, in a different instant, the accidental form “to be walking”. In this second way, A. accepts the divided sense:

Haec oratio ‘sedentem ambulare’ et cetera multiplex est secundum compositionem et divisionem ex eo quod totum dictum potest intellegi coniunctim, scilicet ‘sedentem ambulare’ et ei ut sic attribui potentia, et sic est sensus compositus et falsus, significat enim quod aliquis habeat potentiam ut sedendo ambulet; aut potest totum dictum intellegi divisim et ei divisim attribui potentia, et sic est oratio vera, significat enim quod aliquis habeat potentiam ad actum ambulandi et sedendi divisim, et hoc modo videtur Aristoteles exprimere sensus istos et hic et in secundo huius.<sup>17</sup>

A. focuses on the subject and on the divided sense together. In doing so, he accepts the Aristotelian principle<sup>18</sup> which asserts that two different potencies cannot exist at the same time within the same subject: «Impossibile est duas potentias contrarias simul aggregari in eodem subiecto». <sup>19</sup> Therefore, A. writes that, in Aristotle’s opinion:

Potentia dicitur dupliciter: uno enim modo proprie dicitur potentia respectus ad aliquem actum in ratione prioris, sive carentia actus in aliquo cum aptitudine

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 338-339, vv. 55-70.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340, v. 102-111.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ARISTOTELES LATINUS, *Metaphysica. Libri I-XIV*, in G. VUILLEMIN-DIEM (ed.), *Aristoteles Latinus*, XXV.3.2, Brill, Leiden-New York-Köln 1995, l. V, c. 10, pp. 105-106, Bekker 1018a 20-1018b 8. The same principle was proposed by Avicenna in his *Metaphysics*, cf. AVICENNA LATINUS, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina. Libri V-X*, Brill, Louvain-Leiden 1980, *Tractatus VIII, Capitulum I*, nn. 69-92, pp. 379-380.

<sup>19</sup> INCERTORUM AUCTORUM, *Quaestiones super sophisticos elenchos*, cit., p. 337, vv. 34-35.

ad actum illum [...] Secundo modo dicitur potentia propter non repugnantiam terminorum, sicut ex opposito dicitur impossibile propter repugnantiam terminorum [...] Per hoc ad rationem: in sedentem enim est potentia ad ambulandum, et hoc de potentia primo modo, non autem ad sedendum et hoc de eadem potentia. Sed in sedente est potentia ad sedendum loquendo de potentia secundo modo, et non sunt potentiae istae contrariae quia non sunt potentiae secundum eandem rationem, sed aequivoce; et quod probat Commentator quod impossibile est duas potentias contrarias simul aggregari in eodem subiecto, intellegit de potentia primo modo dicta.<sup>20</sup>

According to A., if we assume the Aristotelian concepts of act and potency, we can understand the proposition “a sitting person can walk” in a divided sense. The proposition means that someone who is sitting actually has the potency to walk in a different time. In fact, two different accidental properties cannot be actualized at the same time by the same subject. However, they can be assumed in different times if there is some compatibility between the subject and the accidental form. Therefore, to solve this kind of Sophistic proposition, A. accepts the Aristotelian solution.<sup>21</sup>

Simon of Faversham proposes the same solution in the *Quaestiones super libro Elenchorum*. In the *Quaestiones Veteres XXIII* and *XXIV*,<sup>22</sup> Simon offers a logical analysis of the proposition “Possibile est sedentem ambulare”. First of all, he proposes several introductory considerations:

Unde, cum nomen aequivocum distinguatur in plura significata, vox illa manet una secundum se; genus etiam, cum est distinctum in plures species per ipsas differentias, manet unum in illis speciebus. Illud autem quod per se distinguitur in compositione et divisione est materia orationi, scilicet termini considerati sub modis significandi et sub significatis circumscripto quolibet modo proferendi [...] Sed oratio non est multiplex secundum compositionem et divisionem nisi ut habet plures modos proferendi, quia illud quod est multiplex in compositione et divisione est aliquid materiale et potentiale circumscripto omni modo proferendi.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 341-342, vv. 147-170 *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> Alfonso Maierù proposed an interesting analysis on the Aristotelian solution (cf. A. MAIERÙ, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma 1972, pp. 507-510). In Maierù's opinion, the composite and divided senses produce linguistic fallacies: «Si ha *fallacia* in senso composto quando si congiungono termini che vanno tenuti divisi, e si ha *fallacia* in senso diviso quando si dividono termini che vanno presi in congiunzione tra loro» *ibid.*, p. 507). According to Maierù, Aristotle says that propositions like *Possibile est sedentem ambulare, et non scribentem scribere* can be understood in the divided sense only: «Chi sta seduto può camminare, chi non scrive può scrivere, mentre, assumendo congiunti i termini *sedentem-ambulare, scribentem-scribere*, si cade in errore». *Ibid.*, p. 509). Moreover, on the apparent truthfulness of the Sophistic discourse, Maierù writes: «Composizione e divisione derivano dal fatto che il discorso, nonostante l'apparenza, non è lo stesso se inteso in un modo o nell'altro, e perciò i due sensi vanno distinti alla ricerca di quello corretto» *ibid.*, pp. 509-510).

<sup>22</sup> SIMON OF FAVERSHAM, *Quaestiones super libro Elenchorum*, cit., pp. 89-97.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 23, pp. 89-90, vv. 11-35 *passim*.

In particular, Simon focuses on the utterance and on the interpretation of the proposition. It is important to consider that the proposition is unique in itself, but it can assume different logical meanings according to the linguistic and vocal mode in which it is uttered. As stated by Simon, the proposition *Possibile est sedentem ambulare* is true in a certain sense and false in another one. His aim, therefore, is to discover the sense in which this Sophistic proposition can be true.<sup>24</sup>

Simon proposes three passages to solve this problem. First, he believes that the term *Sedens* designates a subject with an essence that assumes an accidental form.<sup>25</sup> This accidental condition can be modified by the subject. Therefore, the subject can assume different accidents at different times. In this way, a sitting person is in an accidental condition, but at a later time he can change this condition into another accidental condition, e.g. he can start to walk. Second, with regard to the previous passage, Simon accepts the Aristotelian principle in which two contrary accidental forms cannot be actualized at the same time by the same subject. Therefore, in Simon's opinion, «sequitur quod quae repugnant per rationes proprias, unum necessario removetur ab alio».<sup>26</sup> Again, «est intelligendum quod actus unius contrarii in aliquo subiecto non tollit potentiam in illo subiecto ad aliud contrarium».<sup>27</sup> Third, in understanding this proposition, Simon argues that the only possible way is to assume the divided sense:

Ista propositio est falsa per se, vera autem per accidens, quia quando aliqua duo repugnant per rationes eorum proprias, unum per se removetur ab altero, et unum per se non est in potentia ad alterum; sed sedens et ambulans repugnant per rationes eorum proprias [...] Tamen est vera per accidens, et ratio huius est quia, sicut accipiebatur tertio, subiectum quod est actu sub uno contrariorum bene est in potentia ad alterum [...] quare erit vera per accidens – et dico per accidens quia subiectum, quod per se potest esse ambulans, non includitur in ratione sedentis unde sedens est, quia ratio sedentis unde sedens est sessio, sessio autem unde sessio non includit subiectum, quare nec in ratione sedentis secundum quod sedens includitur subiectum [...] Haec ergo est vera per accidens 'sedentem possibile est ambulare', unde distinguenda est, et in sensu compositionis est falsa, et in sensu divisionis est vera.<sup>28</sup>

According to Simon, the proposition is true in an accidental way, because the same subject cannot assume two incompatible accidental forms at the same time. A

<sup>24</sup> «In uno sensu est vera et in alio sensu est falsa. Ideo quaeritur utrum ista sit vera *possibile est sedentem ambulare*», *ibid.*, Q. 24, pp. 93-94, vv. 5-7.

<sup>25</sup> «Primum est quod 'sedens' et quilibet alius terminus accidentalis significat aggregatum ex subiecto et accidente; et ratio huius est quia illud significat terminus quod praedicat, sed terminus accidentalis non praedicat nisi aggregatum [...] Unde totum aggregatum est illud quod significatur sub ratione formae accidentalis, ut 'ambulans' significat ambulantem sub ratione ambulationis et 'sedens' sedentem sub ratione sessionis», *ibid.*, Q. 24, p. 94, vv. 28-39 *passim*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 24, p. 95, vv. 46-47.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 24, p. 95, vv. 48-49.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 24, pp. 95-96, vv. 57-108 *passim*.

subject in a particular actual condition only has the power to assume a different accidental form at a different time. Therefore, in analyzing the Sophistic proposition “Possibile est sedentem ambulare”, the accidental condition concerns the subject. The proposition means that the accidental form *to be sitting* does not contain the property *to be walking*; these are two incompatible accidental forms. On the contrary, the proposition concerns the power of the subject. In fact, the subject has the power (the possibility, and not an essential necessity) to assume different accidental forms at different times. By way of these arguments, Simon believes that the proposition is valid in an accidental sense, i.e. in a divided sense. In assuming the divided sense we can say that *a sitting person* is someone in an accidental condition, who can change this condition assuming a different accidental form, e.g. *to be walking*.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. The composite sense

In the *Quaestiones Super Librum Elenchorum Aristotelis*,<sup>30</sup> John Duns Scotus proposes a logical analysis for the same problem previously proposed by A. and Simon of Faversham. In particular, the questions from XXVI to XXVIII are very important in order to understand Duns Scotus' position on this problem.

The principal question concerns «Whether this expression ‘Sedentem ambulare est possibile’ can assume different meanings on the basis of different modes of expression» («Utrum haec oratio ‘Sedentem ambulare est possibile’ sub diversis prolationibus possit diversa significare»).<sup>31</sup> According to Scotus, «*possibile est sedentem ambulare sunt in potentia, ut significant diversa sub diversis prolationibus, ut ostendit Aristoteles in II huius*». <sup>32</sup> In the same way proposed by Simon, the proposition can

<sup>29</sup> Curtis Wilson has shown the relation between Simon's position and the Aristotelian one. In particular, in presenting the Aristotelian distinction between the composite and the divided sense, Wilson writes: «According to Aristotle, composition and division are two of the six kinds of fallacy [...] The fallacy of composition occurs when terms which should be understood separately from one another are taken as conjoined. For example, a fallacy of composition occurs if the proposition ‘It is possible that the sitting should walk’ is understood to mean that one who is sitting can walk while he is sitting; yet the same proposition can be true in a divisive sense, that is, when understood to mean that one who is sitting has a potentiality for walking, or can in fact walk after he is no longer sitting»: C. WILSON, *William Heytesbury. Medieval Logic and the Rise of Mathematical Physics*, The University of Wisconsin press, Madison 1956, p. 12. Georgette Sinkler accepts this interpretation. In analyzing the proposition *Possibile est sedentem ambulare*, she writes: «The compounded sense, which is false, results when ‘sitting’ is compounded with ‘stand’, and the sense is that a person can sit and stand at one and the same time. The divided sense, however, which is true, results when ‘sitting’ is divided from ‘stand’ and compounded with ‘possible’. The sense in that case is that a person who is now sitting has the capacity to stand either now or at some future time»: G. SINKLER, *Medieval Theories of Composition and Division*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Cornell University 1985, pp. 11-12.

<sup>30</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones Super Librum Elenchorum Aristotelis*, cit., pp. 255-527.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Q. 26, p. 397.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 5, p. 398. «According to Aristotle, the terms of the proposition *possibile est*

assume *prima facie* different meanings according to the sense in which it is uttered. In particular, as stated by Scotus, the distinction between *modus significandi* and *modus proferendi* is relevant: «Sicut accentus est quidam modus significandi attributus dictioni per quem unum intellectum simplicem ab alio distinguimus, sic modus proferendi est quidam modus significandi per quem nos distinguimus unum intellectum ab alio».<sup>33</sup>

It is important to explain the distinction proposed by Scotus, because it is the element that Scotus uses to propose a different logical solution with respect to the others that I have shown in the previous section. Moreover, this distinction can be useful to understand the following discourse on the contingency of created things.

Between the 11th and 12th centuries, Peter Abelard and James of Venice proposed two important discourses on the same logical problem that this paper is analysing. In reading their works we can see that they did not propose the kind of articulated analyses that we can find, for instance, in the works produced between the 13th and 14th centuries. They were, however, the first ones to introduce, in discussions on logic during the medieval period, the problem on the modes in which a proposition can be understood. In presenting Abelard's position, Martin Tweedale writes:

If we say it is possible for one standing to be sitting, we may mean to attribute, so to speak, possible truth to the proposition 'One standing is sitting', and the result is absurd since that proposition cannot be true. This is the sense *per compositionem* or *de sensu propositionis*. On the other hand we may mean to attribute to someone standing the possibility of sitting, and then the assertion is very likely true. This is the sense *per divisionem* or *de re*.<sup>34</sup>

As stated by Abelard, a *per se* proposition can be considered in a composite sense, because it is like a unitary *res*. However, in considering the same proposition from a modal logic point of view, i.e. in a practical condition, we have to assume that it is by a divided sense. A modal logic analysis concerns the *de re* problem and so addresses the empirical and practical validity of the proposition. In this practical (or modal logic) way, the composition produces an apparent contradiction. This is because we could misunderstand the proposition "A standing person can sit" in the following terms: someone who is standing can also be sitting at the same time. On the contrary, assuming the divided sense, we can say that there is a person standing at a certain time, who can be sitting in a different subsequent instant.<sup>35</sup> Again, according to James of Venice, both the composite and divided sense could have their respective origins

*sedentem ambulare* exist in a potential way, because they have different meanings on the basis of the different modes in which they are considered».

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 6, p. 398.

<sup>34</sup> M. M. TWEEDALE, «Abelard and the culmination of the old logic», in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, cit., pp.143-157: 151-152. On the Abelard's position on this problem, cf. G. SINKLER, *Medieval Theories of Composition and Division*, cit., pp. 18-24.

<sup>35</sup> For Peter Abelard's text, cf. L. MINIO-PALUELLO, *Twelfth Century Logic: Texts and Studies*, 2 vols., Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 1958, vol. II, pp. 13-14.



*in voce* (in the linguistic structure of the proposition) or *secundum intellectum* (in the logical and intellectual understanding of the proposition).<sup>36</sup>

The considerations proposed by Peter Abelard and James of Venice are developed in a more articulate way by a group of philosophers working in linguistic theory, the Modistae.<sup>37</sup> Jan Pinborg and Alfonso Maierù propose several interesting studies on this group of thinkers and the group's role in the distinction between *modus significandi* and *modus proferendi*. In Pinborg's opinion:

Since vocal expressions obviously differ from one language to another, they cannot constitute the true objects of grammar. The obvious place to look for universal features of language is in the semantic component, but it is not meanings of individual words which prove to be relevant to the grammarian. Grammar is traditionally concerned with more general matters, namely, types of words and their constructions. Accordingly, the interest of the Modistae was concentrated on what was sometimes called the general meanings of words (*significata generalia*). These comprise all such components of meaning as constitute grammatical categories – e.g., nouns, verbs, cases, or tenses. All such components were described as *modi significandi*.<sup>38</sup>

The *modus significandi* concerns the analysis of a proposition considered like a *res* in its unitary condition. As stated by Pinborg, «the semantic status of the *modi significandi* was described within a triadic system: the *modi significandi* correspond to *modi intelligendi*, which in turn correspond to *modi essendi*». <sup>39</sup> In considering the *modus significandi* it means we have to assume the proposition like a unitary *res*, which exists in an essential and composite (unitary) condition. In this way, the proposition exists essentially in a composite sense. Therefore, when Modistae authors speak about *modus significandi*, they are referring to the assumption of a proposition in its essential (unitary) condition. In this regard Jan Pinborg writes:

We find no definition of *modus essendi* in modistic literature, although it obviously is a term essential to their doctrine. This may result from the fact that the

<sup>36</sup> «Senso composto (*compositio*) e senso diviso (*divisio*) possono avere origine *in voce*, cioè nella struttura linguistica della frase, o *secundum intellectum*, cioè nella diversa intelligenza della frase stessa»: A. MAIERÙ, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, cit., p. 513.

<sup>37</sup> The term *Modistae* denotes the (mostly Parisian) masters of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century who wrote on grammar, logic, and metaphysics. They worked a lot on modal logic, because it permitted them to propose ontological considerations starting from problems previously analyzed only from a logic-linguistic point of view. For further information on these thinkers: 1) C. KNUDSEN, «Intentions and impositions», in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, cit., pp. 479-495: 486 (note 37), (Knudsen includes Duns Scotus in this group of thinkers); 2) G. SINKLER, *Medieval Theories of Composition and Division*, cit., pp. 31-32.

<sup>38</sup> J. PINBORG, «Speculative Grammar», in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, cit., pp. 254-269: 256.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

theory was centred around the modes of signifying, whereas the *modi essendi* were simply introduced as the necessary ontological counterparts of the former.<sup>40</sup>

The proposition thus becomes a *res* analyzable in an ontological context. Pinborg states:

The *modi essendi* (or *proprietas rerum*) are accidental properties of the objects, as distinct from their substantial forms [...] According to Modistae two kinds of *modi essendi* must be taken into account: proper and common modes. Proper modes are those which belong to the object considered in itself and give rise to first-order descriptions; common modes are those which serve as the source of a description in terms that are general and sometimes are second-order predicates: the properties involved are all such that they do not characterize items of one category only, but can be used indiscriminately of items of all categories.<sup>41</sup>

According to this interpretation,<sup>42</sup> Duns Scotus' solution focuses on the *modus proferendi*, which relies upon the subject that utters the proposition. Again, the *modus proferendi* determines the meanings by which the proposition can be understood.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Scotus writes: «Diversitas modi proferendi ex parte nostra est. Sed quod oratio sic prolata hoc significet, et sub alio modo proferendi significet aliud, hoc non est ex parte nostra, dummodo oratio habeat in se multipliciter». <sup>44</sup>

The proposition can be understood in a double sense starting just from the *modus proferendi* («modus proferendi facit sensum compositum et divisum»).<sup>45</sup> The subsequent linguistic fallacies stem from the *modus proferendi*, i.e. from the subject that utters the proposition. On the contrary, the proposition *per se* is a unitary *res*, which exists like a simple object in a composite sense. As a consequence, Scotus states:

Continua prolatio eius est 'sedentem' cum hoc quod est 'ambulare' causat sensum compositum. Ille autem modus proferendi possibilis est in oratione. Nam sic modi significandi grammaticales ad invicem dependentes terminantur, et quae nata sunt coniungi coniunguntur [...] Sensus autem divisionis accidit ex discontinua prolatione earumdem partium. Et quia quae nata sunt coniungi ad invicem

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262 *passim*.

<sup>42</sup> For further readings on *modus significandi* and on Modistae philosophers: 1) J. PINBORG, *Die Entwicklung der Sprachtheorie im Mittelalter*, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster 1967; 2) *Id.*, *Logik und Semantik im Mittelalter – Ein Überblick*, Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1972; 3) *Id.*, *Medieval Semantics. Selected Studies on Medieval Logic and Grammar*, Variorum Reprints, London 1984; 4) G. L. BURSILL-HALL, *Speculative Grammars of the Middle Ages*, Mouton, Paris 1971.

<sup>43</sup> «Unde sicut accentus variat potestatem dictionis, sic modus proferendi variat potestatem orationis»: JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones Super Librum Elenchorum Aristotelis*, cit., Q. 26, n. 6, p. 398.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 8, p. 399.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 9, p. 399.



separantur, ideo ille sensus minus appropriatur orationi; unde dividuntur cum quadam violentia.<sup>46</sup>

There are two fundamental elements in Duns Scotus' analysis that will be useful in the following ontological analyses. The first element is the *per se* existence of the proposition, which means that the proposition exists by itself in a composite and unitary sense. The second element is the possibility for the subject to utter that proposition and to produce a distinction between the composite and divided senses, i.e. to create a linguistic fallacy in uttering a proposition. In this way Scotus proposes a first conclusion:

In primo sensu ex continua prolatione eius quod est 'sedentem' cum 'ambulare', intelligimus extrema referri ad idem [...] Sed sive sic sive sic, semper illa extrema in sensu compositionis ad idem habent referri. Sed in sensu divisionis, ex discontinua prolatione istarum dictionum, potest ly sedens accipi pro uno tempore et ly ambulare pro alio. Unde in sensu divisionis, modus non dicit dispositionem circa illa extrema pro eodem tempore, sed permittitur quod pro diversis temporibus accipiantur.<sup>47</sup>

The most important element of Duns Scotus' analysis is the new interpretation of the composite sense. In this text (a logical commentary on an Aristotelian text), Scotus must explain the validity of the composite sense from a logical point of view. In this regard he uses several Aristotelian philosophical concepts to show the validity of that interpretation according to Aristotelian thought. Scotus states that the divided sense stems from the subject that can realize two contrary potencies at different times. However, the proposition exists *per se* in a composite sense. It contains these two contrary potencies at the same time. The division happens just when the subject has to realize those two potencies. In this case there is distinction, i.e. the subject needs different instants in which he can realize two contrary potencies. The subject lacks the power to realize contrary potencies at the same time, but this limit does not concern the existence of the proposition *per se*.

According to this view, there is a simple object which exists as a unitary entity, i.e. the proposition in a composite sense. On the other hand, there is a subject who has the power to assume the same "object" in different manners, i.e. he can realize the properties of the proposition at different times. It is important to consider that this distinction relies upon the subject and not upon the proposition. The subject can be sitting and, at the same time, possesses the power to change this condition and therefore to be walking (as opposed to simply continuing to sit). However, it cannot do these two things at the same time. Therefore, the distinction happens solely when someone utters or attempts to actualize that proposition. In this case there is a lin-

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 9-10, p. 399 *passim*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 26, n. 11, p. 400 *passim*.

guistic and modal distinction, because the subject cannot realize contrary potencies at the same time.

After these logical and philosophical clarifications, Scotus offers a solution on the question «Whether this proposition ‘Sedentem ambulare est possibile’ can be true in the divided sense» («Utrum haec propositio ‘sedentem ambulare est possibile’ sit vera in sensu diviso»)<sup>48</sup> In particular, he states:

Propositio potest esse vera in sensu diviso ‘sedentem ambulare est possibile’, nam propositio significat quod unio praedicati ad subiectum est possibilis. Sed hoc potest esse dupliciter: vel pro eodem tempore, et sic est composita et falsa; vel pro diversis temporibus, et sic est divisa et vera. Unde illud quod est subiectum sessionis in uno tempore, potest esse subiectum ambulationis in alio tempore.<sup>49</sup>

This passage is a good example to understand the Modistae’s method of work. In fact, Duns Scotus prepared a logical commentary that identified the rational elements for the following ontological analyses. He proposed an innovative solution for this logical problem. In doing so, he did not change the essential condition of the human subject, which can never realize opposing potencies at the same time. On the contrary, he offered the logical possibility for the existence of a particular kind of things, i.e. a *per se* proposition which exists like a unitary *res* in a composite sense. There is, therefore, a logical condition in which a proposition like *A sitting person can walk* exists *per se* in a composite sense. On the other hand, there is an empirical subject that, in actualizing the aforementioned proposition, can assume those possibilities (*to be sitting* and *to be walking*), just at different times.

In reading Alfonso Maierù’s interpretation of Duns Scotus’ solution, it seems that, as stated by Scotus, linguistic fallacies are not a real problem.<sup>50</sup> In considering Duns Scotus’ analysis, there is a clear definition for each concept. In particular, the distinction between *modus significandi* and *modus proferendi* is relevant, i.e. the distinction between proposition *per se* and linguistic utterance. Moreover, the distinction between the composite and divided senses is relevant too, i.e. the condition of the proposition like a *per se* thing and the empirical actualization of that proposition by a subject. According to Maierù, a fallacy arises only when an erroneous connection between the proposition and his empirical actualization is placed, i.e. when the existential condition of the proposition is not considered.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 27, pp. 403-404.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, Q. 28, n. 12, pp. 406-407.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. A. MAIERÙ, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, cit., pp. 524-528.

<sup>51</sup> «La *constructio* operata dai ‘modi significandi’ grammaticali dà luogo (naturalmente, si potrebbe dire) al senso composto, mentre il senso diviso interviene facendo quasi violenza alla natura delle *dictiones* e alla loro disposizione nella *oratio*»: A. MAIERÙ, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, cit., p. 532.

#### 4. The composite sense in the ontological and theological questions

In the commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Scotus pursues a clear analysis of the distinction between the composite and divided senses from an ontological and theological point of view. In particular, Scotus proposes several considerations in the *Lectura I Distinctio XXXIX*.<sup>52</sup> A particularly important section in this text is that in which Scotus explains how the contingency of the created things depends upon the divine will (*Causa contingentiae in rebus est ex parte voluntatis divinae*).<sup>53</sup>

According to Scotus, God works by intellect and will.<sup>54</sup> However, creaturely contingency cannot depend on the divine intellectual activity, because the intellect precedes the will, and it is necessary and immutable. Therefore, Scotus focuses on the will. As stated by Scotus, God produces the creature and the contingency by an act of the will. In other words, God uses the divine will to determine which of the intellectual possibilities must actualize.<sup>55</sup> First, because it is more accessible to the creatures who are considering it, he presents the human will. Human will is strictly connected with human freedom in three different ways:

Voluntas enim nostra libera est ad actus oppositos (ut ad volendum et nolendum, et amandum et odiendum), et secundo mediantibus actibus oppositis est libera ad objecta opposita ut libere tendat in ea, et tertio est libera ad effectus quos producit sive immediate sive movendo alias potentias exsecutivas.<sup>56</sup>

According to Scotus, two different kinds of contingencies derive from these three different types of freedom. By the first, «distinguuntur propositiones de possibili quae fiunt de extremis contrariis et oppositis, ut *album potest esse nigrum*».<sup>57</sup> This proposition can be true in a divided sense, because the two potencies happen at different times. Therefore, Scotus states: «Something white at a can be black at b» («album in a potest esse nigrum in b»);<sup>58</sup> or «The will loving him, can hate him» («voluntas amans illum,

<sup>52</sup> On the ontological effects of the distinction between composite and divided sense during the Scholastic: 1) S. KNUUTTILA, «Concrete Accidental Terms», in J. L. FINK (ed.), *Logic and Language in the Middle Ages*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013, pp. 273-286: 282-286; 2) A. MAIERÙ, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, cit., pp. 543-544.

<sup>53</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera Omnia*, cit., L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, n. 41, p. 492.

<sup>54</sup> «Deus autem est movens per intellectum et voluntatem [...] oportet igitur inquirere causam contingentiae in entibus ex parte intellectus divini vel eius voluntatis», *ibid.*, L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, n. 42, p. 492 *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> «Sed ista contingentia non est ex parte intellectus divini in quantum ostendit aliquid voluntati, quia quidquid conosci ante actum voluntatis, necessario cognoscit et naturaliter, ita quod non sit ibi contingentia ad opposita [...] Unde quando intellectus divinus apprehendit 'hoc esse faciendum' ante voluntatis actum, apprehendit ut neutram [...] Oportet igitur assignare causam contingentiae in rebus ex parte voluntatis divinae», *ibid.*, L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, nn. 43-44, pp. 492-493 *passim*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, n. 45, p. 493.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, n. 48, p. 494.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5, n. 48, p. 494.

potest odire illum»).<sup>59</sup> According to the previous section, from a human point of view a subject cannot realize contrary possibilities at the same time. The divided sense is the only rational way in which conflicting possibilities can be realized by a human subject. Pursuing this line of thought, Simo Knuuttila presents, from an ontological point of view, the necessity of assuming the divided sense in analyzing human possibilities:

The sentences ‘a man who is not writing can write’ and ‘a sitting man can walk’ are false when the possibility is understood to qualify the composition of two mutually exclusive predicates with the same subject at the same time. And Aristotle thought that the Megarian principle according to which only the actual is possible is based on the falseness of precisely this sort of sentence *in sensu composito* [...] the same proposition can also be taken *in sensu diviso*. It is then true that someone not writing can write [...] the possibility can refer to a supposed actuality of predicates at the same time (*in sensu composito*) or at different times (*in sensu diviso*) [...] The distinction thus includes the step from temporally definite sentences to temporally indefinite ones, but it is embedded in a logical distinction.<sup>60</sup>

In presenting the second kind of contingency, Scotus introduces the concept of logical potency (*potentia logica*). Logical potency suggests the need to assume the composite sense in considering the *per se* existence of a proposition like «voluntas volens *a* in hoc instanti et pro hoc instanti, potest nolle *a* in eodem et pro eodem».<sup>61</sup>

According to Scotus, the concept of logical potency does not mean that a human subject can actualize the aforementioned proposition in a composite mode. On the contrary, the concept means that the composite sense can be useful in presenting the existence of a proposition as a simple object. In this way, Scotus affirms that a human subject has the power to realize contrary possibilities at different times. For a human subject, then, the proposition can be true in a divided sense. However, the proposition *per se* exists in a composite sense, i.e. it is a unitary and simple *res*.

From an ontological point of view, the human subject is still in a diachronic contingency. In this regard Antoine Vos states:

This concerns nothing but the crucial fact that possibility propositions are true if they are composite of non-contradictory terms [...] the non-contradiction of the terms is sufficient condition for the possibility of the states of affairs as described in the proposition [...] Scotus adds [...] that the logical possibility is about *simultaneity* or *synchrony* of a factual state of affairs and the *possibility* of the opposite. Applied to the will: Let us suppose an act of the will at one particular moment,

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> S. KNUUTTILA, «Duns Scotus’ Criticism of the Statistical Interpretation of the Modality», in J. P. BECKMAN (ed.), *Sprache und Erkenntnis im Mittelalter*, 2 vols., W. De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1981, vol. I, pp. 441-450: 444 *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera Omnia*, cit., *L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5*, n. 50, p. 495: «The will, willing *a* at this moment and for this moment, can not-will *a* at and for the same moment».

then it remains true that, if the will wills an object, at that moment, it can still not-will that object.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, in concluding the analysis on contingency from a human point of view, Scotus states that a proposition such as *A sitting person can walk* «est distinguenda secundum compositionem et divisionem: et in sensu compositionis falsa [...] in sensu autem divisionis est propositio vera».<sup>63</sup>

Once Scotus has analyzed the human will, he proposes several considerations on the divine will, because it seems to be the origin of the contingency. The basic argument concerns the distinction between divine and human power, and thus the distinction between their different potencies.

First of all, Scotus says that «the divine will is free to produce opposite effects» («voluntas enim divina libera est ad effectus oppositos producendos»)<sup>64</sup> I have shown previously that the will (it does not matter whether it is divine or human) permits one to actualize intellectual possibilities. According to Scotus, since the human will is a created and imperfect faculty, it can only realize conflicting events at different times. On the contrary, the divine will is non-created and perfect; therefore, it is not obliged to respect human potencies (e.g. temporality or other human structural conditions). As it is atemporal, it can also realize contrary events at the same time.<sup>65</sup> As stated by Scotus, God knows everything in a composite sense, because he exists in an eternal condition for which there is no successive instants. A human subject can realize contrary potencies at different times; however, God knows them (and in a certain sense sees them) in the same eternal instant (*instanti aeternitatis*). In other words, from a divine point of view, both the human subject and all his potencies really exist in the same eternal instant.

In this way, from a divine point of view, a proposition like «*Voluntas volens in a potest nolle in a*» is valid in a composite sense. Moreover, according to this analysis, there is a synchronic contingency. Diachronic contingency solely concerns an accidental condition – i.e. it is a consequence of human time. The ultimate degree of the real concerns the divine domain for which all intellectual knowledge has a real ontological existence at the same time. The diachrony is a creatural effect, which depends upon limited and imperfect human potencies.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> A. Vos, *Contingency and Freedom*, cit., p. 117 *passim*.

<sup>63</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera Omnia*, cit., *L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5*, n. 51, p. 495.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, *L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5*, n. 53, p. 496.

<sup>65</sup> «Voluntas autem divina non potest habere nisi unicum volitionem, et ideo unica volitione potest velle opposita obiecta, nam eius unica volitio est praevalens omnibus volitionibus creatis respectu diversorum, sicut eius unica intellectio respectu omnium intellectionum creaturarum [...] Est igitur libertas voluntatis divinae quod ipsa unica volitione potest tendere in opposita obiecta, et in infinitum liberius quam nos diversis volitionibus [...] voluntas divina unica volitione vult in aeternitate [...] ita etiam voluntas divina, quae in quantum operativa praecedat se ut productiva, potest in eodem instanti aeternitatis et pro eodem instanti aeternitatis velle et nolle aliquid, et sic producere aliquid et non producere», *ibid.*, *L. I, D. 39, Q. 1-5*, n. 53-54, pp. 496-497 *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> The ontological validity of a proposition such as *Possibile est sedentem ambulare* is possible

Following these analyses, I would like to offer some final considerations on Richard of Campasall's position on contingency.<sup>67</sup> It is an example to present the fortune of the Scotistic approach, which comes from a general *Modistae* school of thought.

In Richard's opinion, when a proposition uttered by someone in the past becomes actualized, the proposition has to respect his own previous truth value. From a divine point of view, the truth value cannot change through the passage between utterance and realization, because such a change would imply a certain imperfection in the divine knowledge. In this regard, Richard states:

‘Antichristus erit’. Ista propositio potest esse falsa, sicut antichristus potest esse non futurus, sed posquam vera est, non potest successive mutari a veritate in falsitatem, nec e converso [...] Ratio est quia ista: ‘antichristus erit’ est vera, et potest esse falsa, sed si falsa ponatur, ab eterno falsa fuit, ita quod ibi non esset mutatio, et illud respondendum est de propositionibus de futuro.<sup>68</sup>

God is an omnipotent being, and as such he must know, from eternity, the truth value of each proposition. Therefore, all events have always had the same truth value, independent of the time in which they become actualized for a subject. On the other hand, this theory could imply several doctrinal and philosophical problems, e.g. the role of human freedom or determinism, or theodicy. For this reason, Richard offers the same Scotistic solution: he argues that while God has omniscience of all possibilities, he maintains a neutral view of these possibilities. In this way, all divine intellectual knowledge truly exists in the same eternal instant. Divine knowledge implies the reality (not the actuality) of all possibilities. These possibilities exist in the same eternal instant, but a human subject can realize these same possibilities only in a diachronic way, because he is an imperfect creature with limited power (e.g. he cannot realize contrary

just in assuming a not classic modal logic system, i.e. a different modal theory respect to the Aristotelian one. In particular, Duns Scotus proposes a new formulation of the axioms of the *Possible* and *Necessary* starting from a divine point of view, i.e. in considering the ultimate reality for the Christianity. God is the only necessary being for which *Possible* means the real existence of all logical possibilities at the same time; *Necessary* means the divine knowledge of all possibilities and so their existence into the real. In fact, God cannot know something that does not exist or, in other words, every divine intellectual knowledge exists. All logical possibilities exist in a certain way. Therefore they are real. However, although they exist in the divine intellect at the same time (synchronically), their actualization by a human subject must be at different times (diachronically). Moreover, it has to be considered that words such as synchronic or diachronic contingency have not been proposed by Scotus, but are rather Vos' interpretation. In accordance with the approach proposed by Antoine Vos and Simo Knuuttila, I proposed several specific analyses on this problem: 1) M. SCOZIA, *Le origini medievali di una teoria modale non aristotelica*, in «Schede Medievali» 51 (2013), pp. 99-146; 2) M. SCOZIA, *La non classicità della metodologia filosofica di Giovanni Duns Scoto*, in «Antonianum» 89.4 (2014), pp. 645-678. Again, starting from this theological text, it is possible to present Duns Scotus' modal theory (cf. G. SINKLER, *Medieval Theories of Composition and Division*, cit., p. 21).

<sup>67</sup> RICHARD OF CAMPASALL, «Notabilia de contingencia et presencia dei», cit., pp. 38-43.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 1-3, p. 38 *passim*.



potencies at the same time). In this way, Richard states: «Divina essentia habet unum modum representandi licet non determinetur ad unum oppositum».<sup>69</sup> Richard's words indicate that God is not obliged to realize contrary possibilities at different times, as he knows and he realizes everything in the same eternal instant, i.e. in a composite sense:

Certa et infallibilis cognitio potest haberi de futuris contingentibus, sine mutacione a veritate in falsitatem, sine decisione veritatis, vel successione falsitatis post veritatem, vel deceptio in sciencia, quia propositio potest esse contingenter vera, et tamen, non mutari de veritate in falsitatem, nec desinere esse vera, et cetera; igitur, multo magis deus potest aliquid scire contingenter, et tamen, sciencia non potest mutari in falsitatem, nec arguit desicionem in sciencia sicut nec in propositione, nec successione, ita quod deus potest scire quod non scit sine successione, quia unicus actus indivisibilis est, nec arguit deceptioem quia non omnis, qui est certus et necessario certus.<sup>70</sup>

In reading Richard's text, we can appreciate the validity of Duns Scotus' theory on divine neutral knowledge. Scotus' solution proves useful in addressing other philosophical and theological problems like determinism or divine fallibility. According to Scotus, God has intellectual knowledge of all possibilities, but without truth value. Since divine knowledge is perfect, it must imply a real existence. Of course, there are different ways in which a *res* can be said to be real. For example, an actual choice is not real like the corresponding not-actualized possibility. It simply means that there are different degrees of the real. All possibilities must be real in a certain sense before one of them can become actual. Actuality is thus merely a specific part of the general condition of reality.<sup>71</sup>

Following Duns Scotus' works, it is therefore possible to assume the composite sense in presenting a proposition like *Possibile est sedentem ambulare* from a logical and ontological point of view.<sup>72</sup> I have shown that it is a philosophical innovation which indirectly concerns the discussion of theological problems such as divine knowledge and God's influence on the creatures. However, in general it can be considered to be a new and different rational approach that in the end diverges quite far from the Aristotelian perspective that sparked it.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 20, p. 42.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, n. 25, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> On the problem of the degrees of the real cf: L. PARISOLI, *La contraddizione vera. Giovanni Duns Scoto tra la necessità della metafisica e il discorso della filosofia pratica*, Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Roma 2005, pp. 47-69.

<sup>72</sup> On the ontological validity of the distinction between the composite and divided senses after Richard of Campasall, cf. C. NORMORE, «Future Contingents», in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, cit., pp. 358-381: 369-378.

