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## Further References to the *Nominales* and *Reales* in Stephen Langton's Works

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### Introduction

The year 2022 marked the thirtieth anniversary of volume 30.1 of *Vivarium*, which has been the main point of reference for anyone interested in the logical school of the *Nominales*, the followers of Peter Abelard. One of the key contributions to the volume was made by Yukio Iwakuma and Sten Ebbesen, who prepared an extremely helpful list of sources mentioning logical or “logico-theological” schools from the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> The present paper offers a small supplement to number twenty-nine on that list, Stephen Langton (d. 1228), who was represented by just one fragment from his *Sententiae* commentary. Seven additional passages can be found at the end of the article. I will briefly comment on all of them. One of the passages mentioning the *Nominales* (#29.4a) is taken from question 94 on the gifts of the Holy Spirit from Book III of Langton's *Quaestiones theologiae*. I stumbled upon three further mentions in his commentary on the Romans (#29.3a), Corinthians (#29.3b), and in the unedited part of the *Summa magistri Stephani* (#29.2a).<sup>2</sup> Three remaining

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<sup>1</sup> Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992. Many passages citing the *Nominales* had been collected in Landgraf 1943 and Chenu 1935–36.

<sup>2</sup> Texts #29.2a, #29.3a, and #29.3b have been printed in Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* III.1, q. 66b, par. 7, p. 233, note to ll. 96–104.

passages explicitly mention the *Reales* but imply something about the opposite *Nominales*.<sup>1</sup>

Stephen Langton, who was active in Paris during the last quarter of the twelfth century and the early 1200s could be referring to the state of logical schools from any point within those thirty-odd years (or earlier). His familiarity with dialectic and other arts is well attested by his theological writings, filled with grammatical, semantical, and geometrical terminology.<sup>2</sup> In a letter of 1207 to King John, Pope Innocent III pointed out that Langton “devoted a lot of time in Paris to the study of liberal arts and made such a progress that he deserved being a teacher (*doctor*) not only in liberal sciences (*facultates*), but also in theological disciplines.”<sup>3</sup> The phrase *meruit esse doctor* has been interpreted by John W. Baldwin as “being awarded the rank of master.”<sup>4</sup> That this might be more than a formulaic or exaggerated recommendation is confirmed by Pseudo-Henry of Ghent’s *De viris illustribus*, according to which Langton presided over arts schools (*liberalium artium scolis prefuit*).<sup>5</sup>

### 1 The Creed of the *Nominales*. Text #29.3b

Let us start with a seemingly insignificant detail from text #29.3b, taken from Langton’s *Postillae* on the Corinthians, which may corroborate the idea that he had a first-hand familiarity with the inner workings of the schools. When referring to the views of the *Nominales* and *Reales*, he uses the semi-technical term *professio* (creed, declaration, avowal, manifesto):

<sup>1</sup> I have found one of them by accident in the Romans commentary. Two others, mentioning the *Reales*, are taken from Book I of Langton’s *Quaestiones theologiae*.

<sup>2</sup> As for geometry, for instance, he is one of the first sources to use the term *angulus contingetiae* (denoting the infinitesimal angle formed at the point of tangency by a circle and a tangent line); see Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* II, q. 51a, ad 1.1, forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> Inn. III, *Ep.* 219, *PL* 215, 1328B: “Parisius diu vacans liberalibus studiis in tantum profecit ut meruerit esse doctor, non solum in liberalibus facultatibus, verum et in theologicis disciplinis.”

<sup>4</sup> Baldwin 2008, pp. 823–24; see also Baldwin 1970, vol. 1, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> See Powicke 1933, p. 554; Lacombe 1930, p. 14 n. 3.

This issue is similar to the question of whether this name “genus” has the same signification when used by a *Realis* in his creed and by a *Nominalis* in his.

Sten Ebbesen has suggested that the term *professio* specifically referred to the list of axioms or defining tenets of a given school.<sup>1</sup> Most notably, *professio* is used in the *Secta Meludina*, whose author first promises a full cognition of the Meludinian creed, and—a couple of sentences later—sets out to present “some elements of the Peripatetic discipline and the Meludinian creed.”<sup>2</sup> After listing fifty-three theorems, he says that we must first examine “the opinion of our creed” (*nostrae professionis opinio*) regarding the notion of singularity.<sup>3</sup> But it seems that *professio* is not just an idiosyncrasy of the *Secta Meludina*. Text #26 on Iwakuma and Ebbesen’s list (Anonymus Parisiensis on the *Sophistical Refutations*) employs the phrases *profiteor opinionem* and *professor opinionis* in a similar context and gives two examples of views defended by the *Nominales*.<sup>4</sup> Another case is found in the *Compendium logicae Porretanum*, in connection to the claim that a contiguous whole is many (*est plura*) because it is its own parts. Contiguous wholes are items whose parts have been artificially put

<sup>1</sup> Ebbesen 1992, p. 62: “Insider- and outsider-testimonies combine to suggest that membership of a *secta* was defined by adherence to a ‘creed’ (*professio*) constituted by a number of theorems (*positiones*), virtually all connected with the Old Logic.”

<sup>2</sup> Anon. *Sec. Mel.*, f. 95ra, printed in de Rijk 1967, p. 283: “<M>eludine professionis . . . perfecta et integra in huius operis volumine consum<m>atur cognitio” (#15 in Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, p. 178); “perhipatetice (!) discipline et Meludine professionis quedam elementa propono.”

<sup>3</sup> Anon. *Sec. Mel.*, f. 95va, printed in de Rijk 1967, p. 285: “Quid igitur de singulari sentiat nostre professionis opinio, primo est pertranseundum.”

<sup>4</sup> Text #26, Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, p. 184: “Proprius vero modus ducendi ad inopinabile est considerare ex quo genere sit qui disputat, an sit grammaticus an dialecticus et sic in aliis, vel cuius opinionem profiteatur. In qualibet enim opinione aliquid est quod aliarum professoribus inopinabile videtur, veluti Nominalium opinio quod nulla res crescit, et quod quilibet homo est id in quo nulla scientia est, nullus intellectus, nulla ratio.”

together, such as chain mail (*lorica*) or cloth (*tela*). The claim about being many was reportedly defended by the *Nominales* and the enigmatic *Coppausi*. The author complains that it is not accepted by all the *professores* of the Porretan doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the term *professio* in Langton's biblical commentary may be significant since it has not been a standard way of referring to a doctrine or a set of tenets outside logic. In fact, in one of the manuscripts preserving text #29.3b, the word *professio* was omitted, and one of the readers inserted *sententia* instead:

P<sup>1</sup>P<sup>3</sup>T<sup>1</sup> . . . realis in sua professione et nominalis in sua.  
 H<sup>1</sup> *ante corr.* . . . realis in sua et nominalis in sua.  
 H<sup>1</sup> *post corr.* . . . realis in sua et nominalis in sua \sententia/.

As for the logical content of text #29.3b, we are told that there was a meta-question, perhaps discussed in the dialectical schools, whether the term “genus” has the same signification both in the creed of a *Nominalis* and in a creed of a *Realis*. The passage does not assume that there is only one realist creed. It simply presupposes that some sects falling under the label *Reales* will use the term “genus” in their creed while understanding genera as things, non-linguistic items of some kind. Given that according to the *Nominales* genera and species are names or, more generally, linguistic items, the question amounts to whether being or not being a linguistic item is inscribed into the very meaning of the term “genus.” If it is not, then perhaps the signification of “genus” consists in a more general core that encompasses both the realist and nominalist uses, such as—potentially—the philosophical sense of “genus” from the *Isagoge*: “what is predicated, in answer to ‘What is it?’, of several items which differ in species.”<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, the *Nominales* and *Reales* would be talking past each other. If we assume that there is no common ground or no general core,

<sup>1</sup> Anon. *Comp.* III.12, pp. 38–39.

<sup>2</sup> Porph. *Intr.* 1, p. 4.

then we could argue either that the term is genuinely ambiguous or that one of the schools violates the proper signification.

In his *Postillae* on Paul's epistles (#29.3a–b), Langton uses the dialectical question about the semantics of “genus” as a simile for a question about the name “God.” If we adopt the realist perspective, we might say that Christians are analogous to the *Reales*, whereas the idolaters, who call their idols gods, are like *Nominales*, who say that only names are genera. I would rather not delve into the theological discussion found in the Corinthians commentary (#29.3b), since it is too intertwined with Peter Lombard's tripartite distinction between the substantive, adoptive, and nuncupative senses of “God.” Instead, let us look at the analogous passage from the Romans commentary (#29.3a).

## 2 What Did One *Realis* Say to the Other? Text #29.3a

Langton's *Postillae* is a super-commentary on Peter Lombard's *Collectanea* on Paul's epistles.<sup>1</sup> One of the Lombardian glosses, also present in the *Glossa ordinaria*, states that pagans *Deum putaverunt qui non erat*—that is, they thought about a certain creature (an idol or a demon) that it was God, which it was not.<sup>2</sup> This statement raises an objection discussed by Langton in text #29.3a. It is assumed that in order to understand the name “God,” one must know and use the proper signification of the term, and that this proper signification is of the Christian God. Now, did pagans understand the name “God”? (1) If they did, then they could not believe that an idol was God, because that would amount to thinking that their idol was the Christian God. (2) If, on the other hand, they failed to understand the name “God,” then they used it in a different signification. But then, Christians are not allowed to *assert* that pagans thought that an idol was God. The implicit reason for this conclusion is that when Christians say “putabant ydolum esse deum,” they should be using the term “deus” in the proper, Christian sense.

<sup>1</sup> See Bieniak 2019.

<sup>2</sup> On a different construal, pagans believed in God who did not exist.

Langton takes the dilemma by the second horn, although he qualifies it: the pagans neither fully understood the term “God” nor completely failed to understand it. Instead, they thought that “God” denoted something supremely powerful, good, etc. (*summe potens, summe bonum, et similia*). Accordingly, they were committed to the statement (*locutio*) “Ydolum est deus.” Yet Christians are not entitled to say that pagans were committed to the corresponding propositional content (*dictum*) picked out by the accusative-infinitive clause *ydolum esse deum* (that an idol is God). The implicit reason is that whenever a Christian uses the clause *ydolum esse deum*, it refers to the significate of the statement “Ydolum est deus” as though it were uttered by a Christian. But when uttered by a Christian, “deus” signifies the Christian God, so that the corresponding propositional content *ydolum esse deum* is about the Christian God. Accordingly, pagans were not committed to this *dictum*.

To put it another way, Christians can safely use direct speech, but they should be careful with indirect speech when attributing to pagans beliefs in which “God” serves as a predicate. For in indirect speech, the term “God” will be used in the Christian sense.

The same distinction between granting a statement and granting a *dictum* can be applied to the logical schools. According to Langton, the case is the same when two *Reales* are talking to one another. Call them Robert and Alberic. Robert says, “A *Nominalis* claims that genera and species are names.” (“*Nominalis dicit genera et species esse nomina*”). In the light of the theological case, Alberic should reply that Robert is wrong! The *dictum* that genera and species are names (*genera et species esse nomina*) is bound to the significations employed by Robert. But Robert uses “genera and species” in a realist sense of non-linguistic items. Thus, Robert’s statement amounts to something like this: “A *Nominalis* says that certain non-linguistic items are names.” Robert should have used direct speech.

The simile about *Reales* and *Nominales* from Langton’s Romans commentary (#29.3a) seems to presuppose a negative answer to the question raised in the Corinthians commentary (#29.3b): the *Nominales* and the *Reales* use “genus” in different significations. At the very least, they use the term in different senses—to refer to radically distinct categories of



items—whether or not we can call these senses “significations.” Significations should stem from different acts of establishing (*institutiones*).

Similar reports are found in Alexander Neckam and Peter Capuano, in passages already listed by Iwakuma and Ebbesen under numbers 40a and 44d. According to Neckam, who sometimes draws on Langton,<sup>1</sup> a *Nominalis* does not think that a genus is a name (*nominalis non opinatur genus esse nomen*).<sup>2</sup> Neckam, who was a Parvipontanian,<sup>3</sup> assumes that a genus is a substantial similarity of things differing in species. Due to the accusative-infinitive construction, which requires understanding the term “genus” in Neckam’s realist sense, the statement “A *Nominalis* thinks that a genus is a name” would ascribe to the *Nominalis* the absurd thought that a non-linguistic item is a name. Similarly, according to Capuano (a self-professed member of the school of *Nominales*<sup>4</sup>), a *Nominalis* should concede that a *Realis* thinks that a genus is a name. This is because, when uttered by a *Nominalis* as part of an accusative-infinitive construction, “genus” has the nominalist sense, and a *Realis* indeed thinks that the generic term “animal” is a name.<sup>5</sup>

In this light, we can understand texts #29.2a and #29.4a.

<sup>1</sup> In Neckam’s *Speculum speculationum*, there are textual borrowings from Langton’s *Quaestiones*, Book II (e.g., q. 26.1c on whether the devil sins with his every act, q. 29 on Adam’s state before sin, q. 30.1 on *synderesis*).

<sup>2</sup> Text #40a in Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, p. 192: “In logicis quidem dicerem nominalem non opinari genus esse nomen. Non enim magis posset quis opinari substantialem similitudinem rerum diuersarum specierum esse nomen, quam hominem esse asinum.”

<sup>3</sup> See Hunt 1984, pp. 5–6; Martin 2018, pp. 347–48.

<sup>4</sup> See Landgraf 1943, p. 189; Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, p. 194, text #44c.

<sup>5</sup> Text #44d in Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, p. 195: “Nominalis concederet ‘Realis putat genus esse nomen’, quia secundum Nominalem per hoc nomen ‘genus’ non supponitur nisi vox, quam revera Realis putat esse nomen. Sed interrogatus Realis diceret ‘Ego non puto genus esse nomen’, quia ipse dicit aliud significari hoc nomine ‘genus’ quam vocem.”

### 3 The *Nominales* Know Nothing about *Genus*. Text #29.2a

In text #29.2a, from the unedited part of the *Summa magistri Stephani*, we learn that the *Nominales* know nothing about universals. Apparently, Langton is here adopting the realist point of view. When the *Reales* use the term “genus,” the term signifies a non-linguistic item. Accordingly, they are entitled to say that the *Nominales* know nothing about genus, because the *Nominales* believe that genera—in the realist sense—do not exist. The “nothing” in “know nothing about genus” stands for any proposition about genera. By analogy, ancient pagan philosophers knew nothing about virtues—that is, about Christian virtues understood as aspects of divine grace. Here again, the explicitly mentioned *Nominales* are assimilated to pagan philosophers, and the implicit *Reales* correspond to the implicit Christians.

### 4 They Say That *Sumptum* Is Nothing. Text #29.4a

Text #29.4a (from Langton’s theological question 94 on the gifts of the Holy Spirit) is slightly more interesting because it involves an extended semantical discussion, and the *Nominales* are not simply used as a simile. Besides, we do not have anything like it in other sources from Iwakuma and Ebbesen’s list. It concerns the notion of *sumptum*, treated in a realist way as a non-linguistic item such as *white* or *being white*, as opposed to whiteness, from which *white* is “taken” or denominated. The semantical role of a *sumptum* is that of being attached or coupled (*copulatum*) by a predicate.<sup>1</sup> For instance, in the sentence “Socrates is white,” the predicate “white” couples the *sumptum white*; if the sentence is true, this *sumptum* is an attribute of the thing denoted by the subject term (“Socrates”).

*Sumptum* might perhaps be equated with an accident in a broader sense, though not in the sense of an accidental form such as whiteness but in the sense of an attribute: *sumptum* is a *quale* as opposed to *qualitas*, *quantum* as opposed to *quantitas*, etc. It is something predicated *in quale*, *in quantum*, *in quomodo se habet*, *in ubi*, etc., in contrast to *in quid*. In

<sup>1</sup> For a nominalist, *sumptum* is the predicate term itself; see below.

modern terms, *sumptum* resembles a propositional function understood as an unsaturated entity that contains an empty slot for an object. In this respect, the realist *sumptum* is like Abelard's *status* (e.g., *esse hominem*, being a human), which differs from forms (e.g., rationality). In contrast to the Abelardian *status*, however, the realist *sumptum* should be a universal item with some ontological weight apart from playing a semantical role.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a quick perusal of some realist commentaries on the *Categories*, especially the Albrician C17, suggests that the realist *sumptum* is just another type of real universal in addition to genera and species.<sup>2</sup>

Now, according to Langton, the *Nominales* say that *sumptum* is nothing (*sumptum nihil esse dicunt*). To make sense of this report, we probably must invoke once more the distinction between being committed to a *dictum* and being committed to a statement. Surely, we will not find a statement such as “*Sumptum* is nothing” in the creed of the *Nominales*. If anything, they would rather assert something like “*Sumptum* is a term,” since this is the way Abelard treated *sumpta* throughout his works,<sup>3</sup> and this is also the way they are handled by the Anonymus D’Orvillensis’ commentary on the *Categories* (C26) associated by Sten Ebbesen with the *Nominales*.<sup>4</sup> It seems therefore that Langton intentionally uses indirect speech with an accusative-infinitive clause—*sumptum nihil esse dicunt*. We need to adopt the realist perspective and recall that indirect speech commits us to the significations accepted by our own school. Langton assumes in his response (and in his other writings) a realist interpretation of *sumptum*,

<sup>1</sup> Besides, as noted by a reviewer, Abelard discusses *status* in relation to items in the category of substance, whereas *sumpta* are restricted to the “accidental” categories.

<sup>2</sup> See Anon. Ber. *In Praed.* 7, ed. Hansen, p. 2: “Universale ad aliquid aliud relatio, aliud sumptum a relatione; vel aliud praedicatum in quid, aliud in quomodo se habet”; Anon. Ber. *In Praed.* 9, f. 86va, Yukio Iwakuma’s transcription: “Universale aliud praedicatum in quid, aliud in quid agit, ut sumpta quae continentur in hoc praedicamento.”

<sup>3</sup> For Abelard’s definition and classification of *sumpta*, as well as the difference between *sumptum* and *denominativum* (paronym), see Pet. Ab. *LI Glos. sup. Praed.*, pp. 122–23; Marenbon 1997, pp. 141–42; Kang 2000; Rosier-Catach 2008, pp. 103–25.

<sup>4</sup> See Anon. D’Orvill. *In Praed.*, p. 260 and passim. For the connection to the *Nominales*, see Ebbesen 1999, pp. 237–41; Ebbesen 2003, pp. 347–63.

according to which it is a non-linguistic item coupled or attached by a name like “white” when used as a predicate. If the realist *sumptum* is a universal, then it becomes clear why the Langtonian *Nominales* maintain that *sumptum* is nothing. Namely, *sumptum*—taken in the realist sense—is a universal non-linguistic item, and according to the *Nominales*, no such items are real or exist. I submit that this “nothing” is the strong “nothing” used to deny real existence, as opposed to “nothing” interpreted as a “non-thing” or a *sui generis* extra-predicamental entity such as *enuntiabile* in the *Ars Meliduna*.

Langton mentions the view of the *Nominales* because the realist *sumpta* play a role in his account of the sentence “Because he is loved by God, he believes” and its secular counterpart “Because he is white, he is coloured.” On this account, the expression “is loved by God” predicated in the antecedent connotes faith, and the whole statement “Because he is loved by God, he believes” says that faith is the cause of the *sumptum* attached by the predicate “believes” in the consequent. In other words, faith (regarded as a quasi-form) is the cause of believing. The predicate “is loved by God” connotes faith because it generally connotes every aspect of grace (not only love or charity), and faith is a sufficient truthmaker of “He is loved by God.” By analogy, in the sentence “Because he is white, he is coloured,” whiteness is said to be the cause of the *sumptum* attached by “coloured”; that is, whiteness is the cause of being coloured.

Since the *sumptum coloured*, or *being coloured*, is a universal, the *Nominales* cannot appeal to it in their semantical analysis. They only have particular forms, such as *this whiteness*, at their disposal. Thus, according to Langton, in the theological case, they would contend that in the sentence “Because he is loved by God, he believes,” the faith denoted by “is loved by God” in the antecedent is said to be the cause of *itself* insofar as it is attached or coupled by the predicate “believes” in the consequent. If someone wonders how to make sense of this self-causation, we must appeal to a simile from the arts, involving the distinction between signifying *in existentia* and *in adiacentia*, a variant of which was also used by Abe-

lard (with *essentia* instead of *existentia*).<sup>1</sup> According to Langton's *Nominales*, in the sentence "Because whiteness is in him, he is white," whiteness is said to be the cause of itself, but in the antecedent whiteness is signified as such (*in existentia*), whereas in the consequent it is signified in relation to a substrate (*in adiacentia*). These two different modes of signification are apparently meant to alleviate the worry about self-causation. I have not found any analysis like this in the logical sources so far, but it may be a matter of time.

To conclude, it may be said that all four passages, #29.2a, #29.3a, #29.3b, and #29.4a, refer to the *Nominales* primarily in connection to their views on the universals. Text 29.4a seems to be of particular interest since it is not about genera and species but about the "secondary" universals such as *white*. Another interesting point is that the three passages about "genus" help us to make sense of #29.4a about *sumptum*, as they strongly suggest that the claim "Sumptum nihil est" was not an article of faith of the *Nominales*. Rather, the point is that they reject the existence of *sumpta* as understood by the *Reales*.

Now, let me briefly comment on two other passages from Langton's *Quaestiones* (#29.4b–c) and one from his Romans commentary (#29.3c). All three mention the *Reales*, but indirectly—*ab opposito*—say something about the *Nominales*.

### 5 The Impossibility of the *Reales*. Text #29.3c

Text #29.3c is tantalisingly succinct. In his comment on Romans 4:2, Peter Lombard states that it was impossible for Abraham to be justified by deeds alone (he needed faith to be righteous in the eyes of God), and that this impossible scenario would entail another impossible situation (*aliud im-*

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Pet. Ab. *LI Glos. sup. Praed.*, p. 113.4–16: "Primae [*sc. voces*] etiam dici possunt ex modo significandi, . . . quia rem in essentia significant, non in adiacentia. . . ."; Pet. Ab. *LI Glos. sup. Praed.*, p. 139.6–8: "Si enim proponeret: 'cursus fit' vel 'cursus est', cursum in essentia significaret, non in adiacentia"; Pet. Ab. *LI Glos. sup. Porph.*, p. 75.28–29; p. 103.19–22.

*possibile*)—that Abraham would enjoy eternal glory in heaven solely on account of deeds commanded by law:

IF ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BY WORKS of law [Rom. 4:2]—that is, if he is truly just by virtue of physical obedience, which is utterly impossible—then another impossible thing follows, namely that HE HAS eternal GLORY [Rom. 4:2], which stems from justice; BUT he has it from himself, NOT BEFORE GOD [Rom. 4:2]—that is, not from God.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, it is not *inherently* impossible for Abraham to have eternal glory: having glory is impossible only under the assumption that faith (grace) is necessary for salvation and that Abraham merely performed “works of law.” If we suppose—*per impossibile*—that Abraham was justified by works alone, then it follows that he has obtained eternal glory without faith.

In his gloss (#29.3c), Langton contrasts the entailment based on the impossibility of the *Reales* (*impossibilitas realium*) with the entailment grounded in a relationship between terms (*habitus terminorum*), which might perhaps be associated, among others, with the *Nominales* and Abelard’s relevance logic:

ANOTHER IMPOSSIBLE THING FOLLOWS [Lombard]: but not in virtue of the impossibility of the *Reales*, since then the argument would be null, but in virtue of the relationship between terms. “Follows”—that is, you ought to concede.

William of Sherwood will use similar terminology in his *Syncategoremata* to distinguish between natural and non-natural consequence: the former is based on a relationship (*habitus*) between the antecedent and the consequent, whereas the latter holds merely due to the impossibility of the ante-

<sup>1</sup> Pet. Lomb. *Coll.* in Rom. 4,2, *PL* 191, p. 1366C: “*si Abraham justificatus est ex operibus legis, id est si ex carnali observatione vere justus est, quod utique impossibile est, sequitur hoc aliud impossibile, scilicet quod ipse habet gloriam aeternam, quae ex iustitia sequitur; sed a se habet eam, non apud Deum, id est non a Deo.*”

cedent or the necessity of the consequent.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Langton’s “impossibility of the *Reales*” may be a way of referring to the principle *Ex impossibili quidlibet*.<sup>2</sup> Lombard’s formulation could easily sound to Langton like an application of *Anything follows from an impossibility*, a principle he discusses briefly in question 19 from Book I of the *Quaestiones* (on whether what is possible according to higher causes can be said to be possible *simpliciter*). According to Langton in q. 19b, even if we accept this principle and even if we assume that it is impossible in a weak sense that a virgin gave birth, this weak impossibility does not entitle us to use *Ex impossibili quidlibet* to validate the conditional “If a virgin gave birth, she slept with a man.” For that, we would need a stronger impossibility, such as that involved in a contradiction or, more broadly, in a situation that cannot be realised even by a miracle.<sup>3</sup> In question 19a (another version of q. 19),

<sup>1</sup> Will. Sher. *Sync.*, p. 152, writing about the word “if” (*si*): “Quandoque notat consequentiam naturalem, quandoque non naturalem. Naturalem, ut quando notat consequens sequi ad antecedens ratione alicuius habitudinis unius ad aliud; non naturalem, quando notat consequens sequi ad antecedens non ratione habitudinis unius ad aliud, sed solum propter impossibilitatem antecedentis vel necessitatem consequentis.” See also Martin 2018, pp. 357–358.

<sup>2</sup> For recent overviews of various medieval attitudes to this principle, see Binini 2024 and Martin 2018. See also studies collected in Jacobi 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* I, q. 19b, par. 1.1, pp. 405 and 407: “1.1. Sustineatur illa opinio que dicit quod ex impossibili quidlibet; uirginem peperisse est impossibile per se; ergo ad illud sequitur quidlibet. Cum ergo dicat quod impossibile est uirginem peperisse et non cum uiro concubuisse, sequitur quod si uirgo peperit, cum uiro concubuit. Set naturalis philosophia quam isti sequuntur necessariam iudicat argumentationem a positione antecedentis. Est ergo necessaria ‘si uirgo peperit etc.; set uirgo peperit; ergo cum uiro concubuit’. Hec argumentatio est necessaria, et premissa sunt uera—immo necessaria—ergo et ultimum”; “(ad 1.1.) Ad hanc uero propositionem ‘si uirgo peperit, cum uiro concubuit’ multiplex est responsio. Dicunt enim quidam quod consequentia est uera, set non ualet argumentatio a positione antecedentis, quia assumitur tale uerum quod est impossibile. Alii dicunt—et melius—quod illa consequentia est falsa, nec ualet hec argumentatio ‘hoc est impossibile per se, ergo ex eo sequitur quidlibet’: esset enim addendum ‘et est tale impossibile quod non potest esse uerum’. Dicunt etiam quidam argumentationem esse necessariam, et premissa esse uera, non tamen ultimum, eo quod alterum premissorum assumptum sit, ut dicunt, in celo et non in terra; set absurdum est illud dicere.”

Langton explicitly states that in order to employ *Ex impossibili quidlibet* one needs a propositional content that is impossible *per se*—that is, cannot be actualised even by God.<sup>1</sup>

Now, if the *impossibilitas realium* is Langton’s way of referring to *Ex impossibili quidlibet*, then we could make sense of his idea that the impossibility of the *Reales* cannot validate the conditional “If Abraham was justified by deeds alone, then he has eternal glory.” Namely, the antecedent is impossible in a weak sense, insufficient for the application of *Ex impossibili quidlibet*. If we wish to warrant the entailment, we need to rely on the *habitus terminorum*—the connection between being justified and having glory.

## 6 The Common Consignification of the *Reales*. Text #29.4b

Text #29.4b, from the above-discussed theological question 19b, mentions something called *communis consignificatio realium*. Presumably, “common” is used here in the sense of being general or indefinite, as opposed to being common to all the *Reales*. Thus, the common consignification of the *Reales* should probably be contrasted with *consignificatio praesentis determinati* discussed by Alexander Neckam.<sup>2</sup> The idea of the consignifica-

<sup>1</sup> This has been pointed out to me by Irene Binini. See Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* I, q. 19a, par. 1, p. 402: “Consequentia non est necessaria, nec ad uirginem parere sequitur quidlibet, quia non est impossibile per se. Impossibile enim per se est quod non potest fieri a deo.” See also Binini 2024 for other contemporary sources that restricted the applicability of the *Ex impossibili quidlibet* principle to the *per se* impossibility, variously understood. See also Binini’s contribution to this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Al. Neq. *Spec. spec.* II, c. 41, p. 180: “Dant uiri maturi pectoris idem enunciabile significari istis tribus: ‘Sortes est’, ‘Sortes fuit’, ‘Sortes erit’. Quod si est, dabitur quod quicquid semel est uerum, semper erit uerum. Sed alia erit consideratio istorum quam eorum qui † ad id asserunt † [*forsitan rectius* ad id accedunt *vel* idem asserunt] propter consignificationem presentis determinati”; Al. Neq. *Spec. spec.* II, c. 38, pp. 177–78: “Difficultas autem non modica imminet in talibus eis qui dicunt uerbum consignificare presens determinatum. Secundum hoc enim, si dicam in tempore ‘Sortes currit’, perinde est ac si dicam ‘Sortes currit in hoc instanti’. Si autem dicam ‘Sortes curret’, perinde est ac



tion of the definite present is roughly that a categorical statement such as “Socrates is running” signifies the propositional content that Socrates is running *at this instant*, where “this instant” refers to the moment of assertion. *Consignificatio praesentis determinati* should probably be linked with Abelard and the *Nominales*, as suggested by the reports from Albrican commentaries C15, C17, and H17.<sup>1</sup>

According to Langton, we need to presuppose the common consignification of the *Reales* if we want to deny that the propositional content *antichristum esse* is impossible at this instant. The need to assume this kind of consignification implies that the claim in question—“It is impossible at this instant that the Antichrist exists”—might count as true according to a singular or definite consignification of “exists.” As I have suggested above, the definite consignification was probably postulated by the *Nominales*, who assumed that propositional contents should include a reference to the instant of assertion. Perhaps some *Nominales* would argue that the statement “It is impossible at this instant that the Antichrist exists” asserts

si dicam ‘Sortes curret post hoc instans’.” For a related distinction between consignifying *praesens determinatum* and *confusum*, see Kneepkens 1994, pp. 179–80.

<sup>1</sup> I argue for this link elsewhere (Wciórka 2024). The Albrican reports have been recently discussed in Donato and Hansen, forthcoming. The idea that a propositional content should be relativised to the present instant (i.e., the time of assertion) dovetails with the principle “Once true, always true” (*Semel verum, semper verum*), famously attributed to the *Nominales* in historical sources. Suppose that the statement “Socrates is white,” asserted at *t*, expresses the propositional content *that Socrates is white at t*. If this time-relativised propositional content is true, then it will remain true forever. Furthermore, if we set aside the problem of future contingents and accept the so-called retro-closure, the same propositional content has been true for the entire past. Although the catchphrase *Semel semper* is about propositional contents (*dicta* or *enuntiabilia*), it can also be applied to sentences. Namely, if “Socrates is white,” asserted at *t*, is once true, it is always true in the sense that the propositional content it expresses at *t* is always true. Furthermore, we can apply the maxim to non-relativised propositional contents such as *that Socrates is white* (*Socratem esse album*) if we insist that time-relativisation is required for having a truth-value, and so a true non-relativised propositional content must actually contain an implicit time index in each context. *Semel semper* and time-relativisation work in tandem for the other tenses as well.

that it is impossible at this instant that the Antichrist exists *at this instant*. The limitation to the present moment may make the statement true, provided that the Antichrist could only exist *in the future*.<sup>1</sup>

### 7 A *Realis* Does Not Place Much Weight on Persons. Text #29.4c

Text 29.4c revolves around the sentence “This statue is being made” (“Haec statua fit”). According to Langton, “a *Realis* does not place much weight on persons” (*non facit vim de personis*). This looks like an allusion to the distinction made by the *Nominales* between *persona* and *essentia*, which underlies their catchphrase “Nothing grows” and plays a key role in obligational disputations in which one admits impossible unions such as Socrates who is both a human and a donkey.<sup>2</sup> If we generalise the distinction, then the piece of bronze of which this statue is made would be the *essentia*, and the statue made of bronze would be a *persona*. The *Nominales*, then, are in a position to accept the statement “This statue is being made” on the grounds that the predicate “is made” holds of the *persona* even though it is not true of the piece of bronze, the *essentia*. The *Reales*, by contrast, can only accept this sentence in an improper sense (*sub impropriate*): it is true by virtue of the accident *being a statue*, not by virtue of the thing denoted by the subject term, which is primarily a piece of bronze and thus is not being made.

It is worth noting that the distinction between *persona* and *essentia* was explicitly attributed to the *Nominales* by two theologians directly connected to Langton: Peter the Chanter, who was probably one of his teachers, and Geoffrey of Poitiers, Langton’s student.<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey often followed his master in the *Summa* “*Ego novissimus*.” Unfortunately, the Langtonian counterparts of Geoffrey’s questions lack explicit references to logical schools. This is particularly striking in the case of Geoffrey’s texts #48a

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this passage, see Wciórka 2024, pp. 305–8.

<sup>2</sup> See Anon. *Tract. Emm.*, pp. 120–21; Martin 1998, pp. 8–15; Noël 2022, pp. 114–15.

<sup>3</sup> See Iwakuma and Ebbesen 1992, #33a–b (p. 185) and #48d (p. 198), respectively. For the association between Langton and Peter the Chanter, see especially Baldwin 1970.

about the number of sins (that is, whether volition and act constitute two separate sins) and #48b about the identity of the articles of faith. Langton's corresponding questions 50 (Book II) and 73 (Book III, volume 1) do not mention the *Nominales* despite discussing the relevant theories.

### Conclusion

The references to the *Reales* in texts #29.3c and #29.4b–c, in contrast to the passages that mention them together with the *Nominales* (#29.3a–b), are not concerned with the nature of universals. Although Langton invokes notions such as “the impossibility of the *Reales*” or “the common consignification of the *Reales*” without referring by name to any particular school such as the *Parvipontani*, *Albricani*, *Meludinenses*, or *Porretani*, he is unlikely to have thought that all the *Reales* accepted the principle *Ex impossibili quidlibet*. The indiscriminate use of the label *Reales* suggests that the above-discussed positions on conditionals, consignification, and persons may have been primarily perceived by Langton in opposition to the *Nominales*. That being said, we are dealing with mere snippets. In some cases, the amount of background information required to understand them somewhat dilutes their significance as independent sources of knowledge about the schools. But at least some of the texts seem unique, for instance the claim that *sumptum* is nothing according to the *Nominales* (#29.4a).

The list below gathers all the above-discussed passages from Langton's works along with another reference to the *Reales* found in Geoffrey of Poitiers' *Summa* (#48e). The list is not meant to be exhaustive, as more references may be found in Langton's biblical commentaries, which remain mostly unedited and unexplored.

### A Supplement to Iwakuma and Ebbesen's List of Sources

- 29.2 Stephen Langton, *Summa magistri Stephani* (the unedited part)
- 29.2a Item. Videtur quod naturalia fiunt gratuita. . . .  
 Solutio. Distinguendum est inter uirtutes naturales et politicas.  
 Virtutes politice non possunt fieri gratuita, et iustitia Catonis non

erat iustitia licet putaretur. Et phylosophi nichil sciebant de uirtutibus, sicut **nominales** nichil sciunt de genere, sicut Arriani putant aliquid esse fidem quod non est fides. Licet similia essent opera illius putatiue iustitie que et istius, quia tamen non fiebant fine debito, non erant iustitia. Sicut intentio respicit uoluntatem et finem, ita uirtus opus et finem.

MS C ff. 168vb–169ra.

Cf. #40a (Alexander Neckam); #44d (Peter Capuano)

### 29.3 Stephen Langton, *Postillae super epistulas Pauli*

29.3a *Deum putauerunt qui non erat*: hoc uidetur impossibile. Aut enim intelligebant sensum huius nominis ‘deus’ aut non. Si intelligebant, ergo comprehendebant uerum deum, et ideo non putabant ydolum esse deum. Si non intelligebant, in qua ergo significatione utebantur illo nomine? Si in alia, non ideo putabant ydolum esse deum.

Quod hic dicitur simpliciter est intelligendum (scilicet quod deum putauerunt qui non erat): ponitur enim hoc nomen ‘deus’ in illa significatione in qua nos eo utimur, set ydolatre illam significationem nec penitus intelligebant nec penitus ignorabant. Credebant enim per illud nomen designari quiddam quod esset summe potens et credebant ydolum esse illud, scilicet summe potens, summe bonum, et similia, et concedebant hanc locutionem, scilicet “ydolum est deus”, set non dictum. Simile est si **realis** dicat **reali** “**nominalis** dicit genera et species esse<sup>a</sup> nomina”. Et in hoc errabant.

Steph. Lang. *Post.* in Rom. 1:25, commentary on Pet. Lomb. *Coll.* in Rom. 1:25, *PL* 191, 1332B (see below).

<sup>1</sup> Pet. Lomb, *Collect.* in Rom. 1:25, *PL* 191, 1332B (also Anon. *Glos. ord.*, f. 1058vb): “Ostendit enim per partes eos mutasse gloriam Dei, scilicet quod Deum putauerunt qui non erat, et coluerunt, et seruiuerunt creaturae potius quam Creatori”; Rom. 1:25: “qui commutauerunt veritatem Dei in mendacium: et coluerunt, et seruiuerunt creaturae potius quam Creatori.”

MS T<sup>1</sup> f. 5rb; cf. S<sup>2</sup> f. 16a; V<sup>1</sup> f. 6ra.

<sup>a</sup> esse S<sup>2</sup>sV<sup>1</sup> ] sunt T<sup>1</sup>pV<sup>1</sup>

Cf. #40a (Alexander Neckam); #44d (Peter Capuano).

29.3b <*Dicitur enim*> *tribus modis* <*deus*>: *substantiue*, idest essentialiter, <*adoptiue, nuncupatiue*>. <...> *nuncupatiue demones et ydola*.<sup>1</sup>

Set obicitur: secundum quod dicitur de demonibus et ydolis, aut habet aliam significationem quam quando ponitur<sup>a</sup> naturaliter, siue essentialiter, uel adoptiue, aut non. Si non, ergo non dicitur tribus modis. Preterea, secundum hoc hec est falsa “omnes dii gentium sunt demonia”. Si habet aliam, quare ergo dicitur in illa significatione poni nuncupatiue? Si ideo quia non ex prima institutione habet illam significationem set quasi translatiue, eadem ratione cum dicitur de sanctis ponitur nuncupatiue. Preterea, habetne eandem significationem apud nos et apud ydolatrias?

Questio ista consimilis est isti qua queritur utrum hoc nomen ‘genus’ habeat eandem significationem secundum quod utitur eo **realis** in sua professione et **nominalis** in sua. Et potest esse quod hoc nomen ‘deus’ aliam habeat significationem quando ponitur nuncupatiue quam quando essentialiter uel adoptiue. Et dicitur poni in illa nuncupatiue eo quod ydolatre stulti in illa significatione extendant illud ad uerum deum et<sup>b</sup> credant etiam illud nomen secundum hoc uerum deum significare; sicut dicit glossa super principium Matthei quod solus Iesus Christus habuit hoc nomen ‘Iesus’ essentialiter, et alii nuncupatiue, et tamen unam habuit<sup>c</sup> significationem propriam et discretam in qua Iesum Naue significauit. Set dicitur soli Iesu Christo essentialiter conuenire quia ei soli conuenit secundum nominis interpretationem, scilicet ‘salus’ actiue. Interpretatur enim ‘Iesus’ ‘saluator’, quod nullus habens hoc nomen nisi Christus fuit. Nec tamen plene soluimus que de ydolatria hic possent queri, quia in disputatione plenius sunt discutienda.

Steph. Lang. *Post.* in I Cor. 8:5, commentary on Pet. Lomb. *Coll.* in Cor. 8:5–7, *PL* 191, 1604A (see below).

<sup>1</sup> Pet. Lomb. *Coll.* in Cor. 8:5–7, *PL* 191, 1604A: “Dicitur enim tribus modis Deus, substantive, adoptiue, nuncupatiue. Substantiue dicitur Deus Trinitas; adoptiue, sancti qui per adoptionis gratiam dii sunt; nuncupatiue, demones et idola, quia nomine tantum dii sunt, non natura vel participatione.”

MS P<sup>1</sup> f. 306vb; cf. H<sup>1</sup> f. 43va–vb; P<sup>3</sup> f. 58ra; T<sup>1</sup> f. 58vb.

<sup>a</sup> ponitur P<sup>1</sup>P<sup>3</sup> ] debitum *praem. pH<sup>1</sup>T<sup>1</sup>* debito modo (?) *praem. sH<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>b</sup> et H<sup>1</sup>T<sup>1</sup>P<sup>3</sup> ] Contra, aut intelligunt illam significationem aut non. Et si intelligunt, aut intendunt uti illo nomine in illa significatione aut in alia. P<sup>1</sup>

<sup>c</sup> habuit P<sup>3</sup> ] habuerit H<sup>1</sup> habent P<sup>1</sup> hūnt (habuerunt?) T<sup>1</sup>

Cf. #40a (Alexander Neckam); #44d (Peter Capuano).

29.3c *Sequitur et hoc aliud impossibile:*<sup>1</sup> set non ratione impossibilitatis **realium**, quia sic nulla esset probatio, set ratione habitudinis terminorum. [[“Sequitur”, idest oportet te concedere.]]<sup>a</sup>

Ex hoc quod dicit hic glossa, et etiam textus, probatur quod Habraham fuit dignus uita eterna, quia cum dicit “Habraham habet gloriam”, non loquitur de eo<sup>b</sup> secundum statum in quo fuit uiator. Aliter enim nulla esset deductio apostoli. Est ergo sensus eius quod dicit apostolus: si Habraham iustificatus fuit ex operibus legis sine gratia, habuit gloriam, idest dignus fuit habere. Eadem ratione, si iustificatus fuit ex fide, habuit gloriam, idest dignus fuit habere. Set iustificatus fuit ex fide, ergo dignus fuit habere gloriam. Quod concedimus licet quidam dicant quod nullus ante aduentum Christi meruit uitam eternam uel fuit dignus ea.

Steph. Lang. *Post. in Rom. 4:2* (“Si enim Abraham ex operibus iustificatus est, habet gloriam, sed non apud Deum”); commentary on Pet. Lomb. *Coll. in Rom. 4:2, PL 191, 1366C* (see below).

<sup>1</sup> Pet. Lomb. *Coll. in Rom. 4:2, PL 191, 1366C*: “si Abraham iustificatus est ex operibus legis, id est si ex carnali observatione vere justus est, quod utique impossibile est, sequitur hoc aliud impossibile, scilicet quod ipse habet gloriam aeternam, quae ex iustitia sequitur; sed a se habet eam, non apud Deum, id est non a Deo.”

MS T<sup>1</sup> f. 10ra; cf. V<sup>1</sup> f. 9ra.

<sup>a</sup> [[ ]]—auctorial addition (*versio longa*)

<sup>b</sup> eo sV<sup>1</sup> ] deo T<sup>1</sup>pV<sup>1</sup>

29.4 Stephen Langton, *Quaestiones theologiae*

29.4a Dicimus quod nec aliqua uirtus nec aliquod donum faciens gratum naturaliter precedit fidem, nec aliquod donum faciens gratum precedit uirtutes, immo uirtutes naturaliter precedunt dona. Cum

autem dicitur “quia iste diligitur a deo, credit”, dicimus quod fides connotata per hoc uerbum ‘diligitur’ notatur esse causa sui sumpti copulati per hoc uerbum ‘credit’, sicut cum dicitur “quia iste est albus, est coloratus”, albedo notatur esse causa sumpti copulati per hoc nomen ‘coloratus’. Non<sup>a</sup> sumptum sumpti notatur esse causa. Similiter, cum dicitur “quia deus diligit istum, iste credit”, hec dictio ‘quia’ respicit hoc uerbum ‘diligit’ ratione effectus connotati tantum, scilicet ratione fidei que notatur esse causa sui sumpti. Nam cum dicitur “deus istum diligit”, hoc uerbum ‘diligit’ connotat communiter omne gratuitum faciens gratum, et ita potest reddere locutionem ueram pro fide. Similiter, cum dicitur “iste diligitur a deo”, similiter debet dici.

**Nominales** uero, quia sumptum nichil esse dicunt, dicunt—cum dicitur “quia iste diligitur a deo, credit”—quod fides designata ut effectus diuine essentie per hoc uerbum ‘diligitur’ notatur esse causa sui ipsius prout copulatur per hoc uerbum ‘credit’; sicut cum dicitur “quia albedo est in isto non secundum quid,<sup>b</sup> iste est albus, et non econuerso”, albedo significata in existentia est causa sui ipsius prout significatur in adiacentia. Eodem modo effectus connotatus per hoc uerbum ‘diligit’ notatur esse causa sui ipsius prout alio modo significatur.

Ed. Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* III.2, q. 94, par. 8, pp. 378–379.

<sup>a</sup> non  $\alpha$ CaDH ] nam  $\beta$  [Note: “nam”—the reading of family  $\beta$ —has been accepted in the edition on the assumption that not only *albedo* (a form) is the cause of *coloratum* (a *sumptum*) but also *album* (a *sumptum*) is the cause of the more general *sumptum* coupled by “coloratus.” Also, the position of “non” seemed off. On reflection, however, “non” probably goes with “sumptum,” so that the infinite name “non-sumptum” simply refers to *albedo* as opposed to *album*.]

<sup>b</sup> quid H ] quod *ap*CaDR(?)S quam *s*CaAB

- 29.4b Dicimus itaque quod non ualet talis argumentatio: “uirginem peperisse uel istum uidere ceco demonstrato non potest esse uerum secundum causas inferiores, ergo est impossibile secundum causas inferiores”: primo enim hec determinatio ‘secundum causas

inferiores' determinabat hoc predicatum 'esse uerum', in conclusione uero determinat hoc predicatum 'est impossibile'. Instantia: hoc dictum 'antichristum esse' non potest esse uerum in hoc instanti, ergo est impossibile in hoc instanti, quod falsum est (sustineatur communis consignificatio **realium**); si enim esset impossibile in hoc instanti, simpliciter esset impossibile. Similiter si aliquid enuntiabile est impossibile secundum causas inferiores, sequitur simpliciter quod sit impossibile; similiter si secundum causas superiores.

Ed. Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* I, q. 19b, par. 1, p. 409.

- 29.4c Item. Nota quod licet uerbum mittendi dictum de filio uel spiritu sancto copulet diuinam essentiam que est ab eterno et est eterna, neuter tamen dicitur mitti eternaliter, set tantum temporaliter. Et hoc prouenit propter effectum temporale per uerbum connotatum: propter eandem causam dicitur missio spiritus sancti temporalis et non eterna, licet per hoc nomen 'missio' supponatur diuina essentia que est eterna. Simile est in statua que dicitur artificialis et non naturalis, licet es sit naturale.

Contra. Est ergo hec uera: "missio est temporalis" ratione effectus temporalis qui connotatur; ergo multo potius hec est uera: "missio est eterna" ratione diuine essentie que principaliter per subiectum supponitur et per predicatum copulatur.

Si usquequaque proprie loqueremur, non esset hec uera uel concedenda "missio est temporalis"; set sub eadem improprietae admittitur qua et ista secundum **realem** (qui uim non facit in personis): "hec statua fit", et eiusdem iudicii uidetur esse penitus, quia, sicut hic non fit attributio ratione suppositi set ratione accidentis significati, ita et ibi non ratione suppositi, set ratione connotati. Vnde sicut hec est falsa "statua est naturalis", ita et ista "missio est eterna".

Ed. Steph. Lang. *Quaest. theol.* I, q. 20a, par. 2.2, p. 417.



- 48 Geoffrey (Godfrey) of Poitiers, *Summa "Ego novissimus,"* q. *De primis motibus*
- 48e Instantia: non est uirgo, ergo est incontinens. Sicut enim dico quod continentia est uirginitas secundum quod accidentale est continentie esse uirginitatem—et loquendo ut **realis** dicam quod hoc accidens *continens* est hoc accidens *uirgo*, set accidentale est ei esse hoc accidens—ita dico quod accidentale est huic accidenti *sciens* esse hoc accidens *sciens*, secundum quod accidens importat donum.
- MS Kl f. 32vb; cf. Pa f. 33va; To f. 44rb.

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