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Logic—the Foundation of Medieval Philosophy

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I have spent much of my life studying medieval philosophy, and I have done research in several of its sub-disciplines, but one has always remained central to my research, and that is logic.

One does not need an excuse for being interested in logic, but people might with some justification consider the subject somewhat restricted and somewhat arid—that is, until they realize the close connection between logic and ontology. Once you accept that the notions of possibility and necessity have a place in logic you are in deep ontological waters. And this, of course, is not the only example. Once you start to think about quantification you cannot avoid the perennial question about universals versus individuals, and before you can count to three you are engaged in reflections about the relation between human cognition and the external world.

Add to this that medieval logic covered fields that are no longer considered parts of the discipline, such as the Aristotelian theory of categories, or the theory of science presented in the *Posterior Analytics*, as well as logical tools that are no longer part of standard logic, such as the *topoi* or *loci*.

And finally, don't forget that studying the *Peri hermeneias* implies thinking about concept formation and the relations between words, concepts and the things that words signify and concepts are concepts of. Given all this, it becomes understandable that medieval logic is an extremely fertile field of study.

* This is a slightly revised version of a talk I gave at a conference in Venice in 2022. The main change is the addition of bibliographical references in footnotes. Most of those references are to works by myself. If I had had to give equal attention to the publications by other people, the notes would have swollen so as to fill more than the text.

Then there are some incidental historical facts.¹ Already in the Hellenistic Age it had become a common conviction that any study of philosophy must start with a training in logic, with the result, of course, that many never got beyond what was meant to be the preparatory instruction. Then, in the third century AD the old Hellenistic sects of Academics, Peripatetics, Stoics, Epicureans, Cynics and Sceptics were swept away and replaced by a combined Aristoteli-Platonism, in which Aristotle's logic was supposed to prepare the student for the higher matters treated by Plato and by Aristotle in his non-logical writings.

Soon a core curriculum of logic was established, consisting of Porphyry's *Introduction to the Categories*, Aristotle's *Categories* and *Peri hermeneias* plus the first seven chapters of book I of the *Prior Analytics*, while the rest of the *Organon* was not taught in elementary courses and was not summarized in handbooks.

Philosophical education had become scholastic in the sense that the foundation was analysis of the writings of the two authoritative writers, and introductory courses in logic were based on handbooks that boiled down the contents of the reduced *Organon* to a manageable set of definitions and rules.

This means that anyone who did get a training in logic, but did not spend a large part of his youth on it, would be introduced to the Porphyrian predicables and the problem of universals, the Aristotelian categories, the semantic theory of the *Peri hermeneias* and its analysis of opposition and entailment between propositions, plus, possibly, its reflections about modalities, and, finally, the theory of non-modal syllogistic reasoning in the three Aristotelian figures.

He would also learn a little about hypothetical syllogistic, even though this was something Aristotle had neglected. But he would not learn about modal syllogistic, nor about the theory of knowledge and demonstrative proof or about the topics or fallacies. In the Latin part of the Roman Empire this got a twist, it seems, as the instruction in logic was combined with an

¹ The picture of the development of ancient logic presented here is one I have advocated on numerous occasions. It was first presented in volume 1 of Ebbesen 1981a.

introduction to rhetoric, and Cicero's *Topics* became part of the core curriculum.

The sixth century saw the break-down of higher education in much of the Empire, and in particular in the West, where the city culture that was the carrier of such education almost disappeared. The Latin philosophical library had never been particularly rich, and what survived the deluge was—apart from Cicero and Seneca—mainly works that reflected the minimum course of logic.

Luckily for the Westerners, Boethius in the early sixth century had done a remarkable job as a translator of Aristotelian texts and a writer of Latin commentaries and companion texts in the Greek tradition.¹

So when cities began to blossom again in Italy and France in the late eleventh century and learned men started to set up shop as teachers of philosophy, this was their equipment:

Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* and *Peri hermeneias*, all three accompanied with commentaries by Boethius. Further, Boethius' treatises on categorical and hypothetical syllogistic, as well as his *On Topical Differences* and *On Division*. Add to this a lonely Platonic item, a part of the *Timæus* with Calcidius' late-ancient commentary. And, finally, not to be forgotten: Priscian's Latin grammar. Though not a philosophical text by any standard classification, it was to play a major role in philosophical discussions until the end of the thirteenth century.² Priscianic grammar and Aristotelian logic—both with certain medieval offshoots—provided the scholastics with their basic toolbox.

It is difficult for us to imagine the philosophical schools of the early twelfth century, but one thing is certain: The detailed analysis of the authoritative texts went hand in hand with a well-developed culture of discussion, one characteristic of which was the production of complicated

¹ About Boethius, see Ebbesen 1987a; Ebbesen 2009a; Ebbesen 2011.

² The immense importance of the study of Priscian has not least been underscored by Irène Rosier-Catach in numerous studies from the 1980s onwards. There is no up-to-date comprehensive study of medieval linguistics to replace Jan Pinborg's (1937–1982) seminal *Die Entwicklung der Sprachtheorie im Mittelalter* (Pinborg 1967).

concatenated arguments using all the resources of the logic of the time. Which in turn spurred an interest in finding ways to spot logical flaws in arguments.

John of Salisbury amusingly claims it was a good idea for members of the audience at a disputation to have a bag of peas at hand, so that during long and complicated sentences one could take out a pea each time a negation was used, and then at the end see whether the result was affirmative or negative by seeing whether the number of peas was even or odd.¹

Such was the backdrop when early in the twelfth century Boethius' long-neglected translations of the *Prior Analytics*, the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations* were discovered in God knows which dusty library and brought to the attention of scholars in France and Italy, and when soon afterwards James of Venice translated the *Posterior Analytics* as well as several of Aristotle's non-logical works.²

Only the *Sophistical Refutations*, the book about fallacies, was an immediate success. As early as 1130 or not much later James of Venice pro-

¹ John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon* I.3: "Inconueniens prorsus erat oratio in qua haec verba 'conueniens' et 'inconueniens', 'argumentum' et 'ratio' non perstrebebant, multiplicatis particulis negativis et traiectis per 'esse' et 'non esse', ita ut calculo opus esset quotiens fuerat disputandum. Alioquin vis affirmationis et negationis erat incognita. Nam plerumque vim affirmationis habet geminata negatio, itemque vis negatoria ab impari numero conualescit, siquidem negatio iterata plerumque se ipsam perimit, et contradictioni sicut regulariter proditum est coaequatur. Ut ergo pari loco an impari versetur deprehendi queat, ad disceptationes collectam fabam et pisam deferre qui conueniebatur consilio prudenti consueverat."

² Most of the pioneering work both on Boethius' translations of the *Ars vetus* and on the texts of the *Ars nova* (*Analytics*, *Topics*, *Elenchi*) was done by L. Minio-Paluello (1907–1986), who in his later years was assisted by B. G. Dod. Their results were summarized in the introductions to volumes I–VI of *Aristoteles Latinus*, published between 1961 and 1975. Dod 1982 is a survey article, and several fundamental papers are gathered in Minio-Paluello 1972.

duced a commentary of his own as well as a translation of one by his Byzantine contemporary Michael of Ephesus, and soon a Latin tradition for teaching the *Elenchi* was established.¹

Alberic of Paris, Abelard's notorious opponent, probably gave a course on the book in the late 1140s. It was recorded in writing, whether by himself or by a pupil. We only have fragmentary reports of it, but the fragments interestingly show that time and again he took issue with James of Venice's interpretation of the Aristotelian text.²

Shortly afterwards, an anonymous author composed a well-developed commentary, and another an equally well-developed handbook of the doctrine of the work.³ In no more than a generation the *Elenchi* had changed from being a book that nobody had read to one that was fully integrated in the standard curriculum.

It is striking that while alert to the *Elenchi*, Alberic seems to have blissfully ignorant of both the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*. We have some information about the way he treated the fallacy of begging the question, and this shows that he took no account whatsoever of the highly relevant chapters about the matter in those other parts of the *Ars nova*.⁴

In fact, we only have one twelfth-century commentary on the *Prior Analytics*, and that one is from the end of the century,⁵ while we do not

¹ James of Venice's own commentary on the *Elenchi* seems to have had few readers; the little we know about its contents comes from the texts called *Glose in Aristotilis Sophisticos Elenchos* and *Summa Sophisticorum Elencorum* by L. M. De Rijk, who edited them in volume 1 of *De Rijk* 1962–67. There are plenty of quotations (and misquotations) of James' translation of Michael of Ephesus' commentary in Latin texts from the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. For more about this, see Ebbesen forthcoming a.

² See Ebbesen forthcoming a.

³ *Glose in Aristotilis Sophisticos Elenchos* and *Summa Sophisticorum Elencorum* (see note 1 on this page).

⁴ See Ebbesen forthcoming a.

⁵ '*Anonymus Aurelianensis III*' in *Aristotelis Analytica priora*. The text is incomplete, breaking off in the exegesis of *APr.* I.29. I have tentatively dated it "ca. 1160–1180," and that date was accepted by the editor, but I am now inclined to think that a slightly later date, say the 1180s, is perhaps more likely.

possess a single twelfth-century commentary on the *Topics* or on the *Posterior Analytics*.¹

To all appearances, people felt that the *Elenchi* answered a need in their highly developed disputational culture, whereas there were no empty slots in the curriculum for the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*—their slots were already occupied by the more accessible Boethian works *De syllogismo categorico* and *De topicis differentiis*. The reasons why the *Posterior Analytics* was also put on ice for a long time are less clear, but its relevance for argumentation may not have appeared obvious, and it also seems to have been considered rather forbidding.²

Thus, with the exception of the *Elenchi*, the *Ars nova* had to wait till some decades into the thirteenth century to achieve its definite breakthrough. Which, then, was so thorough that people would even debate whether theology satisfies the criteria for being a branch of knowledge, a *scientia* in the sense of the *Posterior Analytics*.

Several theologians, with some regret, had to admit that this was not the case because the axioms of Christian theology, i.e., the articles of faith, are not self-evident.

Thomas Aquinas tried to save the scientificity of theology by a blatant misuse of Aristotelian theory, claiming that the articles of faith are self-evident to God and the blessed in the beyond, who thus have scientific

¹ For the fate of the *Topics* and the *Analytics* in the West, see Green-Pedersen 1984; Ebbesen 2010; Ebbesen 2015.

² Famously a non-identified John, who about the middle of the twelfth century produced a new translation of the *Posterior Analytics*, claimed the reason he did so was that James' translation was surrounded by such a dark mist of obscurity that the French masters did not dare teach it: "Translationem vero Iacobi obscuritatis tenebris involvi silentio suo perhibent Francie magistri, qui, quamvis illam translationem et commentarios ab eodem Iacobo translatos habeant, tamen notitiam illius libri non audent profiteri." (Text quoted after *Aristoteles Latinus* IV, p. xlv).

knowledge of theology; earthly theology is a subordinate science in relation to the heavenly variant, he claimed, and so also is *scientia*.¹ As Ockham was to scathingly remark:²

It is nonsense to claim
that I know certain conclusions
because you know certain principles
that I believe in
because you state them.
And in the same way it is childish to claim
that I possess scientific knowledge of the conclusions of the-
ology
because God possesses scientific knowledge of its principles
in which I believe
because he reveals them.

One of my favourite philosophers, Boethius of Dacia, who taught in Paris in the early 1270s, used the Aristotelian theory of scientific knowledge to totally dissociate faith from knowledge, so that theological arguments became completely irrelevant in a scientific context.³

The thirteenth century saw a considerable broadening of the arts curriculum, with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, natural and moral philosophy all

¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I^a pars, qu. 1, art. 2: "Respondeo dicendum sacram doctrinam esse scientiam. Sed sciendum est quod duplex est scientiarum genus. Quaedam enim sunt, quae procedunt ex principiis notis lumine naturali intellectus, sicut arithmetica, geometria, et huiusmodi. Quaedam vero sunt, quae procedunt ex principiis notis lumine superioris scientiae, sicut perspectiva procedit ex principiis notificatis per geometriam, et musica ex principiis per arithmetica notis. Et hoc modo sacra doctrina est scientia, quia procedit ex principiis notis lumine superioris scientiae, quae scilicet est scientia Dei et beatorum. Unde sicut musica credit principia tradita sibi ab arithmetico, ita doctrina sacra credit principia revelata sibi a Deo."

² Ockham, *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum. Ordinatio*, p. 199: "Unde nihil est dicere quod ego scio conclusiones aliquas, quia tu scis principia quibus ego credo, quia tu dicis ea. Et eodem modo puerile est dicere quod ego scio conclusiones theologiae, quia Deus scit principia quibus ego credo, quia ipse revelat ea."

³ For an introduction to Boethius of Dacia, see Ebbesen 2020.

entering the programme, but logic retained a strong position—you did not get through an arts education, and hence not into theology either, without a solid training in logic. And this was not only true of the secular universities; the learned mendicant orders trained their friars in logic in much the same way as the secular schools. William of Ockham’s bulky and revolutionary *Summa logicae* from the early 1320s was, to all appearances, the final fruit of his activity as a teacher of Aristotelian logic in the Franciscan friary in London.¹

The ubiquity of logic in medieval philosophy is obvious even to a casual observer. If you know what a syllogism is, you cannot fail to notice that at least since the early thirteenth century, a medieval philosopher will express much of his argumentation in regular syllogisms, no matter what the subject, often first presenting the syllogism, then adding proofs of the major and the minor premisses, using formulas like *maior probatur ...* and *minor patet de se*. The argument may also have the form of a *consequentia*, typically a *modus ponens* “if *p*, then *q*; but *p*; therefore *q*”, and then it will be followed by a proof of the truth of the antecedent and a reason for considering the implication valid.

But the influence of logic goes beyond this. When interpreting Aristotle’s non-logical works, the medievals as a matter of course used conceptual tools they had learned while studying logic. The *Metaphysics* rather directly invites its readers to do so. Thus at the beginning of book IV Aristotle says:²

¹ It is generally acknowledged that Ockham’s commentaries on *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *Sophistici Elenchi* were composed ca. 1321–24 in London, and that the *Summa* dates from the same period, though perhaps only finished a little later. The obvious inference is that during those years Ockham functioned as a *lector* in the London friary. Cf. Courtenay 2008, p. 98.

² Aristotle, *Metaph.* IV.2.1003a33–b1: “Τὸ δὲ ὄν λέγεται μὲν πολλαχῶς, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἓν καὶ μίαν τινὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐχ ὁμώνυμος ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν ἅπαν πρὸς ὑγίειαν, τὸ μὲν τῷ φυλάττειν τὸ δὲ τῷ ποιεῖν τὸ δὲ τῷ σημεῖον εἶναι τῆς ὑγιείας τὸ δ’ ὅτι δεκτικὸν αὐτῆς”.

Being is said in many ways, but with respect to one thing and one nature—not homonymously, but in the way everything *healthy* is so called with respect to health, whether because it preserves it, produces it, is a sign of health or is its bearer. [My translation]

This was an open invitation for commentators to employ all they had learned about homonymy when studying the *Categories* and the *Sophistical Refutations*, and so they did. Similarly, the *Metaphysics* offered many opportunities to employ what they had learned about genera, species and predication in Porphyry and the *Topics*.

But the commentators' basic training in logic also manifests itself at points where Aristotle's text does not obviously invite its use. Thus the discussion of the principle of contradiction in *Metaphysics* IV makes the late thirteenth-century master Radulphus Brito field no less than five *quaestiones* about signification:¹

- 1) Whether presupposing the significate of a term is a proper starting point for establishing the first principle
- 2) Whether every name signifies just one thing
- 3) Whether names signify things or concepts of things
- 4) Whether names signify the same whether their respective things exist or not
- 5) Whether it is natural for words to signify

Only the first question is directly linked to the text of the *Metaphysics*, the remaining four more naturally belonged in classes on the *Peri hermeneias* and the *Sophistical Refutations*.

¹ IV.9 Utrum supponere significatum termini sit principium conveniens ad determinandum primum principium; IV.10 Utrum omne nomen significat unum; IV.11 Utrum nomen significet rem vel intellectum rei; IV.12 Utrum nomen significet idem re existente et non existente; IV.13 Utrum significare sit naturale voci. About Brito's *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam* see Ebbesen 2001. The article contains a list of the questions treated in the work, an edition of which is now being prepared by Dr Charles Girard, Geneva.

And Radulphus Brito was far from alone in using the principle of contradiction as an occasion for discussing the signification of names. A generation before him, Siger of Brabant had dedicated no less than nine questions to the matter when lecturing on book IV of the *Metaphysics*.¹

Indeed, it is striking that as the curriculum came to encompass ever more Aristotelian writings on non-logical subjects, the scholastics tended to treat many of the problems discussed in those books as problems of logic and semantics.

One logical exercise consisted in the discussion of so-called *sophismata*, i.e. propositions that can be argued to be both true and false. The Liar paradox is the best known example, and the medievals discussed it eagerly,² but they spent even more energy on propositions involving what they called *syncategoremes*—principally quantifiers like *omnis* “every”, *quisquis* “whoever” or *qualiscumque* “of whatever sort”, negations and operators of exception or exclusion like *praeter* “except” and *tantum* “only”.³

Now, old Parmenides had argued for the unity of being and was attacked for this in Aristotle’s *Physics*. When lecturing on that work, thirteenth-century masters found it natural to approach this fundamental ontological question by discussing the sophisma *TANTUM UNUM EST*, the original purpose of which had been to elucidate the function of the operator

¹ Siger de Brabant 1981. In the Munich version of Siger’s commentary the questions are: IV.13. U. nomen significet aliquid naturaliter; 14. U. quid significet nomen possit doceri; 15. U. quid significet nomen possit haberi per rationem; 16. U. nomen significet intellectum rei; 17. U. nomen significet quod quid est et substantiam rei; 18. U. nomen possit significare infinita; 19. U. nomen possit significare plura; 20. U., si homo significat animal bipes, necesse sit ipsum esse hoc; 21. U. nomen idem significet et univoce, re existente et non existente.

² For an introduction to the topic, see Spade 1987; Spade 1988. For some examples of thirteenth-century treatments of the paradox, Ebbesen and Spade 1988.

³ See Ebbesen and Goubier 2010.

tantum.¹ In other words, they had transformed an unfamiliar ontological problem into a familiar logical one.²

Similarly, a fourteenth-century follower of John Buridan, when commenting on *De anima* III, raises the question *Utrum non ens possit intelligi* “Whether (something) not being can be understood”.³ In his solution, he takes it to be a question about the proposition ‘*non ens intelligitur*’ “some/the not being is understood”, and so starts by distinguishing several senses of that expression:

Non ens may function as a unity and supposit materially, i.e. be mentioned rather than used, as people say nowadays, and in this case the sentence ‘*non ens intelligitur*’ is true.

But ‘*ens*’ may also supposit personally, and then one further has to distinguish whether the *non* is a *negatio infinitans* or a *negatio negans*, i.e., whether it is a term negation or a sentence negation.

In the latter case the sentence is false because it means “being is not intelligible”, equalling “no being is intelligible”.

If the negation is a term negation, it may either negate only for present beings or for both present, past and future ones.

In the former case the sentence is true, for it means “what does not presently exist is intelligible”, and in this sense the actually non-existing, but future, Antichrist is intelligible. In the latter case, the sentence is false, because it means “what neither is nor was nor will be nor can be is intelligible”.

The *Antichrist* plays a considerable role in medieval logic because he is supposed to be actually non-existing but due to exist at some time in the future. He appears in several standard sophismata, as do other beings with interesting properties, such as *Caesar* who solely belongs to the past, the

¹ See Ebbesen 1995.

² For more about the “logicalization” of physics in the thirteenth century, see Ebbesen 1994b.

³ The text is question III.15 in *Le traité de l'âme de Jean Buridan*. The editor, Patar, claimed the text for John Buridan, but his arguments do not hold water. See Ebbesen 1994a.

phoenix, of which there is at any time exactly one specimen, and my special lady friend the *chimera*, who excels by being a non-being and indeed impossible quasi-entity.¹ Appropriately, the question on the *De anima* ends with some remarks about the chimera. Strictly speaking *chimaera intelligitur* “a chimera is understood” is nonsense, we are told, though one may have genuine concepts of the parts that constitute a chimera, i.e. the body of a young woman and the tail of a fish—which incidentally makes her a mermaid.

The distinction between the two types of negation can be traced back to Aristotle’s *Peri hermeneias*,² whereas that between different types of supposition is an independent medieval piece of doctrine that first appears in the late twelfth century and later becomes codified in various ways in handbooks of logic.

Interestingly, the logicalization of natural philosophy that transformed its problems into problems of sentence analysis did not abate as the relevant Aristotelian treatises ceased to be a new field of study. In fact, it seems to have reached a climax in the fourteenth century, as pointed out decades ago by my late friend John Murdoch (1927–2010),³ and this had consequences at least as late as the fifteenth century.

Theology was not impervious to the influence of logic either. Thus at a certain point in their *Sentences* commentaries, the mammoth works by which bachelors of theology qualified to become doctors, a series of theologians from Bonaventure to Ockham discuss how operators of exclusion (*dictiones exclusivae*) like *tantum* “only” and *solus* “alone” work in theological statements. The whole discussion presupposes the discussions of

¹ About the chimera, see Ebbesen 1986.

² Aristotle, *Int.* 2.16a30–32: “Τὸ δ’ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ὄνομα· οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ κέϊται ὄνομα ὃ τι δεῖ καλεῖν αὐτό,—οὔτε γὰρ λόγος οὔτε ἀπόφασίς ἐστίν—ἀλλ’ ἔστω ὄνομα ἀόριστον. “But ‘non-man’ is not a name, in fact, there is no established name by which to call it, for it is neither a sentence nor a negation, but let it be called an undefined name.” (my translation); in Boethius’ Latin translation: “‘Non homo’ vero non est nomen; at vero nec positum est nomen quod illud oporteat appellari—neque enim oratio aut negatio est—sed sit nomen infinitum.”

³ See, e.g., Murdoch 1982; Murdoch 1989.

such operators in the arts faculty, and more specifically in the context of the study of *sophismata*.¹

However, it was not just a one-way traffic. Even though the early history of supposition theory is not quite clear,² it is beyond reasonable doubt that the variant of the theory developed in trinitarian theology played a role also for the development of the non-theological variant.³ In particular, the fundamental distinction between simple and personal supposition—i.e., standing for a universal or for some or all of its particulars—this distinction almost certainly reflects a theological one between a term’s standing for the whole of the Trinity or for one of the persons. But on the other hand, the theologians’ attempt to develop tools to precisely describe the import of sentences found in Holy Writ was clearly inspired by logic.

So, if anyone claims that it is possible to understand medieval philosophy, or even medieval theology, without a solid knowledge of medieval logic, don’t believe them. They do not know what they are talking about.

Sixty years ago Lambertus de Rijk (1924–2012) tried to provide an explanation of how the characteristically medieval type of logic that is often called ‘terminism’ and that he called *Logica modernorum* arose with its concentration on the referential range or *suppositio* of terms in various contexts. De Rijk argued that it was the study of the *Sophistical Refutations* that brought this about.⁴

Thirty years ago I argued that the issues that differentiated the schools or *sectæ* of twelfth-century Paris were all such as grew out of the exegesis of the *Ars vetus*,⁵ and in an article that is to appear soon I will show that De Rijk’s thesis about the origin of terminism is wrong; once again, to all

¹ See Ebbesen 1997.

² See Ebbesen 1981b; Ebbesen 2013.

³ For an example of the use of *supponere* in late twelfth-century trinitarian theology, see Ebbesen 1987b.

⁴ See L. M. De Rijk 1962–67.

⁵ Ebbesen 1992.

appearances, the study of the *Ars vetus* was much more important than that of the *Elenchi*.¹

This means that in the current situation we urgently need some detailed studies of twelfth-century commentaries on the *Ars vetus*.

Which is precisely what two new research projects will provide us with, the one about the school of Alberic headed by Dr Heine Hansen in Copenhagen and the brand new polyphonic one headed by Dr Caterina Tarlazzi and anchored in the lagoon of Venice.

Dr Tarlazzi has decided to give special attention to a cluster of closely related early *Categories* commentaries known as *The C8 Complex*, the one certain thing about which is that the relations between the texts that make up the complex are complicated.

I have not myself done any work worth mentioning on precisely those texts, but my first PhD student and close friend, Professor Yukio Iwakuma from Kyoto, has done much of the spade work, so I have for a long time been alert to the importance of the topic.

Twelfth-century philosophy has a charm of its own. One feels the scholastic movement is still young, and many bold ideas are tried out. People are not naïve beginners, they have some tradition behind them ... but not so much that it fetters their imagination.

I feel sure the Venetian project will produce many new insights and wish the participants good luck. Were I fifty years younger, I would have tried to get a slot for myself in the project.

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