

MAGISTER ABSTRACTIONUM

Jan Pinborg

In several 14th century logical discussions a *magister abstractionum* is referred to. Since these quotations have been thought to offer a clue to the date of Ockham's *Summa Logicae* the whole question is taken up in the introduction to the magnificent new edition of this work¹. Several quotations are given, but no conclusion as to the identity of this master is reached.

However, it is possible to identify the text quoted. Among the logical texts described, but not edited by L.M. de Rijk in his *Logica modernorum II* we find a collection of *Sophismata* called *Abstractiones Ricardi Sophistae*. It is known from 4 Mss. and seems to be as early as the 1240s².

That this in fact is the text referred to under the name of *magister abstractionum* emerges from a juxtaposition of the texts printed by the editors of Ockham and the following excerpts from the *Abstractiones*, transcribed from the Ms. Oxford, Bodl. L. Digby 24.

f. 61ra

Incipit: Nulla est affirmatio in qua universale universaliter sumptum predicatur, ut dicit Aristoteles. Et hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut quod non predicatur universale sumptum universaliter....

f. 61va (From the end of the 7th sophisma: OMNIS HOMO EST SINGULARE...):

In hiis predictis et consimilibus distinguunt quidam quod signum potest teneri collective vel divisive. Sed quod signum non tenetur collective nisi quando predicatum redditur omnibus suppositis subiecti

-
- 1) G. de Ockham Opera Philosophica I, Summa logicae ed. Ph. Boehner, G. Gal & S. Brown. St. Bonaventure 1974, p.50*-53*.
 - 2) L.M. de Rijk, Logica Modernorum II 1, Assen 1967, 62-73. The Mss. are Oxford, Bodl. Libr. Digby 2 f. 122r-140v. Digby 24 f. 61r-90r. Brugge, SB 497 f. 74r-95v. Paris BN lat. 14069 f. 26r-33r (incomplete). A list of the sophisms is given by de Rijk l.c.

simul, et quando sic redditur predicatum subiecto redditur ei verbum in plurali numero, et signum ***³ est signum multitudinis in numero plurali. Non est etiam sic distinguere signo existente in numero singulari, sed in numero plurali tenet hec distinctio.

f. 62^{ra}

(11) OMNE COLORATUM EST. Sit unum solum album, unum solum nigrum, unum solum medium. Et probatur sic: album est, nigrum est, medium est. Ergo omne coloratum est.

Contra, omne coloratum est, omne album est coloratum ergo omne album est.

Preterea, 'omnis' exigit tria appellata. Quelibet illarum est falsa: omne album est, omne nigrum est, <omne> medium est. Hiis igitur opposite sunt vere, ex quibus sequitur: non omne coloratum est.

Solutio: Facta distributione pro partibus remotis falsa est prima propositio et hec erit <vera> 'non omne coloratum est'. Si fiat distributio pro partibus propinquis accidit e contrario, et non tenet 'omne coloratum est, omne album est coloratum, ergo omne album est' eo quod convertitur quale quid in hoc aliquid.

Respondendo non per distinctionem dicendum quod hec est vera simpliciter 'omne coloratum est' et non tenet 'omne coloratum est, omne album est coloratum, ergo omne album est' eo quod equivocatur 'esse'. 'Esse' enim in prima propositione est esse quod est operatio entis et hoc est esse quod est ens. Et cum dicitur 'omne album est coloratum' est esse consequentie sive esse habitudinis, cuiusmodi est esse cum dicitur 'si est album est coloratum'.

Et non tenet 'non omne album est, non omne nigrum est, non omne medium est, ergo non omne coloratum est', sed est fallacia accidentis. Sequitur 'si omne album est, et omne nigrum est, et omne medium est, ergo omne coloratum est' et non convertitur quia ex vero non sequitur falsum, arguendo e contrario est fallacia consequentis a positione consequentis. Quare sic arguendo 'non omne album est, non omne nigrum est, non omne medium est, ergo non omne coloratum est, eadem est fallacia a destructione antecedentis. Non enim sequitur 'omne coloratum est, et ergo omne album, omne nigrum, omne medium'. Quare non sequitur e contrario negando, cum ex veris non sequitur falsum. Sunt enim premissae vere et conclusio falsa, sustinendo quod 'omnis'

3) the word following 'signum' is illegible in my copy.

exigit tria appellata sicut dicunt quidam. Et per hoc solvitur illud sophisma.

f. 62 ra-b

(12) OMNIS FENIX EST. Probatio: hec est falsa 'aliqua fenix non est', ergo hec est vera 'omnis fenix est'.

Contra, 'omnis' exigit tria appellata, et non sunt tres fenices. Ergo prima falsa.

Solutio, dicendum quod prima est falsa, eo quod affirmatur esse actu de eo quod non est. Unde respondendum est per interemptionem, cum dicit hanc esse falsum 'aliqua fenix non est'. Est enim vera simpliciter; vere enim negatur esse de eo quod non est quia ille terminus 'fenix' supponit equaliter pro ente et pro non ente⁴.

It is curious that Ockham and his contemporaries are arguing so vehemently against a text perhaps 60 or 70 years old. A reasonable explanation would be that the *Abstractiones* were used in Oxford as a kind of text-book, from which the most important logical distinctions could be taught. Some corroboration for this can be gained from the fact that the *magister abstractionum* is also quoted in earlier English sources. I owe this information to professor John Murdoch, who referred me to William of Alnwick and to some Sophismata disputed in the 1290s and found in the Ms. Worcester, Cath. Q 13⁵. Further, the *Abstractiones* have very definite points of contact with the writings of William of Sherwood. If the early date (about 1240) is correct, our text may very well turn out to be an important source for Sherwood's logical doctrine. This incidentally confirms that Oxford knew a continuous tradition of terminist logic, different from the developments in Paris⁶.

Who then was the author of this important, even if hardly profound, logical textbook? Two Mss. ascribe it to a Richardus Sophista. Professor de Rijk proposed to identify him with Richard Fishacre. I do not find this terribly convincing.

Having noticed the resemblance between some of Ockham's arguments

4) cp. Ockham SL II 4, ed. 1. P. 261,72 ff.

5) Prof. Murdoch is preparing a description of the Worcester Ms.

6) For these compare my "Die Logik der Modistae" in *Studia Mediewistyczne* 16 (1975) 39-97.

against our master (especially SL II 4, 261 ff.) and Roger Bacon's critique (in the *Compendium Studii Theologie*)⁷ of his archenemy Richard Rufus of Cornwall, one is tempted to identify our Richardus Sophista with the latter. This would verify Bacon's claims as to the influence of Rufus. But the identification, of course, needs further corroboration.

7) The earlier and more comprehensive draft of this polemical treatise, transmitted in another Digby Ms. (55 f. 229-244) does not mention Rufus but only his teachings. I hope soon to return to this remarkable text.