

THE DIVISION OF PHILOSOPHY IN BRITISH LIBRARY MS ADDITIONAL 62130*

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I. *Manuscript Context*

The short anonymous text discussed and edited in this note is copied as a second column on fol. 138r of the British Library, MS Additional 62130. This large miscellaneous codex, compiled at the Cistercian Abbey of the Blessed Virgin at Fountains, comprises texts on a variety of topics written between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century.

The text in question, entitled *Divisio philosophie*, is found in a codicological unit that can be dated to the thirteenth century. The unit is made of three gatherings occupying fol. 130r–150v (with fol. 150 left blank), and the *Divisio* belongs to the first of them. It is preceded by an excerpt from the *Ars catholice fidei* of the French theologian Nicholas of Amiens (1147–c. 1200) and followed by another anonymous text entitled *De aquis supra firmamentum questio quedam*.¹ It is possible, but not absolutely certain, that the *Divisio* and the *De aquis* were intended to be read as two thematically linked components of one and the same piece.

* I am grateful to Charles Burnett, John Magee, and Cecilia Panti for their useful comments and suggestions.

¹ For a cursory description of the entire codex and its history, see the online catalogue of the British Library: <<http://searcharchives.bl.uk/>>. A detailed list of the contents on this particular gathering is found in GRETI DINKOVA-BRUUN, « How Do Waters Stay Above the Firmament?: British Library, MS Additional 62130 and Its *De aquis supra firmamentum questio quedam* », in GRETI DINKOVA-BRUUN, TRISTAN MAJOR (eds.), *Teaching and Learning in Medieval Europe. Essays in Honour of Gernot R. Wieland*, Brepols, Turnhout 2017 (Publications of The Journal of Medieval Latin, 11), p. 211–222, esp. 214–216; the *Divisio* is discussed briefly in fn. 10 of this article.

II. The Contents of the 'Divisio philosophie'

In the first paragraph of the text the anonymous author presents the *communis philosophorum ratio* according to which the scientific discipline of philosophy is divided into *physica*, *ethica*, and *logica*.² Then he subdivides philosophy into *speculativa* and *practica*, with the *speculativa* encompassing the following sub-branches: 1) *theologia*, which considers the nature of the incorporeal things that exist *extra corpora*; 2) *mathematica*, which discusses the nature of the things *circa corpora*; and 3) *physica*, which deals with the properties or nature of the bodies themselves. Even though this tripartite division of *philosophia speculativa* is known from Boethius' *De trinitate*, ch. 2,³ the actual definitions of the three speculative branches provided in Additional 62130 are much closer to the text of Thierry of Chartres' prologue to his *Lectiones in Boethii librum De trinitate* as well as to William of Conches' glosses on Boethius' *Consolatio philosophiae*, even though William calls the speculative branch *theorica*.⁴

After this standard opening, the remaining three paragraphs of the text in Additional 62130 are dedicated to dividing philosophy into *superior* and *inferior*. The author explains this division three times. In his first formulation both the superior and the inferior branches are given two further subdivisions (see Appendix, no. C). On the one hand, the superior branch deals with the Creative Nature (*de natura creatrice*), which is the subject matter of theology, while on the other it considers

² See JAMES A. WEISHEIPL, « Medieval Classification of the Sciences », *Mediaeval Studies*, 27 (1965), p. 54–90, esp. 62–65. For the text of Boethius, see BOETHIUS, *De sancta trinitate*, ch. 2, in ID., *Opuscula Sacra*, vol. II, ed. ALAIN GALONNIER, Peeters, Louvain 2013 (Philosophes médiévaux, 53), p. 136–139. The system is further developed by Hugh of St. Victor in his *Didascalicon*, Bk. 2, ch. 1 (see WEISHEIPL, « Medieval Classification », p. 65–66). A schematic representation of the divisions discussed in this section is presented in the Appendix (nos. A and B).

³ Boethius' doctrine on the division of the sciences is outlined in JOHN MAGEE, « Boethius », in LLOYD P. GERSON (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, 2 vols., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010, vol. 2, p. 788–812, esp. 797–798. The three sub-branches of *practica*, which is not treated in Add. 62130, are *ethica*, *economica*, and *politica*. Boethius' theory is expanded conceptually by Gilbert of Poitiers (d. 1154) who takes into account the substantial and accidental features of the objects investigated by the different branches of philosophy; see NIKOLAUS M. HÄRING, *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers*, PIMS, Toronto 1966 (Studies and Texts, 13), p. 79–80; LAUGE OLAF NIELSEN, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century. A study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–1180*, Brill, Leiden 1982 (Acta theologica Danica, 15), p. 87–98; and JOHN MARENBOON, « Gilbert of Poitiers », in PETER DRONKE, *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 328–352, esp. 338–340. The author of the text in Add. 62130 seems to be familiar with the twelfth century developments.

⁴ See *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, ed. NIKOLAUS M. HÄRING, PIMS, Toronto 1971 (Studies and Texts, 20), p. 126; and GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium*. In *Consolationem*, ed. LODI NAUTA, Brepols, Turnhout 1999 (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis [= CCCM], 158), p. 31. See below, fn. 15.

the created universe according to its qualities and causes, which are concerns that are the purview of the *doctrina quadrivii*, or arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.⁵ Here the anonymous author singles out *astronomia*, probably because of all quadrivial sciences its subject matter exemplifies most clearly how the human senses perceive God's creation.⁶ The inferior branch has likewise two parts: one which considers the effects of nature in things, like when Hippocrates ponders the theory of why remedies work, reasoning deductively from cause to effect; the other when the effects of nature are considered through direct observation of the ways in which they change the patient. Here the example is Aesculapius who, by trying different remedies, proceeds inductively from effect to cause. So, Hippocrates represents the theoretical approach in medicine, while Aesculapius exemplifies the experimental one.⁷

In his second explanation of the *superior vs. inferior* division of philosophy the author does not provide subdivisions, even though his explanations of what the branches cover elaborate further the meaning of the definitions already presented in the previous paragraph (see Appendix, no. D). Thus, the superior philosophy deals with the (creative) principle of nature in addition to the properties of the created world within time. These two characteristics clearly correspond to theology and the quadrivial sciences from the previous paragraph. The inferior philosophy treats the effects of nature in things, their defects and the cures of those defects. Again this statement more or less repeats what was said before about Hippocrates and Aesculapius.

The final paragraph of the text presents once again the division of superior and inferior philosophy (see Appendix, no. E). If in the first definition of superior philosophy the author talked about nature as a creative force and in the second he outlined the principles of this creative operation, here he says that the *natura creatrix* creates according to its own rules (*secundum se*), meaning that nature in itself is the cause of the creation of things. After this, the author repeats for a third time that inferior philosophy treats the effects of nature in things, adding that these effects are *secundum aliud*, that is, according to the principles of creation. This complex discussion on the creative principles of nature can be linked in general terms to Book I of the *Periphyseon*, where Eriugena talks about the ineffable nature of the divine.⁸

⁵ BOETHIUS, *De arithmetica* I.1. See MAGEE, « Boethius », p. 797–798. For a useful discussion on the reception of the liberal arts in medieval England, see WINSTON BLACK, « The Quadrivium and Natural Sciences », in RITA COPELAND (ed.) *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, vol. I: (800–1558), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, p. 77–94.

⁶ See DINKOVA-BRUUN, « How Do Waters Stay Above the Firmament? », p. 217 and fn. 15.

⁷ This definition is found in ISIDORE, *Etymologiae* IV.4.1; see ISIDORI HISPALENSIS *Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. WALLACE MARTIN LINDSAY, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911, and below, fn. 17.

⁸ See IOHANNIS SCOTTI SEU ERIUGENAE *Periphyseon*, ed. ÉDOUARD JEAUNEAU, 2 vols., Brepols, Turnhout 1996–2003 (CCCM, 161–165), vol. I, p. 32–35.

A couple of observations need to be made in regard to the divisions offered by the author of the text in Additional 62130:

1) First, even though it is tempting to assume that the division between *superior* and *inferior* refers to *speculativa* and *practica* this does not seem to be the case.⁹ In fact, the inferior philosophy is completely equated with medicine, in both its theoretical and experimental manifestations, which leads to the conclusion that by *philosophia inferior* the anonymous author actually means *physica*, i.e. one of the sub-branches of *philosophia speculativa*, rather than *practica* as the second main branch of philosophy. This means that the term *philosophia* in the second, third, and fourth paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie* needs to be understood as *philosophia speculativa*, not as *philosophia* in general.

2) Second, the fact that *physica* is understood as medicine has implications for the dating of the text in Additional 62130. It is well known that this understanding of *physica* was common, especially in Chartres, before the arrival of Aristotle's *Physics* in the Latin West after 1150.¹⁰ Indeed, it has been established that James of Venice (d. 1147) produced the so-called *translatio vetus* of Aristotle's *Physica* in the first half of the twelfth century.¹¹ Another sign that the anonymous author of the *Divisio philosophiae* was not acquainted with the Latin translations of the Aristotelian corpus is the fact that he does not mention anywhere the term *metaphysica*. Thus, we can conclude that he probably composed his text in the first half of the twelfth century.

As already mentioned, it is possible that the theoretical framework presented in the *Divisio philosophiae* was intended to provide a link between the division of the sciences and the particularly thorny biblical question of the supracelestial waters which was presented in the text that follows in the manuscript.¹² The prominent place afforded to *astronomia* among the quadriavial sciences in the *Divisio* seems to suggest such a link, even though this hypothesis cannot be proven with absolute certainty.

⁹ The impulse to equate *superior* with *speculativa* and *inferior* with *practica* is understandable, because William of Conches says precisely that in his glosses on Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, a text that the anonymous author knew, as already stated above. See GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium*, ed. NAUTA, p. 33: « Quia ergo omnis philosophia uel theorica uel practica est ... Sed quia theorica dignior est practica, ideo dicit in superiori margine esse intextum Θ et in inferiori Π. Ita habemus quare istae litterae in uestibus Philosophiae sint intextae et qualiter una superior, alia inferior ». Yet, the practical branch of philosophy is subdivided into *ethica*, *economica* and *politica*, topics that are completely missing from the text in Add. 62130.

¹⁰ See JEROME J. BYLEBYL, « The Medical Meaning of *Physica* », *Osiris*, 6 (1990), p. 16–41.

¹¹ See ARISTOTLE, *Physica. Translatio Vetustis*, ed. FERNAND BOSSIER, JOZEF BRAMS, Brill, Leiden 1990 (Aristoteles Latinus, 7.1), p. XXI–XXII.

¹² See above, fn. 1 and 6.

III. *Edition of the Text*

Diuisio philosophie

Sicut communis philosophorum ratio testatur, philosophia in physicam, ethicam et logicam diuiditur. Philosophia in speculatiuam et practicam.¹³ Speculatiua uero que speculatur secundum indoles¹⁴ uel naturas rerum incorporearum existentium extra corpora, et dicitur theologia, uel naturas earum que sunt circa corpora, et dicitur mathematica, uel naturas ipsorum corporum, et dicitur physica.¹⁵

Secundum hanc diuisionem, philosophia¹⁶ alia superior, alia inferior. Superior uero duplex: alia que tractat de natura creatrice, ut theologia, alia de natura creata secundum qualitates et causas rebus inferioribus dominantes naturaliter, ut doctrina quadriui, et per excellentiam astronomia. Inferior uero philosophia similiter duplex: alia est que tractat de effectibus naturarum in rebus secundum statum sibi competentem et compotem, ut theoricam Ypocratis; alia de effectibus naturarum in rebus secundum permutationem passionum, et de remediis, ut practica Esculapii experimentalis.¹⁷

Rursus philosophia superior uniuersaliter tractat de principio nature, id est de motu <et> non mouente, de qualitate qualificata et non qualificante, de quantitate quantificata et non quantificante, de causa causata et non causante,¹⁸ et de ceteris proprietatibus nature create rebus inferioribus naturaliter dominantibus cum tempore. Philosophia uero inferior tractat de rebus naturalibus, id est de effectibus naturarum in rebus, de defectibus, de medicamentibus.

Vel philosophia superior de ipsa natura secundum se, id est secundum quod est causa rerum naturalium;¹⁹ philosophia inferior de effectibus nature in rebus secundum aliud, id est secundum quod res naturales create dicuntur. Non tamen

¹³ Cf. BOETHIUS, *De trinitate*, ch. 2, ed. GALONNIER, p. 136–139.

¹⁴ indoles] indos Ms.

¹⁵ Cf. THIERRY OF CHARTRES, *Lectiones in Boethii librum De trinitate*, pr. 4, ed. HÄRING, p. 126: « Sunt enim tres partes speculatiue: theologia cuius principium est de summo deo ... et est de incorporeis que sunt extra corpora: et mathematica cuius est principium de numeris ... et est de incorporeis que sunt circa corpora ...: et physica que est de ipsis corporibus et habet principium a quatuor elementis »; and GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium. In Consolationem*, I pr. 1, ed. NAUTA, p. 31: « Theoreticæ similiter tres species: theologia, mathematica, physica. Et est theologia contemplatio incorporeorum quæ sunt præter corpora ... Mathematica uero est de his quæ sunt circa corpora ... Physica uero est de proprietatibus corporum et qualitatibus ».

¹⁶ philosophia] Ms in margine alia manu.

¹⁷ Cf. ISIDORE, *Etymologiae*, IV.4.1, ed. LINDSAY, unpaginated: « Secunda Enpirica, id est experientissima, inventa est ab Aesculapio, quæ non indiciorum signis, sed solis constat experimentis. Tertia Logica, id est rationalis, inventa ab Hippocrate ».

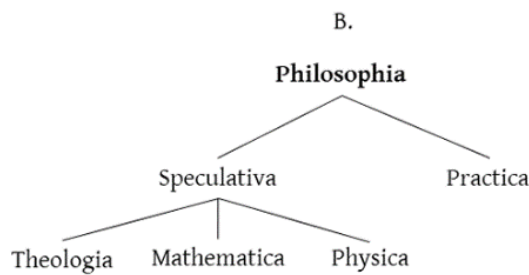
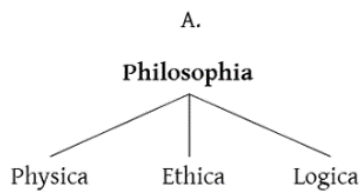
¹⁸ Cf. ERIUGENA, *Periphyseon*, 1, ed. JEAUNEAU, vol. I, p. 32–35.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 22–23; cf. GUILLELMI DE CONCHIS *Glosae super Boetium. In Consolationem*, I m. 2, ed. NAUTA, p. 59: « Naturæ rerum causæ latent, quia solis phisicis comprehenduntur ».

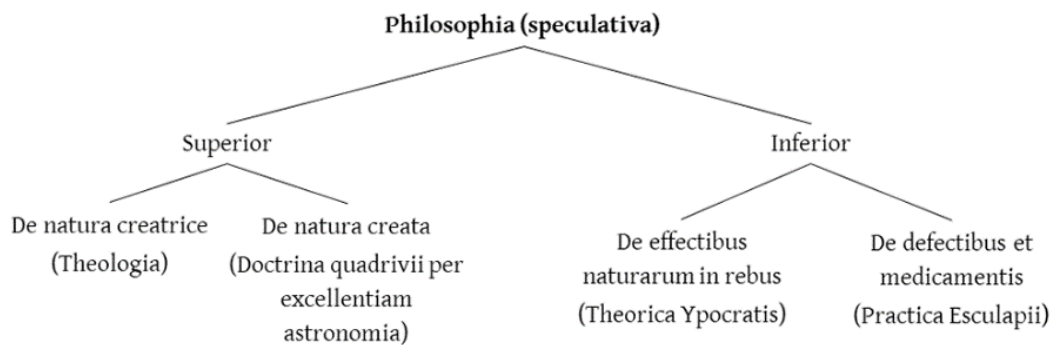
natura res naturales ex necessitate tales uel tales actualiter efficit, set aptas necessario natas ad aliud et ad aliud potencialiter instituit. Explicit.

Appendix: Division of Philosophy

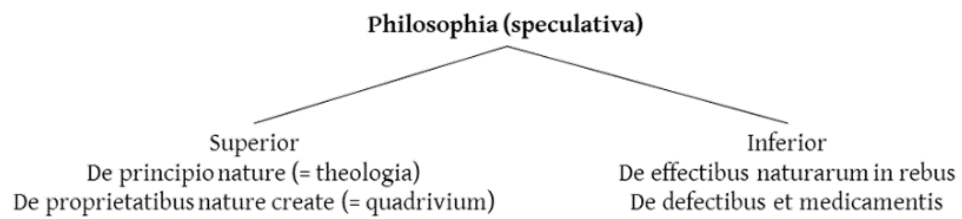
A and B represent the so-called Stoic/Boethian classification of the sciences. This is covered in the first paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*.



C. Second paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*



D. Third paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*



E. Fourth paragraph of the *Divisio philosophie*

