PAUL VINCENT SPADE

Introduction

Standard histories have long recognized that the three most important figures in the philosophy of the High Middle Ages were Thomas Aquinas (1224/5–74), John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308), and William of Ockham (c. 1288–1347).[1] Of the three, Aquinas is comparatively well known to modern readers, whereas Scotus and Ockham largely remain mere names.

Even Aquinas, however, is more foreign to students than Plato and Aristotle are, much less Descartes or Hume. Indeed, as Kretzmann and Stump have observed in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*,[2] such unfamiliarity is characteristic of all medieval philosophy.[3] This sad fact is partly due to the scarcity of translations but more fundamentally to the lack of reliable modern editions of primary texts and thus of good critical analyses and studies of them in the secondary literature.

The situation does not arise from any lack of raw materials but instead, it might be argued, from just the opposite. There are many early printed editions from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and an enormous number of surviving manuscripts of medieval philosophy and theology. But the early editions are often unreliable, whereas the manuscripts frequently present wildly different versions of the same work. They are written in a highly compressed and arcane system of abbreviation, a kind of shorthand that requires special training to read; early printed editions often retain the same system. Frequently the manuscripts are incompletely cataloged or not cataloged at all, and thus their contents are discovered only by chance.

In such circumstances, it is a complicated and painstaking business to produce a reliable, modern edition of a philosophical text, and without such editions there can of course be no useful translations or

critical studies. It is no wonder, therefore, that even a major philosopher like Ockham remains largely unknown to modern readers.

Nevertheless, the situation has improved dramatically in recent decades. New and excellent editions of many works and authors have appeared. Ockham in particular has benefited, and we are now in a position to begin to appreciate and assess more confidently his true place in the history of philosophy. This development was made possible by the publication, between 1967 and 1988, of the first modern critical editions of all Ockham's philosophical and theological writings. The speedy completion of this enormous task by Gedeon Gál and his colleagues at the Franciscan Institute is one of the most impressive achievements of modern textual scholarship.[4] Ockham's political writings, which occupied him almost without pause from 1328 until his death in 1347, have likewise now all been critically edited with the exception of *Dial.*, which is in progress.[5]

With these editions, new and reliable translations have begun to appear. Although a much smaller portion of Ockham's work has been translated than, say, Aquinas's, a surprising amount is available in English, including several works in their entirety.[6] Likewise, there is now enough good secondary literature that curious readers can get a thorough grounding in all aspects of Ockham's thought. The most important secondary literature may be found by consulting the chapter notes and the Bibliography at the end of this volume, but the following sources in particular deserve special mention:

(1) For Ockham's philosophy and theology, with the exception of ethics and political theory, the indispensable starting point is Adams 1987a. There is no other work that studies a single medieval philosopher in such breadth and depth. Much briefer, but extremely clear and useful, is Chapter 3 of the introduction to Wood 1997. That chapter includes a discussion of Ockham's ethics as well. Indeed, it offers readers of the present volume an excellent orientation to Ockham's thought generally.

(2) For Ockham's ethics, Freppert 1988 is a good starting point, as is Adams 1986. The translation and commentary in Wood 1997 are superb.

(3) For Ockham's political philosophy, the best single study is undoubtedly McGrade 1974b.

I. OCKHAM'S LIFE AND REPUTATION

Ockham's life was full of controversy. Although his philosophical and theological views were not in themselves especially radical, they generated considerable opposition even while he was still in his thirties.[7] In 1324 he was summoned to the papal court, then in Avignon, to answer charges of heresy. The pope then, John XXII, was engaged in controversy with the Franciscan order, to which Ockham belonged, over the notion of "apostolic poverty" – that is, over whether Jesus and the apostles owned property and had property rights, and therefore over whether the Franciscans' renunciation of all property could be regarded as an "imitation of Christ." On instructions from Michael of Cesena, the Franciscans' minister general, Ockham reviewed the situation and concluded that the pope was in heresy and so had ipso facto renounced his office.[8] In 1328 Ockham fled Avignon with the minister general and ended up in Munich, living out the rest of his life under the protection of Louis of Bavaria, the Holy Roman Emperor. It was during this time that Ockham composed most of his political writings, challenging the claims of John XXII and his successor, Benedict XII. Ockham died, excommunicated, in 1347.[9] So effective was he as a polemicist that at one point the pope threatened to burn down the city of Tournai if it failed to capture him and turn him over![10]

After such a contentious life, it is little wonder that the Franciscans failed to champion his cause, as they did for their confrere John Duns Scotus, or as the Dominicans did for their own Thomas Aquinas. There was never an Ockhamist "school" of philosophy as there was a Thomist or a Scotist school.[11] Indeed, well into this century, Ockham's name continued to carry the faint odor of disreputability and scandal in certain quarters.

Not surprisingly, this reputation sometimes led to Ockham's being cast, depending on a particular writer's sympathies, either in the role of the great destroyer of the medieval worldview or in the role of a herald of the new, modern era. David Knowles has summarized the situation aptly as follows:

> Neglected in his turn for centuries, save as a bogy to scare young Thomists, he was re-discovered as an historical figure by the students of medieval

thought who, followers as they were of Thomas or Duns, regarded him as Apollyon, the grand deceiver and destroyer who ruined the fabric of the golden age of medieval thought. Others again, in more recent years, have seen in him one of the great creators, one of that group of contemporaries in whose writings Cartesian philosophy, anti-papal reform, modern science and the secular state can be seen in embryonic form.[12]

Fortunately, recent scholarship permits a more realistic assessment of Ockham's position in medieval thought. Although it is true that he contributed to, and was part of, the intellectual and social transformations taking place in fourteenth-century Europe, he did not originate them, cannot bear sole responsibility for them (whether credit or blame), and did not even approve of all of them. In fact, the true situation is far more complex, as the essays in this volume show.

Beginning in the 1970s, English-speaking philosophers of a broadly "analytic" training came to regard Ockham as a kindred spirit. This development was prompted by the realization that Ockham and certain other medieval thinkers were not only sophisticated logicians and philosophers of language but had also – like twentieth-century analytic philosophy – applied their logical techniques and skills to a wide variety of philosophical problems.[13] Medieval philosophy, or at least certain parts of it, had suddenly become "legitimate."

No doubt much of Ockham's thinking is genuinely similar to recent analytic philosophical work; it would be foolish to deny it.[14] But it is equally foolish to view Ockham, or any past philosopher, *solely* through a present-day lens.[15] That approach, by filtering out what is unfamiliar, guarantees in advance that we never really learn anything new from the history of philosophy. Ideally, what should happen is that readers will use what seems already familiar in Ockham as a pathway to probe more deeply into his thought and into medieval thought generally, thereby encountering and coming to appreciate problems, techniques, and perspectives that had perhaps never occurred to them previously or that they had never found reason to take seriously before.

II. A CONSPECTUS OF OCKHAM'S WRITINGS

Ockham's writings are conventionally divided into two groups: academic and political works. Except for items 33–4 listed in Section II.1.3, this corresponds to a chronological division into works written

before Ockham fled Avignon in 1328 and those written afterwards. I here list all Ockham's works, with the best Latin editions and English translations. (The translations are not always based on the most recent editions.) Earlier translations of some items are listed in Beckmann 1992. For each item, the Latin title (and, where appropriate, the abbreviation used in this volume) is followed by a translation of that title. Works are listed in the order in which they are printed in the critical editions.[16]

II.1. *Academic Writings*

The academic writings are published in a modern critical Latin edition, Ockham 1967–88, in two series: *Opera theologica* (OTh, 10 vols., 1967–86) and *Opera philosophica* (OPh, 7 vols., 1974–88).

II.1.1. THEOLOGICAL WORKS

1. *In libros Sententiarum* = *Sent.* (*Commentary on the Sentences*). Book I (*Scriptum*, completed shortly after July 1318). Books II–IV (*Reportatio*, 1317–18). Students progressing toward a degree in theology were required to lecture on the four books of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, a standard textbook of the time. Ockham's lectures survive in two versions. For Book I we possess an *ordinatio* or *scriptum* – a text corrected, revised, and approved for dissemination by the author himself. For Books II–IV, we have only a *reportatio*. Unlike a *scriptum*, a *reportatio* is a transcript of actual lectures, taken down by a "reporter." Such *reportationes* are more reliable than modern-day students' "lecture notes" but have not had the benefit of the lecturer's careful revisions and corrections.[17] Ockham's *Scriptum* is divided into several "questions" on Lombard's Prologue and on each of the "distinctions" into which Book I of Lombard's *Sentences* is divided. The three books of the *Reportatio* dispense with "distinctions" (although Lombard has them) and are divided directly into "questions." The edition is distributed over OTh I–VII as follows: OTh I (I. Prol.–1.6); OTh II (I.2.1–3.10); OTh III (I.4.1–18.1); OTh IV (I.19.1–48.1); OTh V (II); OTh VI (III); OTh VII (IV). Translations: Boehner 1990, 18–25 (from I.Prol.1); Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 335–8, 419–25 (from I.2.3); Spade 1994,

114–231 (I.2.4–8, complete); Boehner 1990, 102–6 (from I.2.9); MacDonald and Pasnau forthcoming (I.27.3); Hyman and Walsh 1983, 679–86 (from I.30.1); Boehner 1990, 133–5 (from I.38), reprinted in Schoedinger 1996, 218–19; Adams and Kretzmann 1983, 80–95 (I.38–9, complete), I.38 reprinted in Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 301–7; Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 78–83 (from I.42), 83–9 (from I.43.1–2); Wippel and Wolter 1969, 447–54 (I.43.2, complete); Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 89–91 (from I.44); Hyman and Walsh 1983, 670–9 (from II.12–13),[18] 689 (from III.4).[19] The passage in Hyman and Walsh 1983, 693–700, described as from III.12, is in fact from item 18 listed in this section.

Two questions (dates unknown) that may be extracts or adaptations of parts of the lost *Reportatio* on Book I of the *Sentences*:

2. *De necessitate caritatis* (*On the Need for Charity*), OTh VIII. 3–27.
3. *Utrum anima sit subiectum scientiae* (*Is the Soul the Subject of Science?*), OTh VIII.28–55.

Three disputed questions, dates unknown:

4. *De aeternitate mundi* (*On the Eternity of the World*), OTh VIII. 59–97. Translation: Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 231–44.
5. *De causalitate finis = De fine* (*On Final Causality*), OTh VIII. 98–154.
6. *De intellectu agente* (*On the Agent Intellect*), OTh VIII.155–91.

Miscellaneous notes, discussions of doubtful points, statements of views (dates unknown except as noted):

7. *De locutione angelorum* (*On the Speech of Angels*), OTh VIII. 195–206. Dated after the *Reportatio*.
8. *Quid totum addit super partes* (*What a Whole Adds to the Parts*), OTh VIII.207–19.
9. *Discursus de peccato originali* (*Discourse on Original Sin*), OTh VIII.220–4. Consists of three brief notes, "*De peccato originali*" ("*On Original Sin*"), "*De necessitate absoluta gratiae*" ("*On the Absolute Need for Grace*"), and "*De speculo et obiecto*" ("*On the Mirror and Its Object*").
10. *De peccato originali in Beata Virgine* (*On Original Sin in the Blessed Virgin*), OTh VIII.224–7.
11. *De nugatione* (*On Nugation*), OTh VIII.228–33.

12. *De univocatione entis* (*On the Univocation of Being*), OTh VIII. 233–7.
13. *De intellectu possibili secundum Averroem* (*On the Possible Intellect According to Averroes*), OTh VIII.237–43. Before *Reportatio* IV.4.
14. *De donis spiritus sancti* (*On the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*), OTh VIII.243–50.
15. *Circa delectationes et dolores* (*On Pleasures and Pains*), OTh VIII.251–72. After the *Reportatio* but before item 18.
16. *Circa virtutes et vitia* (*On Virtues and Vices*), OTh VIII.272–86. After the *Reportatio* but before item 18.
17. *Dubitationes addititiae* (*Additional Doubtful Points*), OTh VIII. 286–320. Five discussions: "*Utrum caritas habeat aliquam causalitatem respectu actus meritorii*" ("Does Charity Have Any Causality with Respect to a Meritorious Act?"), "*Quomodo de potentia dei absoluta aliquis ex puris naturalibus posset esse acceptus deo sine aliquo absoluto*" ("How, by God's Absolute Power, Could Someone on the Basis of His Purely Natural [Powers] Be Accepted by God Without Anything Absolute [Added]?"), "*In quo consistit perfecta delectatio et quietatio potentiae beatae*" ("What Do the Perfect Delight and Repose of a Blessed Power Consist in?"), "*An dilectio et delectatio distinguantur* ("Are Love and Delight Distinguished?"), "*Utrum actus exterior habeat propriam bonitatem*" ("Does an Exterior Act Have Its Own Goodness?"). Probably after item 18.
18. *De connexione virtutum* = *Connex.* (On the Connection of the Virtues), OTh VIII.323–407. Dated 1319.[20] Translation: Wood 1997. The translation preserves the line numbers of the edition.
19. *Utrum voluntas possit habere actum virtuosum respectu alicuius obiecti respectu cuius est error in intellectu* = *Act. virt.* (Can the Will Have a Virtuous Act with Respect to Some Object About Which There Is Error in the Intellect?), OTh VIII.409–50.

Other theological writings:

20. *Quodlibeta septem* = *Quodl.* (*Seven Quodlibets*), OTh IX. Probably based on disputations held in London 1322–24, but revised and edited in Avignon 1324–25. Translations: Freddoso and Kelly 1991 (complete);[21] Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 425–7 (from IV.35), 427–30 (from V.10), 430–3 (from V.12–13), 433–5 (from V.23), 125–36 (VII.11 [with parts of III.1], VII.15, VII.17).

21. *Tractatus de quantitate* = *Quant.* (*Treatise on Quantity*), OTh X.3–85. Probably 1323–24.
22. *De corpore Christi* (*On the Body of Christ*), OTh X.89–234. Probably 1323–24.

Items 21–2 are sometimes (wrongly) treated as constituting a single work, *De sacramento altaris* (*On the Sacrament of the Altar*). In this form they are translated in Birch 1930.

II.1.2. PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

23. *Summa logicae* = *SL* (*Summa of Logic*), OPh I. Dated c. 1323. Divided into three parts, the third with four subparts. Translations: Loux 1974 (I, complete); Spade 1995 (Wodeham's Prologue, Ockham's Preface and I.1–5, 6, 8–13, 26–8, 30–1, 33, 63–6, 70, 72); Bosley and Tweedale 1997, 235–6 (from I.70); Freddoso and Schuurman 1980 (II, complete); Boehner 1990, 83–4 (from III-1.1), 92–5 (III-2.27); Kretzmann and Stump 1988, 314–36 (III-3.10–6); Adams and Kretzmann 1983, 110–14 (from III-3.30); Boehner 1990, 84–8 (III-3.38).[22]
24. *Expositio in libros artis logicae, prooemium et expositio in librum Porphyrii de Praedicabilibus* = *Prooem. et Porph.* (*Exposition of the Books of the Art of Logic: Prologue, and Exposition of Porphyry's Isagoge*), OPh II.3–131. Translation: Kluge 1973–74 (*Exposition of Porphyry* only).
25. *Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis* = *Expos. Praed.* (*Exposition of Aristotle's Categories*), OPh II.135–339.
26. *Expositio in librum Perihermenias Aristotelis* = *Expos. Perih.* (*Exposition of Aristotle's On Interpretation*), OPh II.345–504. Translations: Boehner 1990, 43–5 (from I.Prol.6); Adams and Kretzmann 1983, 96–109 (I.6.7–15, on *On Interpretation* 9).
27. *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia dei respectu futurorum contingentium* = *Praedest.* (*Treatise on Predestination and God's Foreknowledge with Respect to Future Contingents*), OPh II.507–39. Translation: Adams and Kretzmann 1983.

Items 24–7 were published together under the title *Summa aurea* (*Golden Summa*) in Ockham 1496. Dated 1321–24.

28. *Expositio super libros Elenchorum* = *Expos. Elench.* (*Exposition of the Sophistic Refutations*), OPh III. After items 24–6, before item 29.

29. *Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis* = *Expos. Phys.* (*Exposition of Aristotle's Physics*), OPh IV (Books I–III); OPh V (Books IV–VIII). Incomplete. Dated 1322–24. Translation: Boehner 1990, 2–16 (Prol. only).

Parts of item 29 were loosely excerpted by an early scribe and combined into a separate work known as the *Tractatus de successivis* (*Treatise on Successive* [*Entities*]). Only in this indirect sense is the latter "authentically" Ockham's. It is edited, Boehner 1944. Partial translations: Grant 1974, 229–34 (from III.2.4–6); Hyman and Walsh 1983, 686–8 (from III.2.6).

30. *Brevis summa libri Physicorum* = *Brev. Phys.* (*Brief Summa of the Physics*), OPh VI.2–134. Dated 1322–23. Translation: Davies 1989.
31. *Summula philosophiae naturalis* = *Phil. nat.* (*Little Summa of Natural Philosophy*), OPh VI.137–94. Incomplete. Dated 1319–21.
32. *Quaestiones in libros Physicorum Aristotelis* = *Qq. Phys.* (*Questions on Aristotle's Books of the Physics*), OPh VI.397–813. Before 1324. Translation: Boehner 1990, 115–25 (from qq. 132–6).

II.1.3. DOUBTFUL AND SPURIOUS WORKS

33. *Tractatus minor logicae* (*Lesser Treatise on Logic*), OPh VII.3–57.
34. *Elementarium logicae* (*Primer of Logic*), OPh VII.61–304.

The authenticity of items 33–4 is suspect; recent opinion leans toward accepting them.[23] Both probably from 1340–7.

35. *Tractatus de praedicamentis* (*Treatise on Categories*), OPh VII. 307–32. Probably inauthentic. If authentic, probably before 1323.
36. *Quaestio de relatione* (*Question on Relation*), OPh VII.335–69. Spurious.
37. *Centiloquium* = *Centil.* (*One Hundred Theses*), OPh VII.373–505. Spurious.
38. *Tractatus de principiis theologiae* (*Treatise on the Principles of Theology*), OPh VII.507–639. Spurious. Dated 1328–50.

II.2. *Political Writings*

With the exception of items 49–50, Ockham's political writings are published in critical Latin editions in Ockham 1956–97. Item 53 is a "special case."

II.2.1. AUTHENTIC WORKS

39. *Octo quaestiones de potestate papae* = *OQ* (*Eight Questions on the Power of the Pope*), OPol I.13–217. Fall 1340–summer 1341. Translations: Fairweather 1956, 437–42 (II.1, 7); McGrade and Kilcullen 1995, 303–33 (III).
40. *An princeps pro suo succursu, scilicet guerrae, possit recipere bona ecclesiarum, etiam invito papa* = *AP* (*Can the Ruler Take the Churches' Goods to Aid Him in War, Even If the Pope Is Unwilling?*), OPol I.230–71. Incomplete. August 1338–end of 1339.
41. *Consultatio de causa matrimoniali* (*Advice about a Marriage Case*), OPol. I.278–86. Late 1341–February 1342.
42. *Opus nonaginta dierum* = *OND* (*The Work of Ninety Days*), OPol I.292–368 (Chapters 1–6), OPol II (Chapters 7–124). Between 1332–34. Translation: McGrade and Kilcullen 1995, 19–115 (Chapters 2, 26–8, 65, 88, 93); William of Ockham 1998 (complete).
43. *Epistola ad fratres minores* = *Epist.* (*Letter to the Friars Minor*), OPol III.6–17. Spring 1334. Translation: McGrade and Kilcullen 1995, 3–15.
44. *Tractatus contra Ioannem* (*Treatise Against* [*Pope*] *John* [*XXII*]), OPol III.29–156. Dated 1335.
45. *Tractatus contra Benedictum* = *CB* (*Treatise Against* [*Pope*] *Benedict* [*XII*]), OPol III.165–322. Dated 1337–early 1338.
46. *Compendium errorum Iohannis papae XXII* (*Compendium of the Errors of Pope John XXII*), OPol IV.14–77. Late 1337–early 1338. Probably authentic, although there is some doubt.
47. *Breviloquium* = *Brev.* (*Short Discourse*), OPol IV.97–260. Translation: McGrade and Kilcullen 1992. Between 1341 and 1342.
48. *De imperatorum et pontificum potestate* = *IPP* (*On the Power of Emperors and Pontiffs*), OPol IV.279–355. Dated 1346–47.
49. *Dialogus* = *Dial.* (*Dialogue*), Goldast 1614, 398–957; the last portion, lacking in Goldast, published in Scholz 1911–44, II.392–5. An "on-line" critical Latin edition and complete translation are being prepared in Ockham forthcoming; portions of the project are being posted on the Internet as they are completed. *Dial.* has three parts. Part I (seven books, subdivided into chapters) was completed before 1335. What now survives as Part II was not part of the *Dial.* but instead is item 50. Part III (two tracts, each in several books, subdivided into chapters) is variously dated