

FROM 737 CONCLUSIONS BY JEAN CABROL TO GIOVANNI PICO'S 900 CONCLUSIONS

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Abstract

The heart of Pico's legend, still beating today on the internet, is his prodigious, omniscient, self-sufficient genius – original, parahuman mastery of everything knowable at an unbelievably early age. This durable tale has floated free of evidence, but Pico's *900 Conclusions* has given weight to part of it. Yet the ballast crumbles under the load of textual facts. The young prince did not know everything. He got by with a more than a little help from his friends: Marsilio Ficino, Elia del Medigo, Flavius Mithridates and especially Jean Cabrol.

Key Words

Jean Cabrol (Capreolus); *Conclusions*; Elia del Medigo; Marsilio Ficino;
Flavius Mithridates; Giovanni Pico della Mirandola



I. Conclusions Divided

On December 7 of 1486, Eucharius Silber published a strange little book in Rome, where the author was an unfamiliar figure. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was a younger son of lesser nobility from lands near the Po, far from the Tiber. The only contents of his first printed work, more like a pamphlet than a book, were 900 statements averaging 18 words each. Many were listed under names of renowned philosophers and theologians:

1 Albert	15 Theophrastus
2 Aquinas	16 Ammonius
3 Meyronnes	17 Simplicius
4 Scotus	18 Alexander
5 Henry	19 Themistius
6 Egidio	
	20 Plotinus
7 Ibn Rushd	21 Adeland
8 Ibn Sina	22 Porphyry
9 Al-Farabi	23 Iamblichus
10 Albalag	24 Proclus
11 Ibn Marwan	
12 Maimonides	25 Pythagoreans
13 Tolletinus	26 Chaldeans
14 Ibn Bajja	27 Egyptians
	28 Kabbalist Jews

Pico called his theses « conclusions » and divided them into 2 large parts, which I have labeled *P1* and *P2*. *P1* had 402 theses; *P2* had 498 theses. I have labeled them *T1* through *T402* in *P1*, then *T403* through *T900* in *P2*. *P1* also had 28 smaller parts (*P1.1* through *1.28*) described by headnotes. But in *P2* there were only 11 smaller parts, *P2.1-2.11*, also with headnotes. The first 325 theses of *P1* were also arranged in 4 groups of intermediate size: *P1.1-6*, *7-14*, *15-19* and *20-24*. The 28 parts and several intermediate groups of *P1* – including *P1.25-27* and *28*, which were not described by headnotes – were those shown above. The 11 parts of *P2* were those below; there were no intermediate groupings in *P2*, but each part had a headnote:

1 Concord	8 Chaldeans
2 Dissent	9 Magic
3 Novelty	10 Orphica
4 Deviance	
	11 Christian Kabbalah
5 Platonism	
6 Causes	
7 Numbers	

In all likelihood, Pico himself (not his publisher) was responsible for the signposting of his theses or propositions or « conclusions », as he called them. I have chosen the following examples without regard to their content:

T7 Sound as really existing is carried up to the beginning of the auditory nerve.
Sonus fertur secundum esse reale usque ad principium nervi auditivi

T21 Anything contingent that God has known would come to be, he has known necessarily that it would come to be.
Quodcunque contingens Deus scivit esse futurum, necessario scivit illud esse futurum.

T42 Marked matter is the principle of individuation.
Materia signata est principium individuationis.

T70 Love is not a disposition distinct from the disposition of grace by whose mediation the Holy Spirit dwells in a soul.
Charitas non est distinctus habitus ab habitu gratiae quo mediante Spiritus Sanctus animam inhabitat.

T105 The power of begetting in the divine is neither exactly and only the divine essence taken separately, nor a relation nor a feature, nor something constituted from both, nor either of them with the other included: instead it is the essence along with a related mode.
Potentia generandi in divinis nec est essentia divina praecise et absolute sumpta, nec relatio vel proprietas, nec constitutum ex ambobus, nec alterum istorum cum inclusione alterius: sed est essentia cum modo relativo.

T147 The metaphysical *one* indicates a privation of divisibility not in act but in fitness.
Unum methaphysicum dicit privationem divisibilitatis non actu sed aptitudine.

T189 Knowledge of metaphysics is not a single field of knowledge.
Scientia metaphysicae non est una scientia.

T238 It's incorrect to say that Mind looks on or gazes at ideas.
Improprie dicitur quod Intellectus ideas inspiciat vel intueatur.

T294 For the trinity of leaders Jupiter is the maker of substance, Neptune of life and Pluto turns it around.
Ducalis trinitatis Jupiter est substantificativus, Neptunnus vivificativus, Pluto conversivus.

T357 Nine are the hierarchies of angels, whose names are Cherubim, Seraphim, Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim, Tarsisim, Ophanim, Tephisarim and Isim.
Novem sunt angelorum hierarchiae quarum nomina Cherubim, Seraphim, Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim, Tarsisim, Ophanim, Tephisarim, Isim.¹

¹ GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae*, Silber, Rome 1486, p. 1–4, 6, 9, 11, 15, 19, 25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae: Le Novecento tesi dell'anno 1486*, ed. and trans. ALBANO BIONDI, Olschki, Florence 1995, p. 8 (7, 5), 12 (26), 14 (1), 18 (1), 24 (32), 28 (2), 36 (12), 46 (24), 56 (2); STEPHEN

A book-buyer who flipped through the pages of Silber's new publication would have found almost no context for these statements. In *P1*, for example, the only information preceding and describing the thesis on sound (*T7*) was in these two headings (here labeled *H*):

H1 Conclusions after the teaching [*secundum doctrinam*] of Latin philosophers and theologians: Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, John Scotus, Egidio Romano and François de Meyronnes.

H2 Conclusions after Albert, 16 in number.

H2 assigned *T7* (see above) to a named authority, Albert the Great, and *H1* grouped Albert with other « Latin philosophers and theologians »; see Fig. 1.² Some headings in *P2* were more abstract and mentioned no individuals or groups of any kind:

FARMER, *Syncretism in the West: Pico's 900 Theses (1486), the Evolution of Traditional Religious and Philosophical Systems, with Text, Translation and Commentary*, MRTS, Tempe 1998, p. 214 (1.7), 220 (2.5), 226 (2.26), 236 (4.1), 246 (6.1), 260 (7.32), 276 (12.2), 300 (20.12), 322 (24.24), 346 (28.2): Numbers for this *T* series of examples follow the full count of theses from 1 to 900 in the 1486 edition; my selection, not random strictly speaking, starts with Pico's 7th thesis and adds an increment of 7 each time. Other series of examples (*A*, *C*, *D*, *H*, *M*) are numbered in the order of my presentation. Lacking a critical edition of the original Latin for Pico's *Conclusions*, I cite the rare and unpaginated *princeps* by my own page numbers, counting both sides from p. 1 as the side with *[D]e adscriptis* at the top (Fig. 1). Several versions of the *Conclusions* have been published since Biondi's 1995 edition, including the text and English translation in FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*; for the convenience of readers – not as textual authorities – I cite both Biondi and Farmer along with the first edition. I've confined my notes as much as possible to primary texts by Pico and relevant authorities. Abbreviations follow Oxford dictionaries for Greco-Roman material and standard conventions for biblical, rabbinical, Kabbalist and later philosophical texts. FRANCO BACCHELLI, « Giovanni Pico, conte della Mirandola e Concordia », in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 83, Istituto italiano per l'Enciclopedia, Rome 2015 [online at treccani.it] provides a brief biography of Pico; BRIAN COPENHAVER, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola », in EDWARD N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2020 Edition [online at plato.stanford.edu] summarizes my views on the prince. Otherwise, for his life and works as discussed here, I rely on documentation in BRIAN COPENHAVER, *Magic and the Dignity of Man: Pico della Mirandola and His Oration in Modern Memory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2019; ID., *Pico della Mirandola on Trial: Heresy, Freedom and Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2022; and ID., « Pico's *Conclusions*: Setting, Structure, Text, Sources and Aims », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 86 (2023), p. 57–107; also GIANFRANCESCO PICO & GIOVANNI PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: Oration*, ed. and trans. BRIAN COPENHAVER with MICHAEL ALLEN, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2022.

² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 1; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 212; see COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 74–75, for *secundum* as 'regarding' or 'after' rather than 'according to' or 'following'.

H3 Philosophical conclusions according to my own opinion [*secundum propriam opinionem*] 80 in number which, although they dissent from the usual philosophy [*communi philosophia*], are still not much averse to the usual way of philosophizing [*a communi tamen philosophandi modo non multum abhorrent*].

Longer headings like *H1* and *H3* divided the book into halves and smaller parts: the 2 halves were the 402 statements in *P1*, then the other 498 in *P2*: hence the famous title, 900 *Conclusions*. The heading for *P2* announced:

H4 Conclusions five hundred in number according to my own opinion [...] divided [...] into natural, theological, Platonic, mathematical, contrarian-doctrinal [*paradoxas dogmatizantes*], contrarian-reconciling [*paradoxas conciliantes*], Chaldean, Orphic, magical and Kabbalist.³

P1 had many more parts than these – 28 of them, most under shorter headings like *H2*. Intermediate headings also named individuals:

H5 Conclusions after the teachings of Arabs who generally declare themselves Peripatetics: Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, Ibn Bajja, Isaac, Abumaron, Moses and Mahumet.

H6 Conclusions after Greeks who pledge the Peripatetic doctrine: Theophrastus, Ammonius, Simplicius, Alexander and Themistius.

H7 Conclusions after the teaching of philosophers called Platonists: Plotinus an Egyptian, Porphyry a Tyrian, Iamblichus from Chalcis, Proclus a Lycian and Adeland an Arab.

But a few *P1* headings mentioned groups rather than individual persons or else described both groups and persons:

H8 Kabbalist conclusions, 47 in number, after the secret teaching of Jewish Kabbalist sages, blessed be their memory.⁴

The whole book had 39 parts, and most were headed by statements like *H2* that named individuals. Linguistic, ethnic and academic descriptions – including « Arab », « Chaldean », « Egyptian », « Greek », « Hebrew », « Indian », « Latin », «

³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 28, 30; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 62, 64; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 364, 372; although the heading of *P2* indicates 10 parts, the actual count is 11.

⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 7, 12, 14, 24–25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 20, 30, 36; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 250, 282, 296; COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 83, Table 1.

« Peripatetic », « Persian » and « Platonic » – also applied in *P1* and *P2*.⁵ Headings that came after the Platonic division (*H7*) of *P1* referred to messages as well as messengers: the « mathematics » of Pythagoras, the « belief » of Chaldean theologians, « the ancient teaching of Hermes Trismegistus » and « secret teachings » of Kabbalist Jews. But there was no collective description like *H1*, *H5*, *H6* or *H7* for these exotics that Pico honored by locating them at the end of *P1*.⁶

Elsewhere in his works – though not in the *Conclusions* – a reverent label for Chaldean, Egyptian, Orphic and Pythagorean wisdom was *prisca theologia* (ἀρχαία θεολογία).⁷ This « ancient theology » was a category unstated in *P1* – an oversight, perhaps – after the Platonists of *H7*. If so, major divisions of *P1* as planned, though not as presented, may have been these 6:

divisions	heading	theses
1 Christian Aristotelians	<i>H1</i>	115
2 Muslim Aristotelians	<i>H5</i>	82
3 Greek Aristotelians	<i>H6</i>	29
4 Platonists	<i>H7</i>	99
5 Ancient theologians	none	30
6 Kabbalists	<i>H8</i>	47

But if *all* parts with headings were counted, the total in *P1* was 28 parts for 402 theses, whereas in *P2* there were 498 theses but only 11 parts necessarily larger than those in *P1*. Pico needed more parts for *P1* because he referred its content to many other authorities, not just to himself. There was less need to subdivide *P2* because he took personal credit for all of it. Resulting divisions of *P2*, reflecting those of *P1*, were these 4:

⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 1, 7, 11, 12, 14–15, 20, 23–26, 28, 31–32, 38–39, 36, 40, 44, 46, 49, 54, 56–57, 60–61, 63–64, 68; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6 (1), 20 (3), 28, 30, 36, 38 (5, 8), 46 (30, 31), 52–53 (1, 3–5), 56, 58 (26), 62, 66 (13), 70 (36), 76 (77, 80), 82 (40), 84 (55), 94 (3), 96 (19), 104 (60), 114, 116 (11), 120 (22), 126 (5, 7), 130 (24), 138 (63), 140 (71); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 210, 212 (1.1), 250, 252 (7.3), 276, 280, 282, 296, 302, 304 (21.5, 8), 324 (24.30), 326 (24.31), 338 (26.1, 3–5), 340, 344, 356 (28.26), 364, 376 (2.13), 382 (36), 394 (2.77), 396 (2.80), 410 (3.40), 414 (3.55), 438 (5.3), 442 (5.19), 456 (5.60), 486, 490 (8.11), 500 (9.22), 516, 522 (11.5, 7), 530 (11.24), 546 (11.63), 550 (11.71).

⁶ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 22–25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 50–56; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 334, 338, 340, 344.

⁷ PICO & PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Oration*, p. 100, 120, 122, 136 (27, 52, 55, 69); PROCL. TP 6.33.17, *In Tim.* 3.174.8.

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7 Aristotelian	196
8 Platonist	158
9 Ancient theology	72
10 Kabbalist	72

Division 7 in *P2* corresponded to divisions 1, 2 and 3 in *P1*. In Pico's nomenclature, these were all 'Peripatetic' – or 'scholastic' as we might say.⁸ For the book as a whole, counts of conclusions by broad category were:

1 Scholastic	422
2 Platonist	257
3 Kabbalist	119
4 Ancient theology	102

The book did not make these groupings obvious, nor did the author's project require him to be clear about them. What Silber printed late in 1486 was the barest of bare bones: a script, an advertisement and a handout. Pico planned to debate his propositions in Rome early in 1487, and printed sheets (or some of them) would have displayed his talking points. Pages could have been distributed to the audience of cardinals and curial officials that he expected. His expectations were princely – more grandiose than great. An advertisement at the end of the book promised that:

the conclusions will not be disputed until after Epiphany. Meanwhile they will be posted in all the schools of Italy. And should any philosopher or theologian from the farthest parts of Italy want to come to Rome and debate, this Lord himself – the one who will dispute – promises to pay travel expenses from his own funds.⁹

The regal feast of Epiphany came a month after Silber released the book: the prince reckoned that a few weeks were enough to advertise and draw a crowd. Instead the book drew down God's wrath through his Vicar on earth, Pope Innocent VIII.

⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 1, 7, 12; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6 (1), 20, 30; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 212 (1.1), 250, 282; DOROTHEA FREDE, « Alexander of Aphrodisias », in EDWARD N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2023 Edition [online at plato.stanford.edu], writing about an ancient Greek commentator on Aristotle, explained that « the 'scholastic' treatment of authoritative texts that was to become characteristic of the Middle Ages had already started in the first century BCE »; see COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 74–76, on how Pico took credit for the *P2* theses; also AMOS EDELHEIT, *A Philosopher at the Crossroads: Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Scholastic Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden 2022, p. 186–357, for careful dissections of Pico's scholastic authorities.

⁹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 70; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 552.

Planning for a disputational spectacle stopped. Years of disgrace and danger began for Giovanni Pico and his 900 *Conclusions*.

II. Why *Conclusions*?

Why did the prince call his theses *conclusiones*? The format that he chose was scholastic disputation – « the kind of speech used by disputants most in demand at Paris », as he put it – and this was a genre rich in specialist terminology. So why not 900 *articuli*, 900 *consequentia*, 900 *dicta*, *dictiones*, *dubiae*, *praemissae*, *propositiones*, *quaestiones* or *sententiae*? Why *conclusiones*, another familiar word from the scholastic lexicon? One reason for this choice might have been *formal*. If a statement like T42, « *materia signata est principium individuationis* », was a *conclusio* in the strict sense, something else would have led to it – other propositions or premisses about matter or individuation. And then there would have been more to the 5 words of T42 than met the eye – something else that had logical standing and philosophical substance. Such a *conclusio*, shown by itself, was an inference from an *unstated* sequence of reasons, which might not be so for a bare *dictum* or *sententia*. But a looser use of the word *conclusio*, as an abbreviation of a longer statement, had evolved in the later medieval centuries.¹⁰

Did Pico care about these nuances of terminology? Was he this thoughtful about titling a hurriedly printed book that had no title page? Its first words, after a space left for a decorative capital (Fig. 1), simply advertised an event, announcing that « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Count of Concordia, will dispute in public about opinions (*placitis*) listed here, nine hundred in number ». The word *placita* never occurred again in the remaining 35 leaves, where *conclusiones* labeled every set of theses.¹¹ A few months later, however, when Pico defended his first book in a printed *Apology*, its untitled preface introduced *quaestiones*, *res propositae* and *theoremata* – but not *conclusiones* – even though this word occurred often in the body of this second book, where *quaestio* was the heading for each of 13 parts. In

¹⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 12 (26); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 226 (2.26); COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 64–69; and for philosophical uses of *conclusio*, see GILLIAN EVANS, « The *Conclusiones* of Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* », *Studi Medievali*, 24 (1983), p. 729–734; DAVID BLOCH, « Robert Grosseteste's *Conclusiones* and the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* », *Vivarium*, 47 (2009), p. 1–23; OLGA WEIJERS, « Nouvelles réflexions sur un mot rebelle », in IÑIGO ATUCHA et al. (eds.), *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, Gabinete de Filosofia Medieval, Faculdade de Letras, Porto 2011, p. 175–183; and PIETRO B. ROSSI, « *Intentio Aristotelis in hoc libro: Struttura e articolazione degli Analytica Posteriora* secondo Roberto Grossatesta », *Revista Española de Filosofia Medieval*, 30 (2023), p. 53–80.

¹¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 1; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 210; COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 62–64.

1496 Pico's nephew, Gianfrancesco, mentioned his uncle's *libellus nongentarum conclusionum* in a *Life* of the prince that became authoritative.¹²

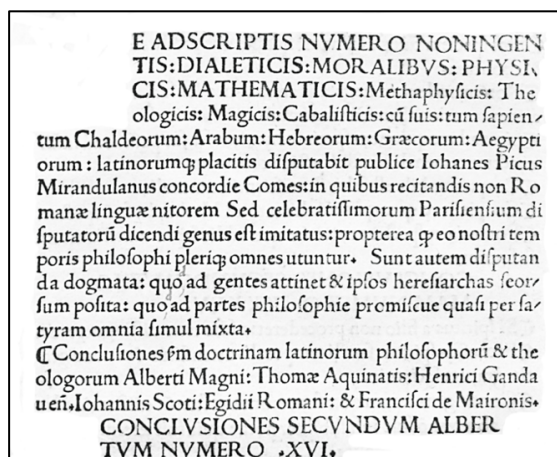


Fig. 1: Pico, *Conclusiones* (1486), p. 1.

On this evidence, it is hard to say what Pico himself meant to call his self-destructive booklet. Its genre was disputational and scholastic in a venerable tradition with roots in a twelfth-century masterpiece: the theological *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Commentaries on this ponderous textbook had been piling up for a long time when Pico found an even bulkier addition to the same tradition. The author, Jean Cabrol (Capreolus, d. 1443), was a Dominican champion of the great sage of his Order, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274).

Cabrol was probably born around 1380 not far from Toulouse, where pilgrims came to pray at Thomas's tomb: Rouergue (Aveyron), northwest of Montpellier, was Cabrol's *pays* and Rodez, its chief town, was the site of his Dominican convent, founded in 1283 and one of dozens in the Midi. By 1409 he was in Paris lecturing on the *Sentences* and starting his own commentary: he finished it in 1433 after returning to Rodez. His project – completed more than a century after Thomas was

¹² GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, Francesco del Tuppo, Naples 1487, p. 1, 3–6, 10–11, 33, 37, 41, 47, 60, 75, 99, 103, 105–106, 108–109; ID., *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell'Inquisizione*, ed. and trans. PAOLO EDOARDO FORNACIARI, SISMEL–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2010, p. 4, 6, 12, 18, 20, 32, 34, 106, 120, 134, 154, 194, 244, 322, 336, 344, 348, 354, 358; PICO & PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Oration*, p. 20 (17). Pico's most lasting choice about presenting the *Oration* – never published in his lifetime – was not to make it public himself. The Bodleian (Auct. 2Q inf. 2.14(1)) and Vatican (Stamp. Barb. BBB III.11) copies of the first edition of the *Conclusions* have the same beginning shown in Fig. 1; see MARGARET SMITH, *The Title-Page, Its Early Development, 1460–1510*, British Library, London 2000 on title pages of incunables.

canonized – surveyed debates that blew up into battles and raged after Thomas died. The theological uproar of 1277 in Paris threatened Thomas’s reputation, but his authority was a sacred heritage for Dominicans like Cabrol. The commentator’s *Super libros sententiarum* amplified the saint’s teachings and refuted his critics – though not yet in the name of a militant *via thomistica*.¹³



Fig. 2: Cabrol, Prince of Thomist Theology, Sits at the Saint’s Right Hand Ahead of Other Eminent Courtiers; Dominic of Flanders (1621), tp.

¹³ EDWARD MAHONEY, « The Accomplishment of Jean Capreolus, O.P. », *The Thomist*, 68 (2004), p. 601–632 summarizes GUY BEDOUELLE, ROMANUS CESSARIO, KEVIN WHITE (eds.), *Jean Capreolus en son temps 1380–1444: Colloque de Rodez*, Editions du Cerf, Paris 1997, where chapters by Delmas, Imbach, Lançon, Lemaître and Montagnes describe Cabrol’s career and environments; ANDREA ALDO ROBIGLIO, « Tradition thomiste et réforme dominicaine: Une remarque sur la circulation de l’oeuvre de Jean Capreolus », in DRAGOS CALMA, ZÉNON KALUZA (eds.), *Regards sur les traditions philosophiques (XIIIe–XVIIe siècles)*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2017, p. 299–307 explains how Saint-Germain adapted Cabrol’s work to changed circumstances in the 1480s; DENIS R. JANZ, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology*, Wilfred Laurier University Press, Waterloo 1983, p. 59–91, stresses the later importance of Cabrol’s commentary for Luther’s theology.

But the *Wegestreit* escalated before an incunable of Cabrol's first 3 volumes came out in 1483, followed by a fourth in 1484 – in time for Pico to use them all while jeering at the author as « Jean Cabrol, defender of Thomas ». ¹⁴ Cabrol's new identity as arch-Thomist (Fig. 2) emerged after his Dominican editor, Thomas de Saint-Germain, addressed self-aware Thomists who feared that their patron's teachings, despite his saintly status, needed defending against a mob of critics. The editor gave his predecessor's commentary a new combative title, *Defensiones theologiae Thomae de Aquino in quattuor libris sententiarum*. He introduced it with a letter to Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, a soldierly prelate, and explained that Cabrol had

commented on the four volumes by the Master of Sentences, relating the four of the holy Teacher to them and treating each topic as a question [*quaestio*], especially those that experts [*doctoribus*] had discussed most extensively because they had differing opinions about them. He sets up his *Defenses* in this order. The headings in the four volumes that I call 'questions' he divides into three parts that I call 'articles' [*articulos*]. First he sets forth our Teacher's positions [*sententias*] – which theologians call 'conclusions' [*conclusiones*] – on the topic in question, and he supports them with remarks from the Teacher's various books. Then come specious arguments and objections from those who contradict him. And finally he also puts solutions together from the Teacher's writings. In between he makes use of work by Pierre de la Palud, Hervé, Durand, Giovanni di Napoli or Bernard and provides replies suited to the issues at hand. ¹⁵

Saint-Germain also filled the first 10 leaves of his first volume with a table of contents and followed suit in the 3 other volumes. This apparatus was a godsend for someone as young and inexperienced as Pico – a well-marked trail through thickets of theological controversy. In the year when the *Defensiones* first appeared in Venice – not far from Padua where the prince studied – he celebrated his twentieth birthday.

¹⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 37, 39; Id., *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell'Inquisizione*, p. 122, 126: « Ille Joannes Capreoli defensor Thomae ipse etiam fatetur id dictum Thomae non posse defendi, nec habet aliam viam salvandi Thomam nisi quod dicit quod ipsemet Thomas videtur deinde aliter sensisse in Summa ». JEAN CABROL, *Quaestiones in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi, seu libri IV defensionum theologiae Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. THOMAS DE SAINT-GERMAIN, Ottaviano Scoto, Venice 1483–1484 is unpaginated; I follow the numbering of the copy provided online by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek at <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view>. JEAN CABROL, *Johannis Capreoli Tholosani, Ordinis Praedicatorum, thomistarum principis, defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. CESLAUS PABAN, THOMAS PÈGUES, Cattier, Tours 1900–1908, the modern edition in 7 volumes, has a very detailed index. The inventories in PEARL KIBRE, *The Library of Pico della Mirandola*, Columbia University Press, New York 1966, p. 68, 82, 195 (567), 204 (629), 269 (1156, 1158), 280 (1346), 288 (1504), indicate that Pico owned the *Defenses* in print.

¹⁵ CABROL, *Quaestiones in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 1.5–14, 17; 2.5–10; 3.2–5; 4.2–4; ROBIGLIO, « Tradition thomiste et réforme dominicaine », p. 301–302.

Saint-Germain tagged the entries in his table of contents with names of *impugnatores* – assailants who had clashed with the Angelic Doctor on issues described by the entries. Only one of these aggressors – there were roughly 2 dozen – was Thomas’s contemporary in the strict sense: both he and Bonaventura died in 1274. Others kept the onslaught going after Thomas was canonized; Durand de Saint-Pourçain lived until 1334, Ockham until 1347, Adam Wodeham until 1358. Saint-Germain listed them and others in his

table [*tabula*] of questions, conclusions [*conclusionum*] and their assailants in this first book by Master Jean Cabrol of Toulouse, OP, of *Defenses of the Theology of the Divine Teacher, Thomas of Aquino*, dealing with the first book of *Sentences*. And even though each question [*quaestio*] in this book is divided into one or more articles [*articulos*], nonetheless, for the sake of brevity, I have preferred to indicate here only articles in which conclusions [*conclusiones*] are designated.¹⁶

From the start, readers of the *Defensiones* were told to focus more on *conclusiones* than on other components of Cabrol’s commentary: its 4 books, 175 distinctions and many more questions and articles. Cabrol himself confirmed this emphasis on conclusions – these hinges of his reasoning – throughout his 4 volumes. This is what he wrote, for example, at question 1 of distinction 27 of book 1, where he asked

whether begetting and fatherhood [*generare et paternitas*] are really the same in divine persons. [...] There will be two articles for this question, and conclusions will be proposed [*ponentur conclusiones*] in the first article. [...] The second conclusion [*secunda conclusio*] [...] in the first article is that begetting and being begotten [*generare et generari*] are in the mode of relations rather than of things that act or are acted upon [*actionum et passionum*].

In support of this second conclusion, Cabrol quoted a passage from Thomas’s *Summa theologiae*:

D1 Just in itself, acting [*actio*] – in that an origin of motion is involved – implies being acted upon [*passio*], though not in such a way as to put the acting in divine persons. Hence, states of being acted upon [*passiones*] are not located there, except only for a grammatical account as to mode of signifying, as we attribute begetting [*generare*] to a father and being begotten [*generari*] to a son.

¹⁶ CABROL, *Quaestiones in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 1.4.

Those were Thomas's words, and they supported Cabrol's *conclusio*:

*D2 Generare et generari potius habent modum relationum quam actionum et passionum.*¹⁷

D2 summarized D1; D2 was compatible with D1; and D2 confirmed D1. But Cabrol's statement, D2, was not D1, which was Thomas's statement. This pattern held through all 4 volumes of *Defensiones* and their 737 *conclusiones*: it was Cabrol, not Thomas, who made these hundreds of statements that Thomas could not have made as Cabrol made them – as headlines for defenses against assaults on Aquinas by *impugnatores* like Durand, Ockham and Adam Wodeham who attacked after their target had died.

Two centuries after the scandal of 1277, when the teenage Pico left home for Bologna and a brief try at legal studies, the old commotion threatened no one directly. New disturbances had displaced the tumults of yesteryear: the French king's fatwa of 1474 against nominalist professors in Paris was a shocker. The *nominales* whose books he banned were heirs of *impugnatores* opposed by Cabrol: not only Ockham and Wodeham, but also Peter Auriol (d. 1322), Giovanni da Ripatransone (d. c. 1357), Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358) and other *moderni*. The uproar about nominalism was still loud when Pico left the law to study philosophy at Ferrara, Padua and Paris.¹⁸

In this agitated situation, the *Defenses* – fully accessible in print by 1484 – was a boon for aspiring philosophers who wanted to know whose account of what doctrine (like T42) might offend which clique of their elders. Saint-Germain's polemical edition of Cabrol's commentary combined passionate ideology and clear presentation with comprehensive scope and large size: the modern edition, completed in 1908, filled more than 3,500 pages in 7 volumes. Size mattered to Pico: quantity was a sore point in the *Oration* that he wrote to introduce his 900 theses. Responding to critics who found so many propositions « excessive and ambitious », he called 900 a « necessary » number while goading his opponents to « think about how philosophy works » and insisting « that the necessity is plain

¹⁷ CABROL, *Quaestiones in IV libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 1.482; CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 2.236; Aquinas, *ST* 1.41.1 ad 3.

¹⁸ CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 1.XXIII–XXV, is a list with descriptions of « authors whose names are found rather often in the works of Jean Cabrol »; my subsequent citations refer to this modern edition of the *Defenses*; see also FRANZ EHRLE, *Der Sentenzenkommentar Peters von Candia, des Pisaner Papstes Alexanders V: Ein Beitrag zur Scheidung in der Scholastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts und zur Geschichte des Wegestretes*, Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster 1925 (Franzikanischer Studien, 9), p. 305–322; CHRISTOPHER SCHAPEL, « The Quarrel with Aureol: Peter Aureol's Role in the Late-Medieval Debate Over Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents », Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Iowa 1994; and CALVIN NORMORE, « Nominalism », in HENRIK LAGERLUND, BENJAMIN HILL (eds.), *Routledge Companion to Sixteenth Century Philosophy*, Routledge, New York 2017, p. 121–136.

enough ». The 737 conclusions of the *Defenses* – newly presented just as Pico’s public career was about to collapse before it started – gave a case-by-case account of « how philosophy works », and 900 was not much more excessive than 737.¹⁹

The most successful product of early printing with *conclusiones* in its title had already addressed a different topic: sermons as lessons in practical morality were the subject of *Conclusions on Various Moral Matters* by Jean Gerson (d. 1429), whose celebrity sparked demand for 17 incunable editions after 1467. Johann Kölner’s *Textual Summary and Conclusions on the Clementines and Decretals* was less popular – only 4 incunables starting in 1484. Kölner (d. 1490) was a jurist, not a theologian, but like Cabrol he aimed to summarize older material of great complexity. Henry of Gorkum (d. 1431) was in Paris with Cabrol’s generation, teaching theology though not as a mendicant. By 1489 his *Conclusions on Peter Lombard’s Four Books of Sentences* had also appeared 4 times on its own and more often as an add-on to the Lombard’s textbook. Henry’s aims were modest and pedagogical: he paraphrased the original *Sentences* without tracking the lengthy debates that Cabrol analyzed in his *conclusiones*.²⁰

Again: why did the prince use this word for his 900 theses? No one knows: he was nothing if not enigmatic. Two motives come to mind, however: *formal* reasons of logical structure inherent in philosophical conclusions; and *exemplary* reasons, 737 of them, in the Thomist proclamation published as Cabrol’s *Defenses*. Evidence for Pico’s reliance on the *Defenses* is abundant in the *Conclusions* – in patterns which are similar for very different texts made accessible to him by Elia del Medigo, Flavius Mithridates and Marsilio Ficino.

III. *Elia and Ficino*

From Pico’s perspective, more than 400 of his conclusions were « Peripatetic », which for us is ‘scholastic,’ more or less: typical propositions of this kind (already shown in English and Latin) were *T7*, *T21*, *T42*, *T70*, *T105*, *T147* and *T189*. Many of them, like *T189*, were too short to communicate the complexities involved, which for even minimal exposition required longer statements like *T105* and *T147*.

¹⁹ PICO & PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Oration*, p. 38 (110), 44 (114), 45 (116).

²⁰ JEAN GERSON, *Conclusiones de diversis materiis moralibus sive de regulis mandatorum*, Ulrich Ziel, Cologne c. 1467; HENRY OF GORKUM, *Conclusiones super quattuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, Johannes de Bell, Cologne c. 1482; JOHANN KÖLNER, *Summarium textuale et conclusiones super Clementinas et Decretales extravagantes Johannis XXII*, Johann Koelhoff, Köln 1484; JANZ, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism*, p. 91–96; HENK SCHOOT, « Language and Christology: The Case of Henry of Gorkum », *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 68 (2001), p. 148–162; CHRISTOPHE GRELLARD, « Le sermon comme exercice de casuistique chez Jean Gerson », *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 98 (2014), p. 457–477.

T105 Potentia generandi in divinis nec est essentia divina praecise et absolute sumpta, nec relatio vel proprietas, nec constitutum ex ambobus, nec alterum istorum cum inclusione alterius: sed est essentia cum modo relativo.

T147 Unum methaphysicum dicit privationem divisibilitatis non actu sed aptitudine.

T189 Scientia metaphysicae non est una scientia.

Pico imputed *T189* to Maimonides, but its 6 words oversimplified the *Guide*'s position. Narrowly construed, the prince's statement, following from previous propositions, was correct: if natural philosophy was the *scientia* of body, and if body also belonged to the *scientia* of metaphysical philosophy, then *scientia* about metaphysics was not unified in its subject. But *T189* implied something different: that Maimonides looked down on metaphysics. After all, he advised the perplexed to resist pondering the imponderable and counseled them to shun «the theoretical study of metaphysical matters». But authentic metaphysics was a closed book only for *most* of the human race, he added. He recognized that a few sages were «full of understanding» about metaphysics based on «achieved knowledge», even though most inquirers were «confined to accepting tradition». Few Christians in Pico's day knew the *Guide* well enough to see *T189* for what it was: too simple and misleadingly so.²¹

T105 was longer and better suited to its task – restating a point made by Egidio Romano (Colonna, d. 1316) in his trinitarian metaphysics and noted by Cabrol. Egidio taught in Paris and defended Aquinas against Henry of Ghent in the 1277 controversies before heading the Augustinian Order and serving as Archbishop of Bourges. The 32 words of Pico's thesis on essence, mode and other metaphysical items included terminology that educated non-experts would have recognized as typically scholastic without fully understanding it.

Any literate person with experience of a university would have expected to find words like *essentia*, *modus*, *potentia*, *proprietas* and *relatio* used by teachers like Egidio. According to his *Sentences* commentary, «the power to beget [*potentia generandi*] in the divine [...] indicates a what [*dicit quid*] unqualifiedly, yet it has a certain relational mode [*modum relativum*]». If the *quid* in Egidio's statement was also an *essentia*, adding a *modum relativum* covered the same ground as Pico's *T105*. Anyone who could read the scholastic Latin of his *Conclusiones* could get a rough

²¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 11; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 28 (2); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 276 (12.2); Cf. MAIMONIDES, *Guide*, Intro. 3b–6a, 1.31, 34a–37b, in MOSES MAIMONIDES, *Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. and trans. SHLOMO PINES, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1963, p. 6–10, 65–72.

sense from *T105* of a plausible message about Egidio's metaphysics, which was not so for Maimonides and *T189*.²²

T147 on Ibn Rushd was a middling case. Its 9 words, not many more than the 6 of *T189*, also included basic technical terms – *actus*, *aptitudo*, *divisibilitas* and *privatio* – that gave non-experts a little to go on, though not much.²³ As of 1486, however, when Silber printed the *Conclusions*, Pico had special access to a deeper message of *T147* from Elia del Medigo, a learned Jew who tutored him at Padua and elsewhere. Elia introduced his student to a Jewish commentary tradition on Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle that began soon after the Commentator died in 1198. From his tutor Pico learned about material by Ibn Rushd that Jews knew in Hebrew and Arabic before Latin versions (some by Elia) became available. Short works that Elia produced for Pico's instruction had their first print editions in 1488 and 1497; in the next century they circulated in 11 printings. But all the publicity came after the *Conclusions* had been condemned.²⁴

²² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 6; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 18 (1); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 246 (6.1); EGIDIO ROMANO, *Commentarium beati Aegidii Columnae romani [...] in primum librum magistri sententiarum*, ed. ANTONIO DE AGUILAR, Lazar de Risquez and Antonia Rosello, Cordoba 1699, p. 145; CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 1.279.

²³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 9; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 24 (32); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 26 (7.32).

²⁴ ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Annotationes, De primo motore quaestio, De efficientia mundi*, in JEAN DE JANDUN, *Quaestiones in libros physicorum Aristotelis*, Hieronymus de Sanctis and Johannes Lucilius Santritter, Venice 1488; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, trans. of IBN RUSHD, *In meteorologica Aristotelis*, Torresanus, Venice 1488; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, trans. of IBN RUSHD, *Quaestio in librum analyticorum priorum*, in LORENZO MAIOLO, *Epiphylides in dialecticis*, Aldo Manuzio, Venice 1497; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones [...] de primo motore, de mundi efficientia, de esse et essentia et uno, [...] in dictis Averrois super eosdem libros annotationibus*, in JEAN DE JANDUN, *Super octo libros Aristotelis de physico auditu subtilissimae quaestiones*, Giunta, Venice 1551; Elia's logical writings are cited in the 1497 edition, others in the 1551 edition; for new work on Elia, see MICHAEL ENGEL, *Elijah del Medigo and Paduan Aristotelianism: Investigating the Human Intellect*, Bloomsbury, London 2017; ID., « Elijah del Medigo », in EDWARD N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2023 Edition [online at plato.stanford.edu]; EDELHEIT, *A Philosopher at the Crossroads*, p. 41–53; SIMONE FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico di Elia del Medigo: Note su alcune fonti delle *Conclusiones nongentae* (1486) », *Schifanoia*, 52–53 (2017), p. 117–144; GIOVANNI LICATA, *La Via della ragione: Elia del Medigo e l'averroismo di Spinoza*, EUM, Macerata 2013; ID., « Elia del Medigo sul problema della causalità divina. Un'edizione critica della *Quaestio de efficientia mundi*, (1480) », *Mediaeval Sophia: Studi e ricerche sui saperi medievali*, 14 (2013), p. 59–81; ID., « An Unpublished Letter of Elijah del Medigo to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: *De nervis et sensu tactus* », *Rinascimento*, 54 (2014), p. 175–183; ID., « Il *De substantia orbis* nell'averroismo ebraico (Isaac Albalag, Moshé N Elia de Medigo) », in OMERO PROIETTI, GIOVANNI LICATA (eds.), *Tradizione e illuminismo in Uriel da Costa*, EUM, Macerata 2016, p. 75–103; ID., « *Magno in secta peripatetica*: Una nuova edizione commentata della lettera di Elia del Medigo a Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (Paris, BnF, ms. lat. 6508) », *Schede Medievali*, 6 (2017), p. 103–143; and ID., *Secundum Averroem, Pico della Mirandola, Elia del Medigo e la 'seconda rivelazione' di Averroè*, Officina Studi Medievali, Palermo 2022, p. 24–29.

A question by Elia *On Being, Essence and the One* along with *Notes on Statements by Averroes* gave Pico private information about the issues in *T147*, which Ibn Rushd had discussed in the framework of physics or natural philosophy. In that context, he treated one (*unum*) and being (*ens*) as nearly the same and much like those items in metaphysics – except that « the one [*unum*] which the metaphysician deals with indicates being with a privation of divisibility [*ens cum privatione divisibilitatis*] [...] which being [*ens*] does not indicate ». Elia applied these distinctions to keeping time and counting. Comparing an *instans* to an *unum*, he asked how such a thing might be indivisible. Perhaps mentally, he suggested:

maybe [...] an indivisible instant is not outside the mind in act but by fitness [*non est extra animam in actu sed aptitudinaliter*], so that in time there is something naturally fit [*aptum natum*] to be understood in this way. In itself this is not actually indivisible, however, so that a continuance [*continuatio*] of one time with another is understood as if it were something actually indivisible in itself, like a point on a line.

Unlike the metaphysical *unum*, the mental *instans* had no actual privation that would preclude divisibility, so the mind could indeed split an atom of time as long as it was purely notional.²⁵

Such private lessons from Elia showed Pico how to unpack the Commentator's intricate thoughts, and then he packed them up again in *T147* and many other theses of his *Conclusions*. He did this 900 times for more than 2 dozen authorities like Egidio, Ibn Rushd and Maimonides and for scores of problems about philosophy and theology. Some of these statements infuriated Pope Innocent and his janissaries, though other observers have been dazzled by them and still are, more than five centuries after Pico died. Part of this brilliant boy's legend has been the scope of his omniscience – his mastery at the age of 23 of everything knowable (*omnis scibilis*).²⁶

How could a single young genius have learned so much so quickly? What mind on its own could have assembled 900 puzzles as complex as the underpinnings of *T105*, *T147* and *T189*? If there ever was such a mind, it was not Pico's in his early twenties. At this stage of his short life, 4 experts – actually or effectively his contemporaries – provided form and content for his propositions about ancient theology, Kabbalah, Platonism and scholasticism. These thinkers, scholars and one swindler were Flavius Mithridates for Kabbalah; Elia del Medigo for Muslim, Jewish and pagan scholasticism; Jean Cabrol for Christian scholasticism; and Marsilio Ficino for ancient theology and Platonism.

Ficino translated 14 discourses of the Greek Hermetica into Latin and developed a theory of sacred history, his Christianized *prisca theologia*, which

²⁵ ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 142v, 149.

²⁶ COPENHAVER, *Magic and the Dignity of Man*, p. 199, 455–457.

esteemed these pagan devotionals as records of revelation that corroborated sacred scripture.²⁷ Pico grouped this Hermetic piety with Chaldean and Pythagorean lore in *P1* of the *Conclusions*, where he took 10 theses more or less verbatim from Ficino's Latin *Hermetica*.²⁸

M1^P Ubicunque vita, ibi anima; ubicunque anima, ibi mens.

Wherever life is, there is soul; wherever soul is, there is mind.

M1^F Nam ubicunque anima ibi quoque mens, quemadmodum ubicunque vita ibi etiam anima in viventibus.

ὅπου γὰρ ψυχὴ, ἐκεῖ καὶ νοῦς ἐστίν, ὥσπερ ὅπου καὶ ζωὴ, ἐκεῖ καὶ ψυχὴ.

Pico's thesis was *M1^P*; Ficino's earlier translation of a line from a Hermetic dialogue was *M1^F*; the Greek is from the modern edition. Every one of Pico's 8 words came from Ficino's 14, and borrowing continued at this level throughout the conclusions on Mercurius Trismegistus.²⁹ The pattern was the same elsewhere in *P1*, where dozens of theses were exact or nearly exact repetitions of material that Pico found in writings by Elia del Medigo, Flavius Mithridates and Jean Cabrol.

Ficino's Latin discourses were easy for Pico to locate and copy: 3 editions had been printed since 1471.³⁰ But Ficino did not publish his translations of works by Iamblichus, Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus and other Neoplatonists (see *H7*) until more than 10 years after Pico released the *Conclusions* in 1486. He and Ficino talked and corresponded, however – about Ficino's Plotinus project, for example. Long before his readings of the *Enneads* were printed in 1492, they stimulated Pico's composition of 15 conclusions on Plotinus. Moreover, Ficino's groundbreaking studies of Proclus – inspiration for a *Platonic Theology* of his own – gave him the means to advise his young friend on the Successor's tangled texts.³¹ Pico devoted

²⁷ BRIAN COPENHAVER, *Magic in Western Culture from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, p. 170–185.

²⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 22–24; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 50–54; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 334–342.

²⁹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 24; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 54 (1); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 340 (27.1); MARSILIO FICINO, *Corpus Hermeticum I–XIV, versione latina di Marsilio Ficino, Pimander*, ed. SEBASTIANO GENTILE, Studio per Edizioni Scelte, Florence 1989, fol. 42v; *Corp. herm.* 12.2 (ed. Nock and Festugière 174; ed. Copenhaver 43, 173)

³⁰ [HERMES TRISMEGISTUS], *De potestate et sapientia Dei*, tr. MARSILIO FICINO, Gerardus de Lisa, Treviso 1471, reprinted in 1472 (Ferrara) and 1481 (Venice).

³¹ PLOTINUS, *Opera*, trans. and comm. MARSILIO FICINO, Antonio di Bartolommeo Miscomini, Florence 1492; IAMBlichus et al., *De mysteriis aegyptiorum, chaldaeorum, assyriorum*, with PROCLUS, *In platonium Alcibiadem, De sacrificio et magia* and other texts, trans. MARSILIO FICINO, Aldo Manuzio, Venice 1497; BRIAN COPENHAVER, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola on Virtue, Happiness and Magic », in STEPHEN GERSH (ed.), *Plotinus' Legacy: The Transformation of Platonism from the Renaissance to the Modern Era*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019, p. 44–70.

more of his *P1* theses, 55 of them, to Proclus than to any other individual, focusing on the *Platonic Theology* and the *Timaeus* commentary.³²

Ficino's presence – implicit in Pico's *P1* propositions on Proclus and Plotinus – was an explicit textual fact about his Hermetic theses and was effective elsewhere in the *Conclusions* as well, especially the 62 Platonic propositions in *P2*.³³ Textual facts of the same type were even more numerous in other parts of this book that relied heavily on writings by Jean Cabrol, Elia del Medigo and Flavius Mithridates.

IV. *Flavius Mithridates*

Elia was Pico's tutor in Jewish Averroism, and Elia despised Kabbalah. Flavius – a Christian and a Vatican employee – was also born a Jew: no one knows what he actually thought about Kabbalah, despite his vast knowledge of it. He was a clever con-man, sharp enough to fool Pico. Even his name was a pretentious fake: Mithridates of Pontus knew 22 languages, so people said, and Pico's translator was a new Mithridates. Flavius – aka Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada, aka Shmuel bin Nissim Abulfaraj – turned thousands of pages of Kabbalah into Latin for the prince. He also buried snippets of Christian doctrine for Pico to exhume from Latin versions of Hebrew and Aramaic texts. This eager buyer of counterfeit wares learned some Hebrew and maybe a little Aramaic while being flim-flammed, and Arabic also came up in Elia's tutorials. These experiences added another fantasy to Pico's legend: his command of 2 dozen languages.³⁴

Pico reserved his first 47 theses on Kabbalah for the finale of *P1*, parallel with *P2*'s culmination in 72 additional Kabbalist conclusions. These 119 propositions stymied scholars who were undaunted by Latin technicalities in theses like *T105* or

³² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 17–22; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 42–50; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 314–332.

³³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 44–50; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 94–104; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 436–458.

³⁴ CHAIM WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1989, p. 4–6, 59–76, 114–118; SAVERIO CAMPANINI, « Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada (alias Flavio Mitridate), traduttore di opere cabbalistiche », in MAURO PERANI, LUCIANA PEPI (eds.), *Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alias Flavio Mitridate: Un ebreo converso siciliano*, Officina di Studi Medievali, Palermo 2008, p. 49–88; SAVERIO CAMPANINI, « El'azar da Worms nelle traduzioni di Flavio Mitridate per Pico della Mirandola » in MAURO PERANI, GIACOMO CORAZZOL (eds.), *Flavio Mitridate mediatore fra culture nel contesto dell'ebraismo siciliano del xv secolo*, Officina di Studi Medievali, Palermo 2012, p. 47–79; PERANI, PEPI (eds.), *Guglielmo Raimondo Moncada alias Flavio Mitridate*; PERANI, CORAZZOL (eds.), *Flavio Mitridate mediatore fra culture*; COPENHAVER, *Magic and the Dignity of Man*, p. 211–216, 222, 342–343, 351–356, 441–448.

by Greek mysteries like *T294* on Proclus.³⁵ Even for the most erudite Christians, Pico's first Kabbalist thesis was worse than baffling:

M2 Just as a human being and lower priest sacrifices souls of unreasoning animals [*animalium irrationalium*] to God, so Michael, a higher priest, sacrifices souls of animals that reason [*animalium rationalium*].

The blasphemy was frightful: Pico seemed to accuse Saint Michael, the blessed archangel who vanquished Satan, of sacrificing « souls of animals that reason ». An *animal rationale* was a human being. Was Michael holy or homicidal? Only a few Jews and none of Pico's Christian contemporaries understood that the sacrifices in question were *blessings* for the sacrificed, that the deaths need not be bodily and that any physical loss might be temporary.³⁶

None of this was known to Christians when Pico had *M2* printed. Most of his next thesis was even more obscure and just as bewildering:

M3 *Novem sunt angelorum hierarchiae quarum nomina Cherubim, Seraphim, Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim, Tarsisim, Ophanim, Tephisarim, Isim.*
Nine are the hierarchies of angels whose names are Cherubim, Seraphim, Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim, Tarsisim, Ophanim, Tephisarim and Isim.

Michael, Gabriel and Raphael were archangels. Was there no such rank in *M3*'s hierarchies? Christians had sacred names of their own for these spirits, counting from the top: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. *Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim* and the other Latinized Hebrew names were gibberish to gentiles.³⁷ But Pico had textual grounds for reconciling the 9 orders of Christian angelology with the 10 that were customary for Jews. His evidence was a document that Flavius translated: the *Crown of the Good Name* by Abraham Axelrad, an Ashkenazi Kabbalist of the thirteenth century. Axelrad's list of angel names could be read as a hierarchy of 9, and Pico exploited the coincidence. « Our sages say that the ten utterances (*decem verba*) are ten levels of honor », Axelrad explained.

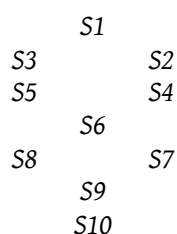
³⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 24–28, 60–69; ID., *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 55; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 56–62, 126–140; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 344–362, 516–552; PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico*, p. 176.

³⁶ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 56 (1); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 346 (28.1); WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 21–22, 158–159.

³⁷ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 56 (2); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 346 (28.2); WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 22–23.

One level is higher than another, and such levels are called a heavenly hierarchy [*hierarchia celestis*]. Their names are these: *hisim*, meaning 'humans'; *malachim* or *tafsarim*, meaning 'angels' or 'principalities'; *hirin* or *tarsisim*; *aralim*; *xeraphim*; *ofannim*; *cherubim*; *aioth*; *chisse* or *asmallim*. And the tenth [*decimus*] is sacred and the foundation of the tenfold [*fundamentum denarii*].

Axelrad gave distinct names to only 9 classes of angels before mentioning a tenth without naming it. Was this nameless order angelic or something entirely different? It was « the foundation of the tenfold », and this *denarius* was the full array of *sefirot*, 10 attributes or emanations or features of the Godhead that theosophical Kabbalists arranged in configurations like this:



Each *sefirah* – literally a 'numbering' – had many names: the first (S1) was often the Crown, the second (S2) was Wisdom, the third (S3) was Intelligence and so on. Axelrad analogized these *sefirot* with orders of angels; with 10 utterances (*verba*) of a 10-letter phrase, « and God said (ויאמר אלהים) », in the first chapter of Genesis; and also with the 10 commandments. Christians who read *M3* knew none of this theological arithmetic, but Pico had seen the Latinization of Axelrad's exegesis by Flavius – a textual basis for the obscure language of his conclusion.³⁸

Flavius also translated an anonymous *Book of Combining* (ספר הצרורף) about a practice that Hebrew script made possible: its 22 letters were also numerals – א for 1, ב for 2, ג for 3 and so on. Kabbalists combined these signs for hermeneutic and ritual purposes: they interpreted the Torah by treating the letters in its words as a numerical code; and they prayed for redemptive ecstasy by putting letters together in shifting patterns and chanting them over and over. Letters in the names of *sefirot* like Judgment (S5) and Clemency (S6) were ciphers for divine powers, and in this hermeneutic context the 10 numberings of divinity were its « measures » (מדות), which Flavius translated as *proprietas*.

A passage from the *Book of Combining* in the translator's Latin (Fig. 3) explained « that although [*quamvis*] the four-lettered name of God [*nomen dei tetragrammaton*]

³⁸ ABRAHAM AXELRAD, *Corona nominis boni*, trans. FLAVIUS MITHRIDATES, BAV, MS Vat. ebr. 190, fol. 177r; Gen. 1:3–29; WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 286; COPENHAVER, *Magic and the Dignity of Man*, p. 345–346.

is called the feature of Clemency [*proprietas clementie*] according to our sages, it nonetheless contains the feature of Judgment [*continet tamen proprietatem iudicii*] ». Pico's restatement of this passage in a P1 conclusion on Kabbalah was M4, here with corresponding words underlined:

M4 Quamvis Nomen ineffabile sit proprietas Clementiae, negandum tamen non est quin contineat proprietatem Iudicii.

Although the unsayable Name is the feature of Clemency, one must still not deny that it contains the feature of Judgment.

In the left margin of the manuscript that Flavius prepared for him, Pico made the same vertical stroke with 2 dots that he used elsewhere to mark passages of special interest. We can be sure that he read this part of the *Book of Combining* in this particular manuscript (Fig. 3).³⁹

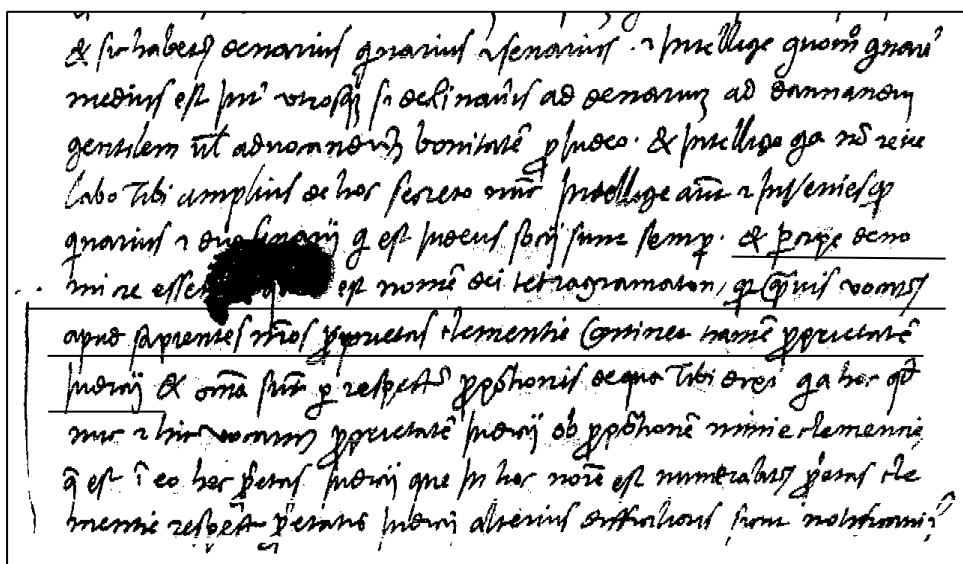


Fig. 3: Anonymous, *Liber Combinationum*, fol. 41r, with my underlining.

³⁹ ANONYMOUS, *Liber combinationum*, trans. FLAVIUS MITHRIDATES, BAV, MS Vat. ebr. 190, fol. 41r: « Et percipe de nomine essencie quod est nomen Dei tetragrammaton, quod quamvis vocatur apud sapientes nostros proprietas clementie continet tamen proprietatem iudicii », as in WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 23, 31–40, 141–142, 287; COPENHAVER, *Magic and the Dignity of Man*, p. 340–341.

We can also conclude that he found pieces of M5 in an anonymous commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah* that Flavius translated:

M5 Eaedem sunt literae nominis cacodaemonis qui est Princeps Mundi Huius et nominis Dei triagrammaton, et qui sciverit ordinare transpositionem deduceret unum ex alio.

The letters of a name of the wicked spirit who is the Prince of This World and of a three-lettered name of God are the same, and one who knows how to put their transposition in order may derive the one from the other.

The third underlined phrase was crucial for Pico's Kabbalist account of the name of Jesus but was *not* in the original Hebrew. Flavius inserted these words into his translation (Fig. 4) and tricked the prince with a falsely Christianized analysis of divine and diabolical names. The numerology in the *Conclusions* that reflected this forgery was intricate – along the lines of the *Book of Combining* – but the textual evidence for Pico's bamboozlement is plain enough.⁴⁰

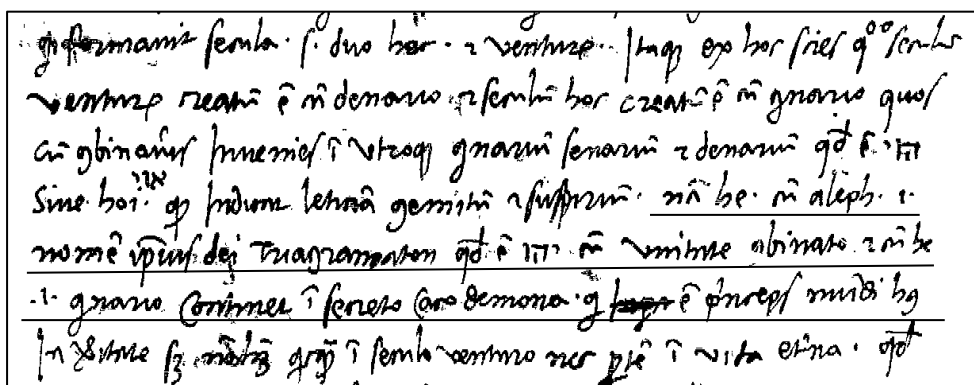


Fig. 4: Anon. (c. 1485), fol. 23r, with my underlining.

Kabbalist calculations in support of M6 were even more elaborate:

M6 Qui noverit in Cabala mysterium Portarum Intelligentiae cognoscet mysterium Magni Iobelei.

⁴⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 26; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 58 (19); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 352 (28.19); ANONYMOUS, *Commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah*, tr. FLAVIUS MITHRIDATES, BAV, MS Vat. ebr. 191, fol. 23r: « nam he cum aleph id est nomen ipsius dei tetragrammaton quod est 177 cum unitate combinato et cum he id est quinario continent in secreto cacodemonia qui est princeps mundi huius », as in WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 36–37, 291.

One who knows the mystery of the Gates of Understanding in Kabbalah will recognize the mystery of the Great Jubilee.

Pico's thesis relied on the *Gates of Light* by Joseph Gikatilla (d. c. 1305), a renowned Spanish Kabbalist. He paraphrased Gikatilla's exegesis of a word (תַּכְּחִי, 'under me') in 2 Samuel where a single letter, *nun* (נ), was out of place. Since the same letter was also the numeral 50, and since nothing in the Bible could have been wrong or not purposeful, interpreters looked for other 50s that might explain the anomaly. Talmudists had claimed, for example, that Moses passed through 49 Gates – but not a 50th – in his spiritual journey, and Kabbalists located 7 of the Gates with each of the 7 *sefirot* who guarded a path of salvation up from S10 toward Understanding at S3. The *Zohar* also taught that the Creator kept a Gate hidden at S3, above a palace with 49 other entrances.⁴¹ This was Gikatilla's comment:

M7 Et qui novit secreta harum indictionum intelliget [...] quia nun numero est quinquaginta portarum intelligentiae. [...] Si vero intellexeris secretum Iobelei et secretum quinquaginta portarum intelligentiae intelliges hoc misterium intellectu perfecto.

Whoever knows the secrets of these declarations will understand [...] that the number *nun* is the fiftieth of the Gates of Understanding. [...] But if you understand the secret of the Jubilee and the secret of the Fifty Gates of Understanding, you will understand this mystery with complete understanding.

Gikatilla taught that the Jubilee's connection with *nun* would uncover a *misterium* concealed in Leviticus where the Jubilee laws were proclaimed. After 7 cycles of 7 weeks (sabbaths) of years, the holy Jubilee year was the fiftieth. A translation by Flavius was the textual basis of the *mysterium* in M6.⁴²

We have no such manuscript evidence for the longest work of Kabbalah that Flavius translated, a commentary on the Torah by Menahem Recanati (fl. c. 1300) that digested large parts of the *Zohar*, the immense masterwork of Kabbalah from the late thirteenth century. Pico's reliance on Recanati for Zoharic Kabbalah is well established, however, as in M8:

⁴¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 57 (13); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 350 (28.13); 2Sam. 22:37; Roš haš. 21b; *Zohar* I, 3b; WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 32.

⁴² JOSEPH GIKATILLA, *Portae iustitiae seu de divinis nominibus*, tr. FLAVIUS MITHRIDATES, BAV, MS Chigi A.VI.190, fol. 128v–129r; Lev. 25:11; WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 32, 291.

M8 Cum arbore scientiae boni et mali, in qua peccavit primus homo, creavit Deus saeculum.

God created the world with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in which the first human sinned.⁴³

On this point about creation, trees and sin in Eden, Recanati followed the *Zohar*. The forbidden tree's counterpart among the *sefirot* was the Shekinah (S10) – divinity in its lowest hypercosmic Dwelling and the Creator's link between the higher sefirotic world and lower creation. Pico's word for 'world', *saeculum*, with its temporal core, was a better match than *mundum* for Hebrew עולם or Aramaic עלמא. And his thesis implied that the occasion of sin for Adam and Eve – though not sin itself – was built into the world. Evidence that Recanati transmitted these Zoharic secrets to Pico were the words « cum arbore [...] creavit Deus saeculum » in *M8*, an exact Latin rendering of a non-Biblical Aramaic phrase that Recanati had quoted from the *Zohar*: באילנא דא ברא קב"ה עלמא.⁴⁴

Pico was aware of the *Zohar* but lacked direct access and relied instead on Recanati's Torah commentary. When he wrote the *Conclusions*, both Flavius and Elia were personal informants about recondite Jewish material, but Elia discouraged his interest in Kabbalah. Flavius, a prolific and unscrupulous translator, was his channel through Recanati to the *Zohar*: 5 words in *M8*, translating 5 in Aramaic, are textual evidence of such links.⁴⁵

The textual setting of propositions *M3*–*M6* and *M8* was the same for Pico's 42 other Kabbalist conclusions in *P1*: all his information and much of his wording came from Latin versions by Flavius of books on Kabbalah mainly by Recanati but also by Axelrad, Gikatilla and anonymous Kabbalists like the compilers of the *Bahir*. The prince who commissioned this huge project of translation had exclusive and timely access to its results.⁴⁶ In two similar cases, his access was just as timely though not exclusive. Others read the incunable editions published in Pico's

⁴³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 25; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 56 (5); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 346 (28.5); WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 19–22, 53–65; MOSHE IDEL, *La Cabbalà in Italia (1280–1510)*, ed. FABRIZIO LELLI, Giuntina, Florence 2007, p. 138–142.

⁴⁴ MANAHEM RECANATI, ביאור על התורה, Marco Antonio Giustiniani, Venice 1545, fol. 23v, with Gen. 2:8–9, 3:1–6; *Zohar* I, 36a; WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ For Pico's only mention of the *Zohar* in the *Conclusions*, see PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 63–64; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 130 (11.24); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 530 (11.24); and for discouraging words about Kabbalah, see KALMAN BLAND, « Elijah del Medigo's Averroist Response to the Kabbalists of Fifteenth-Century Jewry and Pico Della Mirandola » *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 1 (1991), p. 30–32; LICATA, « Il *De substantia orbis* nell'averroismo ebraico », p. 99–100; and Elia to Pico, c. 1485, in Licata, « *Magno in secta peripatetica* », p. 121–122; also IDEL, *La Cabbalà in Italia*, p. 276–278, on access to the *Zohar* in Italy.

⁴⁶ WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. 53–59.

lifetime of Jean Cabrol's 737 Thomist conclusions and of questions by Elia del Medigo on Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle. But Pico's reliance on Elia, like his connection with Flavius, differed from his dependence on Cabrol: its setting was personal and its expression was more oral than written – hence less stable and not as easily traced as statements printed in the *Defenses*.

V. *Elia Again*

None of the Latin books of Kabbalah translated by Flavius and used by Pico was published until 2004. Even now most can be read only in manuscripts, and passages from them became accessible only in the last century.⁴⁷ But comments by Cabrol on Thomism and by Elia on Averroist Aristotelianism were printed during Pico's lifetime. Nothing by Elia was published until 1488, however – after Pico released the *Conclusions* in 1486. By then Elia had been talking with the prince for five years or so, and the teacher had put some of his lessons in writing.⁴⁸

Sometimes they talked about logic. Elia recalled translating rules of Aristotelian reasoning « from Hebrew into Latin for Lord Giovanni Pico, the most distinguished Count of Mirandola [...] on the most difficult questions of their kind ». Another topic was metaphysics, and Elia remembered conversing « with the most learned Count, [...] a very brilliant philosopher, in Perugia, where we discussed many things about existence, essence and the one ». But their longest discussions that made it into print examined Aristotle's *Physics*. Elia reported that Pico's curiosity about these books of natural philosophy was « my reason for writing something about them [...] and putting it together ».⁴⁹

In 1485 Elia finished a Latin *expositio* of a Hebrew version of Ibn Rushd's treatise *On the Substance of the Sphere*. Themes from this short study – form and prime matter; matter as dimensional, undelimited or potential; differences between heavenly and earthly bodies; final and efficient causality in heavenly motion; heavenly forces ending or unending in time – appeared throughout Pico's theses on Ibn Rushd. This essay on metaphysical cosmology and other writings by the Commentator had responded to « Peripatetics besides Aristotle » – including

⁴⁷ ANONYMOUS, *The Great Parchment: Flavius Mithridates' Latin Translation, the Hebrew Text and an English Translation*, ed. GIULIO BUSI, SIMONETTA M. BONDONI, SAVERIO CAMPANINI, Aragno, Torino 2004 was the first text published in the 'Kabbalistic Library of Giovanni Pico' by Giulio Busi and his colleagues, after many excerpts from Pico's books of Kabbalah had become available in WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, which Moshe Idel prepared for publication: cf. WIRSZUBSKI, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, p. vi.

⁴⁸ ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Annotationes*; ID., trans. of IBN RUSHD, *In meteorologica Aristotelis*; ID., trans. of IBN RUSHD, *Quaestio in librum analyticorum priorum*; cf. also *supra*, n. 25.

⁴⁹ ELIA DEL MEDIGO, trans. of IBN RUSHD, *Quaestio in librum analyticorum priorum*, sig. Dviii^o; (1651), fol. 142r, 143v.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, Philoponus, Themistius and Theophrastus – on points of disagreement with the Philosopher. Elia's writings informed Pico about these ancient Greek interpreters, just as the teacher's support for Ibn Rushd's attacks on Farabi, Ibn Sina and other Muslim sages shaped his student's outlook.⁵⁰

In these various ways, Elia's presence in Pico's theses on Muslim, Jewish and Greek Peripatetics (see *H5* and *H6*) was pervasive: evidence is plain and extensive throughout dozens of conclusions, even though Elia's lessons were oral before they were written – hence less stable textually in 1486 than Cabrol's *Defensiones*, which by then had already been printed.

M9 Ad dispositionem termini necessarii, requiritur ut sit terminus per se unus.

For a term to be posited as necessary, a requirement is that the term be one in itself.

In *M9* Pico discussed the modality of propositions like « necessarily every human [*homo*] is mortal [*mortalis*] »; his thesis claimed that the subject term (*homo*) had to have intrinsic unity in order for the proposition to be true necessarily rather than just contingently or possibly. Pico's *M9* was very close to Elia's translation of a statement by Ibn Rushd in a question on Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*: « *dispositio seu intentio terminorum necessariorum est quod sit terminus per se unus* ». ⁵¹

M10 Propositio necessaria, quae ab Aristotele in libro Priorum contra possibilem et inventam distinguitur, est illa quae est ex terminis necessariis.

A necessary proposition, distinguished by Aristotle in the book of *Prior Analytics* from the possible and the discovered, is the one made of necessary terms.

Conclusion *M10* was also about modality, but Pico's terminology departed from the Latin mainstream. In order to regulate the switching of subject and predicate terms in a proposition while preserving its truth, Aristotle had distinguished other categorical statements from *modals* that were *necessary* or *possible*: « something belongs [ὑπάρχειν] or belongs necessarily [ἐξ ἀνάγκης] or belongs possibly [τοῦ ἐνδέχασθαι] ». Drawing on the same exegesis used for *M9*, Elia wrote that

⁵⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2–9; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 20–24; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 250–262; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 131r, 139v, 154r, 155r, 158v; also fol. 131r, 134r, 136r, 138v–141r, 145r, 146r, 147r, 158, 160–161 for Elia's frequent citations of *De substantia orbis*; harsh responses to Ibn Sina were even more frequent in the same works; IBN RUSHD, *De substantia orbis: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with English Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. ARTHUR HYMAN, Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge, MA 1986, p. 28, 44–45, 120; BLAND, « Elijah del Medigo's Averroist Response », p. 23, n. 3; LICATA, « Il *De substantia orbis* nell'averroismo ebraico », p. 83–84, 87–90.

⁵¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones DCCCC publice disputandae* [1486], p. 8; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 22 (27); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 258 (7.27); ELIA DEL MEDIGO, trans. of IBN RUSHD, *Quaestio in librum analyticorum priorum*, sig. Bii^r; FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico », p. 139; LICATA, *Secundum Averroem*, p. 171.

« discovered propositions [*propositiones inventae*] are those made of possible discovered terms [*terminis inventis possibilibus*], but the necessary [*necessaria*] are made of necessary terms [*terminis necessariis*] ». A later translator of Ibn Rushd, Abraham De Balmes, returned to the usual Latin terminology with *propositiones de inesse* rather than *inventae*, though both he and Elia innovated by applying modalities to terms rather than propositions. Elia also discussed these issues with Pico in a letter written before the *Conclusions* was published at the end of 1486.⁵²

M11 Deus primum mobile non solum ut finis sed ut verum efficiens et proprius motor movet.
God moves the first movable not only as its aim but as a real efficient cause and its own mover.

Background for *M11* was Elia's question *On the First Mover*, one of 4 published in 1488 as an appendix to a commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* by Jean de Jandun, who was Elia's main target among Christian interpreters of Ibn Rushd. Asking whether « God moves the first heaven [*movet primum coelum*] as an efficient and a final cause [*secundum efficiens et finem*] », he concluded – *ad mentem Philosophi et Commentatoris* – that « he moves the first heaven directly as efficient cause [*effective*] ». Accordingly, Elia condemned Jean de Jandun and others for « denying to the first beginning what especially belongs to it [*proprium sibi*], which is to move [*movere*], and this leaves them with no beginning except regarding form and end [*secundum formam et secundum finem*] ». Then, in order to correct Ghazali, Elia also insisted that « the world's mover is the efficient cause of the world [*motor mundi est efficiens mundi*], [...] and God is the one who has the special property of being the world's efficient cause [*cui appropriator esse efficiens mundi*] ». ⁵³

M12 Quodlibet abstractum dependet a primo abstracto in triplici genere causae – formalis, finalis et efficientis.
By three kinds of causing – formal, final and efficient – anything separated depends on the first separated.

⁵² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 8; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 22 (26); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 258 (7.26); Arist. *PrAn.* 25a 1–6; IBN RUSHD, *Quaesita varia in logica iuxta ordinem librorum logicae*, tr. ABRAHAM DE BALMES, in *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis*, Giunta, Venice 1562, fol. 83; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, trans. of IBN RUSHD, *Quaestio in librum analyticorum priorum*, sig. Bii^r; FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico », p. 139; LICATA, « Magno in secta peripatetica », p. 112–114; Id., *Secundum Averroem*, p. 171.

⁵³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 7; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 20 (7); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 254 (7.7); ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 130r, 132r, 133v–134r; FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico », p. 127; LICATA, *Secundum Averroem*, p. 24–25, 150–151.

When causality came up again in M12, Pico had help from another of Elia's questions – his *De mundi efficientia*. Elia's task (like Ibn Rushd's) was to adapt Aristotle's pagan naturalism to the supernaturalist creationism of Islam and Judaism. Part of the problem was Aristotle's doctrine of first movers above the visible heavens – beyond planets and stars and their observed motions. Things seen moving below the moon were composites of matter and form, but higher causes of motion had to be immaterial, hence invisible yet still effective on bodies, and Elia distinguished such causes as separated (*abstractus*) rather than composite. « The cause of other separated items is the first of them [*primum abstractorum*] » he explained, and « the first beginning [*primum principium*] of them all is a maker and a form and an end [*efficiens et formam et finem*] ». ⁵⁴

M13 *Dimensiones interminatae sunt coeternae materiae, praecedentes in ea quamlibet formam substantialem.*

Undelimited dimensions are coeternal with matter, preceding in it any substantial form.

M13 addressed a puzzle related to causality and matter: how immaterial movers might or might not be located somewhere and have spatial dimensions. Elia commented on *De substantia orbis*, where the Commentator dealt with such problems, which Elia also examined in *Notes On Statements by Averroes about Aristotle's Physics*.

The notion of a form of bodiness (*forma corporeitatis*), complicated by disagreements about prime matter, had been controversial in scholastic philosophy since Ibn Sina, who described such forms as brute matter's built-in inclination to have dimensions. « Undelimited dimensions [מרחקים מוגבלים, *merhaqim mugbalim*] » themselves were a preliminary stage of embodiment – according to Elia's reading of Ibn Rushd – until a substantial form made them delimited. Ibn Sina's position, as stated by Elia while opposing it, was that « three dimensions result from a simple form found in prime matter [*tres dimensiones consequuntur simplicem formam inventam in materia prima*] ». But Ibn Rushd – again in Elia's telling – replied that « a heavenly body and all its inclinations [*dispositiones*] are because of the mover, and this mover has come before the dimensions [*praecedit dimensiones*] ». ⁵⁵

⁵⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 7; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 20 (5); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 252 (7.5); ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 140r, 141r; FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico », p. 131; LICATA, *Secundum Averroem*, p. 146–147.

⁵⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 8; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 22 (16); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 256 (7.16); IBN RUSHD, *De substantia orbis*, p. 41–42, 53–54; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 157v, 160v; FELLINA, « Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e l'insegnamento averroistico » p. 128–129; LICATA, *Secundum Averroem*, p. 160–162.

Read in context, these 5 propositions – M9 through M13 – show how Elia gave Pico a textual treasury, both oral and written, for his 111 theses on Muslim, Jewish and Greek Peripatetics (see H5 and H6). As of 1486, Elia’s lessons were still personal and private, unlike the textual setting of Pico’s 115 theses on Christian Peripatetics (see H1), Cabrol’s *Defenses*, which appeared in print 3 years before Pico published. After that moment in 1486, however, there was still no *public* information that might have alerted the prince’s contemporaries to his reliance on Elia or Flavius. But if Ficino ever read all of Pico’s conclusions, he surely would have noticed his young friend’s (unacknowledged) borrowings from his own *Hermetica*.

The prince was not Cabrol’s only beneficiary as of 1486. By then all 4 volumes had been circulating in manuscript for half a century without attracting much attention. But once this well-organized work of reference was printed, Pico’s contemporaries, including his Thomist opponents, could have learned about his reliance on Cabrol more easily. No remarks or complaints from the time have been noted, however – this despite Pico’s howls in the *Oration* about incessant attacks from adversaries who « have damned my project and keep damning it ».⁵⁶

But one enemy soon informed himself. Pope Innocent VIII appointed Bishop Pedro Garsias (d. 1505) to the commission that tried Pico in 1487, and two years later Garsias served the pope again with a thorough rebuttal of the prince’s recalcitrant *Apology*, including its 3 chapters on eucharistic theology.⁵⁷ While attacking Pico’s conclusions about the sacrament, the bishop’s *Instructional Decisions* defended Aquinas on a small but endlessly controverted point: the referent of the demonstrative *hoc* in the words of consecration, *hoc est enim corpus meum*. Although no priest meant to change bread into his own mortal body, the words of the liturgy – *hoc* and *corpus meum* – left matters unsettled, and Cabrol had tried to clear things up with a *conclusio*. First he affirmed that the sacramental proposition was true. Then he quoted Thomas as saying that its words were correct « as signifying [*significative*] and not just materially [*materialiter*] ».⁵⁸

⁵⁶ PICO & PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Oration*, p. 110–111 (38); ROBIGLIO, « Tradition thomiste et réforme dominicaine », p. 302–303. None of the 5 surviving manuscripts of Cabrol’s commentary is complete. But almost 200 libraries now own the first printing of the *Defenses*, indicating that Cabrol’s work circulated widely in Pico’s lifetime: see ISTC, ic00129000.

⁵⁷ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 60–75, 103–106; ID., *Apologia: L’Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell’Inquisizione*, p. 194–242, 336–346; PEDRO GARSIAS, *Determinationes magistrales contra conclusiones Joannis Pici Mirandulae*, Silber. Rome 1489, sigli lascio. fiiiiv–gviii^r; HENRI CROUZEL, *Une Controverse sur Origène à la Renaissance: Jean Pic de la Mirandole et Pierre Garcia*, Vrin, Paris 1977; LUCA BIANCHI, « Pierre Garsias, adversaire de Jean Pic de la Mirandole, entre nominalisme et via communis », *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 74 (2007), p. 75–108; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 8, 25–27, 38, 167–168, 211–216.

⁵⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 41–42; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 88, 90 (1–2, 10); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 422, 426 (4.1–2, 10); GARSIAS, *Determinationes magistrales*, sig. gv^r–viii^r; CABROL, *Defensiones theologiæ divi Thomæ Aquinatis*, 6.147–148, with Aquinas, *ST* 3.78.5; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 16–17, 186–194.

Thomas's point was technical. He took his terminology (*significative, materialiter*) from a branch of logic that was young when he was young: the semantics of supposition (*suppositio*) that regulated how *words* in a proposition, like *hoc*, stood for *things* outside the proposition, like bodies, without making the statement false. Applying the new semantics without mentioning its name – *suppositio* – Aquinas used the theory to parse the formula of consecration. More than 150 years later, after the theory had ripened and gone to seed, Cabrol's semantic equipment was plentiful. Testing the truth-value of a sacramental statement on terrain traced and retraced by experts, he presented the claim in M14¹ about 3 types of *suppositio*: 'simple,' 'delimited' and 'merely confused.'

M14¹ Sed ly hoc habet ibi suppositionem non simplicem nec determinatam sed suppositionem confusam tantum.

But here the *this* has neither simple nor delimited but merely confused supposition.

M14² Ex quo patet quod ly hoc in praedicta propositione habet suppositionem non simplicem nec determinatam sed confusam tantum.

Cabrol's primary task was to show how Scotus and Peter Auriol had failed to refute Thomas on the eucharist because they misunderstood temporal senses of sacramental language. The commentator's 7 explicit references within the space of 2 pages to the semantic *suppositio* were normal at the time. Later, when Garsias attacked Pico on the same technical topic, he found more than a dozen uses, including M14², for *suppositio*, *supponere*, *suppositum* and their cousins – again within 2 pages, and they relied on Cabrol's exposition.⁵⁹

Cabrol's printed *Defenses* was a Thomist manifesto whose growing influence the Thomist bishop exploited in his *Determinationes magistrales*: his tactic was to shoot the prince with the prince's bullets. He cited texts accessible to himself, to Pico and to many others that the prince had used to defend himself in the *Apology* while he, Garsias, attacked that very same book. The bishop's maneuver was clever, exploiting his advantage as a close reader of the *Defenses* that his victim had also read closely. Circumstances show how Garsias would have become aware of Pico's reliance on Cabrol, which was and is well attested by textual evidence.

⁵⁹ CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 6.158–159; GARSIAS, *Determinationes magistrales*, fol. gvii^r; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 16–18, 56–59. My colleague Milo Crimi has found that Garsias used the *Defenses*; gauging the extent of the bishop's reliance on Cabrol awaits further study of his *Determinationes magistrales*.

VI. Jean Cabrol

Theses that copied Cabrol's *conclusiones* exactly or almost exactly are proof of the prince's dependence on the *Defenses* in his own *Conclusions*. A few months later, his *Apology* corroborated this evidence in print: roughly half of a lengthy section on eucharistic metaphysics came from the *Defenses*, which Pico owned. Despite Cabrol's large presence in the *Apology*, the book mentioned him only in passing. Nonetheless, he was Pico's silent informant about eucharistic and other disputes involving Aquinas, Berengar of Tours, Durand, the *Glossa ordinaria*, Jean Quidort, John of Damascus, Pierre de la Palud and Scotus.⁶⁰

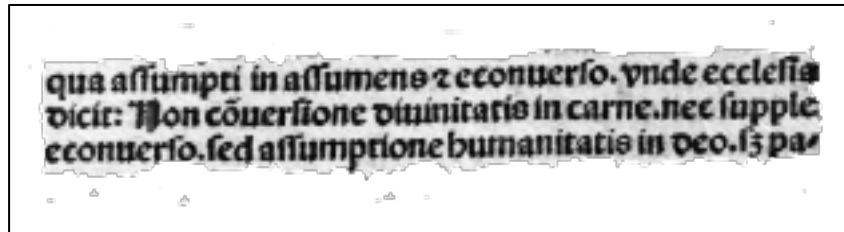


Fig. 5: Cabrol, *Defensiones* (1483–1484), 4.148.

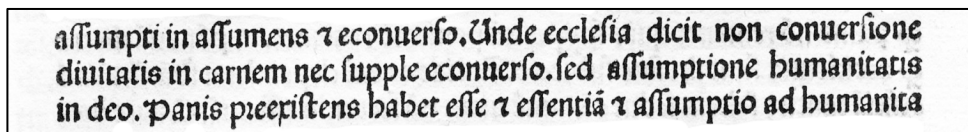


Fig. 6: Pico, *Apologia* (1487), p. 70.

The prince was often in a hurry, but he should have stopped to fix a phrase in a statement from the *Apology*: « Unde ecclesia dicit non conuersione diuinitatis in carnem nec supple econuerso sed assumptione humanitatis in deo ». A proofreading instruction, *supple econuerso*, had merged with the text of the printed

⁶⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 26; ID., *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell'Inquisizione*, p. 82; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 11–13. In Question 1 of the *Apology* on the Harrowing of Hell, Pico mocked his judges for implying that their own authorities, « Cabrol (*Capreolum*), Durandellus and many other teachers, [...] were ignorant about the faith ». Elsewhere in the *Apology* he used the *Defenses* extensively but mentioned Cabrol again only in Question 3 on adoring the cross; see note 15 in this article for a passage from this Question. On Pico's uses of Cabrol, see also STEFANO CAROTI, « Note sulle fonti medievali di Pico della Mirandola », *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, 84 (2005), p. 60–92, esp. p. 71, 80–82; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 12–13, 31–34, 41–43, 105, 122, 167–177, 193–194; EDELHEIT, *A Philosopher at the Crossroads*, p. 21–22, 169–173, 455, 509.

Defensiones, and the *Apology* repeated it: (Fig. 5 and 6).⁶¹ Just on the evidence of this typo, it's certain that the *Apology* relied on Cabrol's printed volumes, as many theses like C1-C10 also confirm for the *Conclusions*.

In a number of propositions on Aquinas like C1-C5, Pico copied Cabrol exactly or almost exactly.

C1 Ex divina bonitate potest sumi ratio praedestinationis aliquorum et reprobationis aliorum, et sola divina voluntas est ratio quod istos reprobet et illos eligat in gloriam. (Pico)

The reason why some are predestined and others rejected can be taken from divine goodness, and the divine will alone is the reason for condemning the latter and electing the others for glory.

Ex divina bonitate potest sumi ratio praedestinationis aliquorum et reprobationis aliorum, et sola divina voluntas est ratio quod istos reprobet et illos eligat in gloriam. (Cabrol)

God's providential will was completely good, according to Thomas, guiding but not compelling sinners to be saved – thereby allowing some to be damned by their own wickedness. Pico's thesis copied Cabrol's account of this hard teaching: the Dominican had classified the very same proposition as one of his 737 *conclusiones* on Thomist doctrine.⁶²

C2 Licet Dei voluntas consequens semper impleatur, non tamen necessitatem rebus volitis generaliter imponit. (Pico)

Although God's consequent will is always fulfilled, this still imposes no necessity in general on things willed.

Licet Dei voluntas consequens semper impleatur, non tamen necessitate rebus volitis generaliter imponit. (Cabrol)

Sinners broke God's commandments, yet Thomas insisted that the divine will, which caused everything, was never thwarted. To untie this knot, he applied an antecedent/consequent distinction not to God's will itself, where « there is no before or after, but on the side of what was willed [*ex parte volitorum*] ». God was like « a just judge who antecedently wants [*vult*] every person to live but consequently wants a murderer to be hung ». Thomas also maintained that God « imposes necessity [*imponit necessitatem*] » only on some of what he wills and that consequents « get necessity from their priors as befits the priors » – not by a

⁶¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 70; ID., *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell'Inquisizione*, p. 224; CABROL, *Quaestiones*, 4.148; ID., *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 6.223; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 11–12.

⁶² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 8 (6); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 220 (2.6); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 2.500–501, with Aquinas, *ST* 1.23.5 ad 3.

general rule of necessity. Pico's thesis was another exact repetition of a *conclusio* by Cabrol that summarized Thomas's position.⁶³

C3 Christus in ultimo iudicio iudicabit non solum in natura humana sed etiam secundum naturam humanam. (Pico)

At the Last Judgment Christ will judge not only *in* a human nature but also *according to* human nature.

Christus in ultimo iudicio iudicabit non solum in natura humana sed etiam secundum naturam humanam. (Cabrol)

Thomas gave reasons of clarity, compassion and fairness for Christ's « power to judge » not only « in his human nature » but also « according to human nature ». C3 was precisely Cabrol's wording in a *conclusio* about the Last Judgment.⁶⁴

C4 Processus Spiritus Sancti temporalis attenditur secundum dona gratiae gratum facientia. (Pico)

The Holy Spirit's proceeding in time is extended by gifts of grace that produce acceptability.

Processio temporalis Spiritus Sancti, de qua loquimur, tantum attenditur secundum dona gratiae gratum facientis. (Cabrol)

Aquinas taught that grace was a gift from God which enabled sinners to be saved during their times of trial on earth. The Spirit's special gifts made them receptive to grace, including the most powerful kind – sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*). The Spirit's giving, like his proceeding, was both temporal and timeless. Every word in Pico's C4 matched a word in Cabrol's statement.⁶⁵

C5 Verum corpus Christi est in coelo localiter, in altari sacramentaliter. (Pico)

Christ's true body is in heaven as to place, on the altar as the sacrament.

Verum corpus Christi, per hoc quod incipit esse realiter in sacramento in terris, non desinit realiter in coelis; immo simul est in coelo localiter, et in terra vel altari sacramentaliter, et in diversis locis et altaribus in terra simul. (Cabrol)

⁶³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (7); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 220 (2.7); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 2.577–579, with Aquinas, ST 1.19.6, 8; SS 1.47.1.1.

⁶⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (16); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 224 (2.16); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 7.122–123b, with Aquinas, ST 3.59.2; SS 4.46–48.1.1.

⁶⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 8 (2); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 220 (2.2); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 2.60, with Aquinas, ST 1.43.3; SS 1.14.2.2.

The location (*locus*) of Christ's body – (a) after crucifixion; (b) while in the tomb; (c) meanwhile (hypothetically) on an altar after Christ had established the sacrament but before he rose from the grave; (d) for later celebrations of the sacrament; and (e) simultaneously in heaven – was a point of contention in propositions by Pico that the Pope condemned. Thomas's formulations had been appropriately cautious, and Pico's wording matched phrases from one of Cabrol's conclusions exactly.⁶⁶

Some theses on Aquinas used Cabrol's conclusions on the pattern of C1–C5 but without staying as close to the commentator's language; others took Cabrol's words and phrases from expositions and defenses of his *conclusiones* but not from the conclusions themselves.

C6 *Impassibilitas corporum post resurrectionem erit ex pleno dominio animae super corpus.*
Unaffectedability of bodies will come after resurrection from the soul's complete mastery of the body.

Pico put C6 together from two of Cabrol's conclusions on bodies of the saved that were transformed in heaven, claiming that *post resurrectionem [...] impassibilitas proveniet ex pleno dominio animae supra corpus.*⁶⁷

C7 *Aevum est subiective in angelo beatorum.*
Perpetuity is as subject in the more blessed angel.

Like many of Pico's theses, C7 was too short to communicate effectively. What was an *aevum*, how might it exist *subiective*, and which of myriad angels was or were *beatorum*? Although these spirits were untransformable (*intransmutabilis*) in their being (*esse*), according to Thomas, they changed in other ways – location, for example – and such changes were « measured by perpetuity [*aevum*] » rather than by time or eternity. Thomas distinguished time (*tempus*), as having a before and after, from perpetuity, which lacked these extensions but could be related to them, and also from eternity (*aeternitas*), which had no such relations.

Pico took every word of C7 from a longer *conclusio* not stated by Aquinas but derived by Cabrol in part from the great *Summa* and a *Quodlibet* – though mainly from a work by Thomas of Sutton (fl. c. 1310) that he (Cabrol) tacitly attributed to Aquinas. The first creature to which perpetuity – second best only to the Creator's eternity – could have belonged was the first, and momentarily the best, created

⁶⁶ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (14); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 222 (2.14); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 6.164–165, with Aquinas, *ST* 3.75.1 ad 3, 76.5 ad 1; *SS* 4.10.1.1.

⁶⁷ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (15); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 222 (2.15); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 7.62–63, with [Aquinas], *ST* 3 *Suppl.* 82.1; *SS* 4.44.2.1.1.

person: Lucifer before he fell. Cabrol stated that « just as the time of all temporal bodies is the same numerically, so is the perpetuity of all perpetuals [*aeviternorum*] the same numerically, and this is as subject in the more blessed angel [*subiective in beatiori angelo*] ». Here and elsewhere Pico used *subiective* to mean, more or less, ‘independently of being cognized,’ as opposed to *obiective* for a way of existing that involved being cognized: from a post-Kantian point of view, his medieval usage reversed the subject/object polarity.⁶⁸

C8 Opus ab anima charitate formata elicited meretur aeternam gloriam de condigno.

Effort brought forth from a soul formed by love merits eternal glory as wholly deserving.

A person’s effort (*opus*) – whether motivated by free will or fueled by the Holy Spirit’s grace – could earn (*mereri*) eternal life, and the primary virtue at work in both cases was love (*charitas*), which Thomas called « the name of the Holy Spirit ». He classified merit from willed effort as merely ‘fitting’ (*congruus*), however, unlike the ‘wholly deserving’ (*condignus*) merit that resulted from the Spirit’s gift of love. Cabrol’s conclusion was that « one who stands out in grace [*exsistens in gratia*] can merit glory as wholly deserving [*mereri gloriam de condigno*] ». The last 3 words of C8 exactly matched the last 3 of Cabrol’s conclusion about merit, *gloriam de condigno*, whereas Thomas had repeated *ex condigno* – his normal usage – several times in his *Scriptum*.⁶⁹

C9 Si Spiritus a Filio non procederet, a Filio non distingueretur.

If the Spirit were not to proceed from the Son, he would not be distinct from the Son.

God’s essence was absolutely unitary in the Trinity, but « one person is distinguished from another by proceeding ». Every word in C9 was a match or near match for Cabrol’s application of this principle: « *Si autem Spiritus Sanctus non procedit a Filio, [...] non distingueretur Spiritus Sanctus a Filio* ». Before summarizing and refuting objections by Scotus on the exact manner of

⁶⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (18); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 224 (2.18); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 3.153–157, with Aquinas, ST 1.10.3, 5, 6; 53.1–3; SS 2.2.1.2; Qdl. 5.4, 10.2; Thomas of Sutton, *De instant.* 5.

⁶⁹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (9); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 220 (2.9); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 4.273, 281–282, with Aquinas, ST 1.37.1; 1–2.114.3–4; SS 2.27.1–3, 3.18.1.2.

such distinguishing, Cabrol made this claim in his exposition of a conclusion « that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son » but not in the conclusion itself.⁷⁰

C10 Non potest esse peccatum in voluntate nisi sit defectus in ratione.

There can be no sin in the will unless there's a failure of reason.

Thomas treated will and reason as partners in crime, and Cabrol's summary, while defending a conclusion against Peter Auriol, was very close to *C10*: « impossibile est peccatum esse in voluntate nisi praecedat defectus aliquis in ratione ». ⁷¹

In the foregoing *C* examples, matches and near matches between Pico's conclusions and Cabrol's *conclusiones*, expositions and rebuttals are textual proof of the prince's reliance on Cabrol's *Defenses* when he wrote his theses on Aquinas. Other correspondences were more conceptual than textual, but in light of textual facts that frame them, they are no less revealing: the sum of textual and conceptual evidence confirms that Cabrol guided Pico through his 45 propositions on Aquinas. For reasons of the same kind, Cabrol's presence is also evident in other settings – both in *P1* and in *P2* of the *Conclusions* – where similar findings hold for many other theses about philosophy and theology in various scholastic traditions. The Thomism that animated the printed *Defenses* had roots that reached back to the attacks on Thomas in 1277. Of the figures identified by Pico's *H1* as « Latin philosophers and theologians », only Thomas's teacher, Albert the Great, came from an earlier generation – out of range for Cabrol, who seldom mentioned him. Henry of Ghent, the oldest of these other 5 theologians except for Thomas, died in 1293; the youngest, François de Meyronnes, lived until 1327. Without naming François, a doctrinaire Scotist, Cabrol addressed issues that Pico connected with him and with Scotus: Cabrol may have lumped François in with other *Scotistae* that he respected too little to mention by name. But he objected explicitly to criticisms of Thomas by Egidio Romano. Cabrol's responses to Egidio, Henry, Scotus and disciples of Scotus like François were formative for Pico's theses.⁷²

C11 Habere aliquiditativam et diffinibilem realitatem commune est figmentis et non figmentis.

Having a what of some sort and a definable reality is shared by things made up and not made up.

⁷⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 8 (1); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 218 (2.1); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 2.18, 22–23, with Aquinas, *ST* 1.36.3–4; *SS* 1.10.1.1, 5; *De pot.* 10, 2, 5.

⁷¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10 (19); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 224 (2.19); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 3.350, with Aquinas, *ST* 1–2.74.5 ad 2, 7 ad 2; *De Malo*, 3.6 ad 2, 16.2 ad 4, 7.

⁷² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2–7; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6–20; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 210–248.

Within the capacious reality envisioned by Henry of Ghent, a builder could cognize a house in more than one way: by looking at a finished building, for example, but also by having devised a plan for building it. For the first way of cognizing (*cognitio*), whatever was incompatible with beingness (*entitas*) was also incompatible with *cognoscibilitas*. Not so for the second way, however: the builder could cognize an unbuilt building that lacked the *esse* of a finished building.

Henry explained that « there is a kind of being that is quidditative and belongs to essence [*quoddam esse quidditativum et essentiae*], and there is a different being of actual existence [*aliud esse actualis existentiae*] which – in the way of a figment [*figmentum*] and chimaera or goatstag and so on – is incompatible with beingness in the primary mode ». Only *esse* of the latter kind was « completely incompatible with the intellect’s ability to cognize [*cognoscibilitatis intellectus*] ». A builder’s mental plan, unlike a chimeric goatstag, was not a figment. But both were « definable » (*diffinibilis*), in terms of *C11*, as sharing a type of *realitas* that was compatible only with *cognoscibilitas* of the second kind. Citing Henry, Bernard de Gannat and Godfrey of Fontaines in this context, Cabrol used the unusual word *aliquiditas* or ‘somethingness’ – cognate with the ungainly *aliquiditativam* in *C11* – as a minimal alternative to *nihilitas* or ‘nothingness’: nothing in particular as distinct from nothing at all.⁷³

C12 De potentia Dei absoluta, possibile est culpam originalem deleri sine infusione gratiae.

Regarding God’s absolute power, it’s possible for original guilt to be removed without an infusion of grace.

De potentia absoluta posset Deus dimittere culpam originalem, non conferendo gratiam.
(Scotus)

De potentia Dei absoluta, possibile est culpam originalem deleri sine gratiae infusione.
(Cabrol)

Christian theologians agreed that the sacramental grace of baptism eliminated two effects of original sin: not only guilt or blame (*culpa*) but also punishment (*poena*). Abraham, Moses and other biblical saints inherited original sin from Adam and Eve and were never baptized. And yet, until Jesus went down to hell and released them, these holy people were kept in a limbo without suffering the *poena* that tormented unbaptized heathens. What about their *culpa*? Had circumcision delivered the saving grace that Christians got from baptism? Some said that circumcision brought exculpation without grace. But Thomas insisted that « guilt is excused [*culpa remittitur*] only through grace », and Scotus objected, deferring to God’s absolute power. Pico’s restatement of this objection in *C12* differed from Cabrol’s

⁷³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 6; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 18 (9); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 244 (5.9); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 3.73, with Henry of Ghent, *Qdl.* 5.2, 3 (1613 fol. 228v–229r, 232v).

version only once, in word order, but the prince's words varied more from the original statement by Scotus.⁷⁴

C13 Voluntas potest non frui ostenso obiecto fruibili.

It's possible for the will not to enjoy when shown an enjoyable object

Christians believed that their ultimate enjoyment (*fruitio*) would come from seeing God in heaven. Thomas distinguished happiness (*beatitudo*, *felicitas*) from enjoyment, and he treated *fruitio* as an act of will (cf. A9), whose acts were « not necessary except where its movement is natural ». François de Meyronnes grouped Thomas and Henry of Ghent with *antiqui* who nonetheless maintained that the will « cannot not enjoy [*non potest non frui*] » its ultimate end. Cabrol, juggling distinctions and qualifications, concluded that « the will necessarily enjoys [*necessario fruitur*] the final end once it has been clearly perceived [*clare apprehenso*] ». He cited Scotus in opposition, and Pico's C13 stated the Scotist view as confirmed by François: that the will was capable of « not enjoying [*non frui*] the final end once the intellect perceived it [*apprehenso [...] per intellectum*] ».⁷⁵

C14 Superior angelus illuminat inferiorem non quia ei vel obiectum praesentet luminosum vel quod in se est unitum illi particulariset et dividat sed quia inferioris intellectum confortat et fortificat.

A higher angel enlightens a lower one not by presenting something luminous to it or by dividing and particularizing what is united with it in itself but by firming up and strengthening the lower angel's intellect.

C14 agreed with Egidio Romano on 2 points. First, higher angels enlightened lower angels not with new light (*novum lumen*) but by increasing what was already there – a change of degree or intension (as from bright to brighter) rather than of kind or quality (from dark to light). Truth enhanced by enlightening (*illuminatio*) gave the lower angel intellectual comfort and strength (*confortare et fortificare*). But C14 denied that the comforting divided universals into particulars so that lower angels could understand them better. The denial conflicted with Egidio's striking simile: higher angels enlightened lower angels by dividing concepts into parts like a « nurse chewing food for a child to eat ». Aquinas confirmed that higher angels

⁷⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 5; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 16 (13); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 238 (4.13); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 6.56, with AQUINAS, ST 3.69.2 ad 2, 70.4; SCOTUS, Ord. 4.1.6.6 (Vives 209).

⁷⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 4; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 14 (3); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 232 (3.3); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 1.105, 109–110, with AQUINAS, ST 1–2.10.1–2, 4; 11.1; SCOTUS, Ord. 1.1.4 (Vives 352–378); FRANÇOIS DE MEYRONNES, *Sent.* 1.1.7, in ID., *Scripta [...] in quatuor libros sententiarum, ac quolibeta eiusdem, cum tractatibus formalitatum, et de primo principio, insuper explanation divinorum terminorum et tractatu de univocatione entis*, Heirs of Ottaviano Scoto, Venice 1520, fol. 14v.

broke universals up into particulars so that lower angels could take them in, but Cabrol reported that Durand de Saint-Pourçain dissented about the « particularizing and dividing [*particulando et dividendo*] ». ⁷⁶

VII. Contentious Corrections

In *P1* of the *Conclusions* – as shown by these *C* examples – Pico used Cabrol's *Defenses* to state scholastic puzzles throughout 115 theses on « Latin philosophers and theologians », as in *H1*. ⁷⁷ Cabrol's presence, along with Elia's, continued through the first 196 theses of *P2*, which mirrored *P1* on the same scholastic material – pagan, Christian, Jewish and Muslim – from a different point of view. Some *P2* theses extended or corrected statements made in *P1*, where (as already described) Pico had collected propositions under the names of Aquinas, Ibn Rushd, Proclus, Chaldean theologians, Kabbalist sages and 2 dozen other authorities. But in *P2* he claimed all the propositions as his own and made statements that challenged authorities cited in *P1* – Aquinas most conspicuously. On the whole, the large scholastic component (40%) of *P2* was anti-Thomist and Averroist in content and tone. Elia del Medigo supplied Averroist weapons, and Cabrol gave the prince Thomist targets to shoot at. ⁷⁸

Pico's tactics in *P2* were odd: belligerence subverted the ideology of *concordia* that he proclaimed in its first 17 theses, which urged philosophers to look for deeper harmonies beneath superficial conflicts between Plato and Aristotle, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, Aquinas and Scotus. ⁷⁹ Maybe the prince meant to prove by philosophical combat that the best philosophy was not combative. What else could explain the manifest inconsistency between the first section of *P2* and the next three? There had been no explicit call for *concordia* in *P1*, where statements sometimes agreed with cited authorities but sometimes disagreed, and some dissent amounted to contradiction. On the other hand, some irenic theses in *P1* were more or less direct quotations – of Aquinas, for example – while others drifted from their sources by condensing what an authority had said at greater

⁷⁶ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 6; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 18 (7); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 246 (6.7); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 3.497–498, 500, 503, with AQUINAS, *ST* 1.106.1; EGIDIO, *Sent.* 2.9.1.5 (1581 2.1.421–423).

⁷⁷ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 2–7; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6–20; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 210–248.

⁷⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 28–44; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 62–92; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 364–434.

⁷⁹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 28–30; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 62–64; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 364–370.

length. And some of the stated information was unavailable to the designated authorities. Sources of such theses were not 'sources' in the usual sense.⁸⁰

Nor was what Silber published for Pico on December 7, 1486, a book in the usual sense: it was a script for an oral performance that never happened. Expecting a crowd of dignitaries, this is what the prince planned to say to them just before debate began: « you await the fight [*pugnam*], [...] now let us give battle [*conseramus manum*], for [...] the trumpet calls [*citante classico*] ». The music was martial, not a hymn to peace. Notices at the beginning and end of the *Conclusions* announced an argumentative plan: to « dispute in public » – and to win, of course.⁸¹ Victory required theses well suited for disputation. As long as they displayed Pico's learning and exhibited his oratorical skill, other considerations were secondary – including how accurately his propositions represented the views of one authority or another. If the prince worried about getting his material right by any normal standard, he would not have foreclosed assessments of accuracy by stating so many theses in so few words – like these 6 in a *P1* thesis on Ibn Rushd.

A1 Quicquid est in genere est corruptibile.
Whatever is in a genus is destructible.

At stake was an elementary principle of metaphysical taxonomy: a genus like ANIMAL, restricted by a difference like LAUGHING or WHINNYING, defined a species like HUMAN or HORSE, whose individual members were matter/form composites. « Composition takes place between a genus and a difference [*inter genus et differentiam*] », according to Elia, and a composite could be « both produced and destroyed [*generabile et corruptibile*] » when a batch of matter gained or lost a form.⁸² At this intersection of logic, metaphysics and taxonomy, there was plainly more to say than *A1*, and Pico disclosed some of it in a pair of *P2* theses that had help from Cabrol:

A2 Si unitas generis non est solum ex parte concipientis, sed etiam ex parte concepti, necesse est quaecunque sunt in eodem genere logico esse in eodem genere physico.

If the unity of a genus is not just on the part of the one who conceives of it, but also on the part of the concept, then necessarily any things in the same logical genus are in the same physical genus.

⁸⁰ COPENHAVER, « Pico's *Conclusions* », p. 74–76, on complexities of authorial voice in the *Conclusions*, including first-person statements by Pico and claims made « according to my own opinion ».

⁸¹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 1, 70; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 6; FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 210, 552; PICO & PICO, *Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Oration*, p. 138–139 (72).

⁸² PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 8; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 22 (19); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 256 (7.19); ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 136r, 138v; LICATA, *Secundum Averroem*, p. 164.

A3 Si intelligentias esse in genere secundum Aristotelem dixerit Thommas, non minus sibi quam Aristoteli repugnabit.

If Thomas were to say that intelligences are in a genus according to Aristotle, he would contradict himself no less than Aristotle.

If celestial intelligences were indestructible, then *A1*, stating that « whatever is in a genus is destructible », was supported by *A3*'s implicit denial that « intelligences are in a genus ». But Thomas, commenting on the *Book of Causes*, had cited Aristotle to show that although the heavens shared only a few features with lower transient things, the two belonged together in the genus of substance – though only « in a logical sense ». Logical genera, however, were blended with physical genera by Pico's *A2*. In this way, his *A2* and *A3* propositions in *P2* unpacked the *A1* thesis that had been stated summarily in *P1*. Such attempts to resolve *P1* problems in *P2* were a pattern in the *Conclusions* – one of many patterns that Pico called « hidden linkages ».⁸³

Some *P2* theses also needed unpacking, like *A4*, whose 3 words were the minimum for an ordinary subject/copula/predicate proposition:

A4 Logica est practica.

Logic is practical.

Peter Auriol had maintained that logic was practical because it was useful; the *Defenses* countered on behalf of Thomists that not all uses were practical; but Pico sided with Auriol in *A4*. Authorities might give different reasons for or against this proposition, but the options were straightforward: logic was either practical or not practical.⁸⁴ *A5* was also short yet not at all straightforward:

A5 Tractatus suppositionum ad logicum non pertinent.

Tractates on suppositions don't belong to logic.

Contrary to appearances, Pico could not have written these 6 words simply to deny that *suppositio* was a regular part of *logica* or *dialectica*. Beginners everywhere in Europe learned this subject from Peter of Spain's *Summaries* in

⁸³ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 33; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 72 (44–45); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 384 (2.44–45); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, with Arist. *Cael.* 269b18–270a23; AQUINAS, *Super de causis* 1.7; also PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum suorum*, p. 110: « In omnibus meis conclusionibus semper occulta quaedam est concatenatio »; ID., *Apologia: L'Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell'Inquisizione*, p. 358.

⁸⁴ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 32; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 68 (29); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 378 (2.29); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 1.25, 29.

12 tractates. Six of them dealt with propositions like 'H is A' and with arguments made of such propositions. When the propositions were well formed and correctly combined with other propositions, they produced valid arguments or syllogisms, like

H is A
A is M
∴ H is M.

Formal rules governed propositions whose terms could be purely abstract, like A, H and M. In a textbook written for teenagers, however, Peter preferred ordinary words like 'animal,' 'human' and 'mortal.' His rules were formal nonetheless, and terms governed by them might refer to nothing in the world. Such terms, under rules presented in another 6 of Peter's 12 tractates, might not – in principle – stand for anything at all. Because the only relations of such terms to real things (*res*) were incidental and contingent, « the knowledge transmitted in books of logic » as Cabrol put it, was « not called real [*non dicitur realis*] ».

Cabrol also taught that a « logical point of view [*logicam considerationem*] » was the outlook of Aristotle's *Categories* or *Predicaments*. Peter covered this elementary material on predication in his first 3 tractates, not in the 6 that came later on *suppositio* or 'standing-for' – as when the subject term of 'a human is an animal' (sometimes) stood for a real person in present time. In such propositions, where words like 'human' were not just tokens of logical types, *suppositio* was not a purely *logical* relation between terms; as a *semantic* relation between terms and things in the world, *suppositio* was not purely abstract.

Accordingly, the point of Pico's A5 thesis may have been to exclude *suppositio* from logic conceived in this regimented way, which certainly had not been Peter's approach in the *Summulae*. Nor was it Cabrol's approach. As a practical matter, he used rules of *suppositio* when he applied logic to theology, as in M14, and so did Pico: he cited these rules in the *Apologia* and alluded to them (equivocally) in the *Conclusiones*. Another possibility: Pico claimed in A4 that logic was practical, and maybe he thought that a *suppositional* logic was too complicated to be practical – hence disqualified as a logic that non-logicians could cope with.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 31, 34; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 68, 74 (16, 62); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 376, 390 (2.16, 62); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 5.94, 97; for *distributio, materialiter, recitative, significative, suppositum* and related semantic terminology, see PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Apologia conclusionum*

Scholastic philosophers had many uses for the word *suppositio* – logical, semantic and metaphysical – and the taxonomy of genera and species, as in A1, A2 and A3, straddled the line between metaphysical applications and the others. In this loose framework, Aquinas talked about genera « in a logical sense » and provoked the slur in A3 about contradicting himself on this topic. From Pico’s side the incitement was deliberate: he repeated the insult in A6 when dealing with a different issue.

A6 Si Thommas dixerit in intelligentiis secundum Aristotelem esse accidentia, non Aristoteli modo sed sibi ipsi contradicet.

If Thomas were to say that according to Aristotle there are incidentals in intelligences, he would contradict not only Aristotle but also himself.⁸⁶

A fifth or more of the 80 theses in the second section of P2 were anti-Thomist and Averroist or nominalist. Pico learned his Averroism from Elia del Medigo and applied Elia’s lessons in these propositions. Jean Cabrol’s detailed reporting on critics of Aquinas also supplied material for anti-Thomism, including the nominalist kind. Cabrol’s rebuttals of Peter Auriol’s rebuttals of Thomas, for example, informed this part of the *Conclusions*.⁸⁷ But Pico never mentioned Auriol, and not all the prince’s enemies in Rome would have spotted the anti-Thomist polemic in propositions like A7.

A7 Esse corporeum non habet res ab aliqua forma substantiali vel gradu formae substantialis.

A thing does not get *bodily* existence from any substantial form or level of substantial form.

According to Thomas, a *substance* like a horse or a human was a form/matter composite that had only one *substantial* form, which was the form that gave

suorum, p. 37, 51, 61, 65, 72, 106; ID., *Apologia: L’Autodifesa di Pico di fronte al tribunale dell’Inquisizione*, p. 128, 166, 196, 208, 232, 344–346; also PETER OF SPAIN, *Summaries of Logic: Text, Translation and Notes*, ed and trans. BRIAN COPENHAVER, CALVIN NORMORE, TERENCE PARSONS, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014, p. 13–17, 42–46, 62–78; JOKE SPRUYT, « The Logic of Peter of Spain », in EDWARD N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2023 Edition [online at plato.stanford.edu]; COPENHAVER, *Pico della Mirandola on Trial*, p. 16–18, 56–59, as in note 60 of this article.

⁸⁶ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 34; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 72 (53); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 388 (2.53); Arist. *Meta.* 1028a 23–25; Thomas, *In Arist. Meta.* 7.1.1253–1254; *Super de caus.* 14; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 135r. The usual ‘accidents’ for *accidentia* is misleading in English, suggesting something ‘unexpected,’ ‘undesired’ and ‘harmful’ – *accidentaccio!*

⁸⁷ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 31–32, 35; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 66–68, 76 (15, 29, 67, 70); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 376–378, 392 (2.15, 29, 67, 70); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 1.25, 29; 4.41–58, 84–87; 4.52–54, 101; 4.114–117, 119–120.

existence (*esse*) to the substance. But Scotus and others imagined a plurality of such forms, including a form of bodiness (*corporeitas*, see M13). Thomas's contrary stand was clear: « there is no substantial form [*forma substantialis*] in a human other than the reasoning soul, [...] nor is the body the body by any form of bodiness [*formam corporeitatis*] distinct from the reasoning soul, [...] [which is] the soul that gives bodily existence [*dat esse corporeum*] ». Cabrol reviewed these debates at length and cited Thomas's very words *against* a compromise that he (Cabrol) presented tentatively: namely, the possibility that « the essence of some substantial form had duration in matter before giving existence to the composite or to matter ».⁸⁸

Pico's anti-Thomist A7, by contrast, was not at all tentative. He also made personal statements that called Saint Thomas out by name, schooled him in theology and suggested that he contradicted himself, as in A3 and A6. Pico's enemies in Rome were more restrained: they attacked none of these provocative remarks in the condemnations that they recommended to the pope.

A8 Dico secundum Thommam dicendum esse in actu reflexo intellectus consistere beatitudinem nostram.

I say that following Thomas we should say that our blessedness lies in an act of intellect that *turns back*.

Pico added A8 to P2 in order to correct A9, a thesis on Thomas from P1:

A9 Beatitudo est essentialiter in actu intellectus. Correlarium: nec fruitio nec aliquis actus voluntatis est essentialiter beatitudo.

Blessedness is essentially in an act of intellect. Corollary: neither enjoyment nor any act of will is blessedness essentially.

Beatitudo (happiness, blessedness) was distinct from *fruitio* (enjoyment, as in C13), topics that required *quaestiones* of their own in the great *Summa*. But the account in the *Contra Gentiles* – reproduced by Cabrol in two of his *conclusiones* – was closer to A9: « a person's ultimate happiness or blessedness [*felicitas vel beatitudo*] does not consist essentially in any act of will [*essentialiter in aliquo actu voluntatis*] [...] [but] in an act of intellect [*in actu intellectus*] ». A8 adjusted A9 by changing *in actu intellectus* to *in actu reflexo intellectus* and by dropping *essentialiter*.

Removing *essentialiter* avoided plural combinations in bodily things of *essentia* with *esse* and *existentia*. In the scholastic debate reported by Cabrol, some critics

⁸⁸ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 31; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 66 (12); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 374 (2.12); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, 4.114–117, 119–120, with AQUINAS, ST 1.76.4.

also objected that « blessedness cannot be in an act that turns back [*actu reflexo*] because this does not reach the goal of blessedness directly, only when an act of turning back comes in between [*mediante actu reflexo*] ». But Pico, having read Plotinus and Proclus, may have understood this *actus reflexus* not as a subject/object transaction (see C7) but as a *reversio* (ἐπιστροφή) – the subject’s total withdrawal within itself, hence away from the embodied manifold.⁸⁹

Pico’s rewriting of A9 in A8 instructed the Angelic Doctor: the instruction was outspoken, personal (*dico*), anti-conciliatory and became intransigent in A10.

A10 Tenendo opinionem de anima intellectiva quam tenet Commentator, videtur mihi rationabiliter tenendum illam animam nullius accidentis esse subiectum, et positionem hanc tanquam veram defendam quamquam utrum hoc ille tenuerit ego non definio.

While holding the opinion about the intellectual soul that the Commentator holds, holding that the soul is the subject of nothing incidental seems well reasoned to me, and I shall defend this position as true even without my deciding whether he held it.

A10 claimed that the Commentator’s metaphysical psychology entailed, but did not assert, the absolute exclusion of incidentals (*accidentales*) from divine intelligence. Such an intelligence, according to Ibn Rushd, was an eternal soul, unlike a transient soul in a mortal human body. As Elia explained, « a separated form treated as a mover is called a soul, but treated as itself is called an *intelligence* ». Moreover, this intelligence was only « in some sense a soul [*quodammodo anima*] ». As « separated from *matter* », the intelligence was « the soul of an eternal body », and this soul was « not separated from its *body* ». But if this embodied yet immaterial *anima intellectiva* was not « mixed in with matter », how could it be a subject (*subiectum*) for incidental experiences of physical pain and pleasure?

Ibn Rushd’s psychology of dematerialized – yet not disembodied – divine intelligences skirted questions that Thomas had to face in his different psychology of human intelligence in matter/form composites. In this hylemorphic setting, incidentals (*accidentales*) were of various types: some were taxonomic species cognized in souls, others were features of individual bodies. In the latter case, the soul could not be « the subject for such incidentals [*talibus accidentibus non potest subjici anima*] », so Thomas claimed, although the soul could be « the subject for incidentals » if they were species. Pico, even without an explicit endorsement by the Commentator, defended a view contrary to

⁸⁹ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 3, 35; ID., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 10, 76 (12, 74); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 222, 394 (2.12, 74); CABROL, *Defensiones theologiæ divi Thomæ Aquinatis*, 7.145–149, with AQUINAS, ST 1.26.1–2, 1–2.11.1 ad 1; SCG 3.26.10–11; SS 4.49.1.1.2.

Thomas's on this subtle point and described it as Averroist in an aggressive personal statement that made no effort at all to achieve concordia: « defendam quamquam [...] ego non definio ».⁹⁰

VIII. *Conclusions*

Both Elia and Cabrol provided textual and conceptual material for Pico's theses in the A series of disharmonious propositions just examined and elsewhere throughout the *Conclusions*. But Cabrol's contributions – in 4 printed volumes published before Pico finished his little book – were clearer, richer, more numerous, more systematic and more effective for Pico's purposes. The quickest paths to many of his 900 *Conclusions* ran through Cabrol's *Defensiones*. Considering the extent of the prince's reliance on Cabrol and other Quattrocento authorities, I conclude that his learning – like his ambition and self-regard – was prodigious though not parahuman or *de omni scibili*. Since 3 of these authorities – Elia, Flavius and Cabrol – were compilers and critics of *medieval* traditions, I also conclude that popular tales about the public Pico as « un umanista e filosofo » have been only half-right.

⁹⁰ PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, *Conclusiones dcccc publice disputandae* [1486], p. 35; Id., *Conclusiones nongentae* [Biondi], p. 76 (73); FARMER, *Syncretism in the West*, p. 394 (2.73); AQUINAS, SS 1.8.5.2 ad 4, also ST 1.76.6; ELIA DEL MEDIGO, *Quaestiones*, fol. 135v, 139r, 140v.

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