ROBERT GROSSETESTE, PETER JOHN OLIVI AND JOHN DUNS SCOTUS ON FREEDOM OF THE WILL

ROBERT GROSSETESTE, PEDRO JUAN OLIVI Y JUAN DUNS ESCOTO SOBRE LA LIBERTAD DE LA VOLUNTAD

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Abstract

Duns Scotus's claim that the will, both human and divine, has a capacity for opposites at a single instant has been seen as a turning point in the history of modality. But historians have discovered anticipations of Scotus's position in Robert Grosseteste and Peter John Olivi. I argue that none of these three authors focuses on modality or has a new modal theory, but that the discussions do show the development of a new view about freedom of the will and what is required for it. The discussions also raise the question of whether immutability (the impossibility of changing) is sufficient for God's simplicity, or whether it must also be impossible for God to be in any way otherwise, as Grosseteste, but not Scotus, holds.

Keywords

Will; Freedom; Choice; Possibility; Necessity; Immutability; Aristotle

Resumen

La afirmación de Duns Escoto de que la voluntad, tanto humana como divina, tiene la capacidad de abarcar opuestos en un único instante ha sido vista como un punto de inflexión en la historia de la modalidad. Sin embargo, los historiadores han descubierto anticipaciones de la posición de Escoto en Roberto Grosseteste y Pedro Juan Olivi. Argumento que ninguno de estos tres autores se centra en la modalidad ni tiene una nueva teoría modal, sino que las discusiones muestran el desarrollo de una nueva visión sobre la libertad de la voluntad y lo que se requiere para ella. Las discusiones también plantean la pregunta de si la inmutabilidad (la imposibilidad de cambiar) es suficiente para la simplicidad de Dios, o si también debe ser imposible para Dios ser de alguna otra manera, como sostiene Grosseteste, pero no Escoto.

Palabras clave

Voluntad; libertad; elección; posibilidad; necesidad; inmutabilidad; Aristóteles

The following pages are about freedom of the will in thirteenth-century Franciscan thought. Two of the writers treated, Peter John Olivi and John Duns Scotus, were Franciscan friars, working at the end of the century; the other, Robert Grosseteste, not a Franciscan himself, was the first lector to the Franciscans at Oxford about fifty years earlier, c. 1229-1235.

My starting point, however, is provided not by freedom of the will, but by modality and its metaphysical significance. (Note that I use "freedom of the will" as a label for the broad question, still debated by philosophers, a central part of which, in the medieval discussion, was investigation of *liberum arbitrium* – "free choice"). One of Duns Scotus's most famous claims is that our will has not just the power to will something at one instant and the opposite at the next, but also a power for opposites at the same instant.[1] This position has often been used to support, and interpreted in the light of, the view that Scotus was a great modal innovator, who introduced the idea of synchronic possibilities, thereby opening the way to contemporary theories of possible worlds. Over the last four decades, historians have found passages by Robert Grosseteste and Peter John Olivi which, they claim, to some extent anticipate Scotus's modal discovery.[2]

[1] There are three versions available in modern editions of the discussion among Scotus's work. The earliest (1298-99) is in his *Lectura* on the *Sentences*, I, d. 39, qq. 1-5 (the text of the Vatican edition along with a translation and a commentary, which illustrates exactly the possible worlds view of medieval modalities I am criticizing, is found in: Antonie Vos Jaczn, et al., *John Duns Scotus. Contingency and Freedom. Lectura* I, 39. Introduction, Translation and Commentary, New Synthese Historical Library 42 (Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer, 1994). In the *Ordinatio* of Scotus's Oxford commentary on the *Sentences,* the commentary on I, d. 39 was not included in the manuscript put together by the author, but a version (the "Apograph") was made, probably after his death by a follower with access to authentic material by Scotus: it is printed in an Appendix to the Vatican edition: *Ioannis Duns Scoti opera omnia* VI, edited by C. Balić (Vatican City: Vatican Multilingual Press, 1963), 401-444. The third version is in the examined *reportatio* of Scotus's Paris lectures on the *Sentences,* from the early 1300s: John Duns Scotus, *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture. Reportatio I-A*, II, edited by A. Wolter and O. Bychkov (St Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008) – designated henceforth as 'R', d. 39-40, qq. 1-3; 467-491.

[2] Stephen Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency", *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149-167 – claiming that Scotus used ideas from Peter John Olivi's q. 57 in his Commentary on *Sentences* II (Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum sententiarum* II, edited by B. Jansen [Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924], 305-394 [henceforth designated by "OL"]); Neil Lewis, "Power and Contingency in Robert Grosseteste and Duns Scotus", in *John Duns Scotus. Metaphysics and Ethics*, edited by L. Honnefelder, R. Wood and M. Dreyer, Studien und Texte

But should the discussions be placed within *this* context? The present paper follows from my recently published wider-ranging article, where I argue against looking at medieval thinking about modalities as a step on the way to the discovery or invention of possible worlds.[3] In his powerful and persuasive critique of this view, Robert Pasnau describes the discussion in Scotus as "one of the best-developed early statements of a libertarian conception of freedom", but he chooses not to develop this idea but to look at "the more properly modal aspects of the question".[4] By contrast, I shall argue that this discussion in Scotus, and in the two authors who have been identified as anticipating it in some respects, is centrally about the will and its freedom. None of these authors is trying to put forward a new view of modality, but all three think about modality in terms of the will, especially God's will.

The three discussions are probably linked historically. Grosseteste's discussion takes place in *De libero arbitrio,* which was quite well known in England and may have had some diffusion in France.[5] It is possible that Scotus, and even perhaps Olivi, may have known it.[6] There is good evidence that Scotus knew some of Olivi's work, and it is likely that he knew the discussion examined here and borrowed ideas from it without acknowledgement.[7] The reason for comparing the discussions by these three authors is not, however, to look for Olivi's or Scotus's sources, but because each of these treatments of similar themes, from partly distinct, partly coinciding perspectives, throws light on the others and on new ways of thinking in the thirteenth century.[8]

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zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 53 (Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1996), 205-225. Neil Lewis has now produced an edition with parallel translation of the text he discussed there: Robert Grosseteste, *The Two Recensions of On Free Decision*, Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 29 (Oxford: The British Academy, 2017) (henceforth designated by "DLA").

[3] John Marenbon, "Medieval Modalities. Is There Still a Story to tell?", *Studi sull'Aristotelismo medievale (secoli VI-XVI)* 3 (2023): 121-161.

[4] Robert Pasnau, "Medieval Modal Spaces", *Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 94 (2020): 225-254, 238-239.

[5] See DLA, lxxxi-lxxxiii.

[6] Calvin Normore ("Scotus, Modality, Instants of Nature and the Contingency of the Present", in *John Duns Scotus. Metaphysics and Ethics*, edited by. L. Honnefelder, R. Wood and M. Dreyer, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 53 [Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1996], 161-174, 170) declares that "it is very unlikely that Scotus was not influenced by Grosseteste's discussion".

[7] See Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 148, for Scotus's reading of Olivi on cognition, despite the ban for Franciscans on reading his work, and see Pasnau, "Medieval Modal Spaces", 238.

[8] One general preliminary: Many of the texts to be examined are about the power of an agent, usually God, to will, know or do something and its opposite. What is meant by 'its opposite'? Is the opposite of willing *a* (i) not willing *a* (as, strictly, it should be) or (ii) willing not-*a*? In my discussion I take it to be (i), but the medieval authors sometimes write as if it is (ii). In the contexts considered, however, where at any given instant *a* or not-*a* must be chosen, not willing *a* amounts willing not-*a*.

Robert Grosseteste

Grosseteste wrote his *De libero arbitrio* in the late 1220s or early 1230s, and it survives in two recensions. Although the existence of a second recension might suggest that Grosseteste polished his work, both versions give the impression of thinking in progress, full of ideas that are not always worked out fully. For the sections concerned with the theme in question here, the first recension often contains a somewhat fuller version of the material, and so it will be most frequently used, but there are some important additions in the second recension that will also be considered.

Grosseteste: Immutability with Doing Otherwise

Grosseteste asks his readers to consider the following line of reasoning about your sitting tomorrow, a powerful version of the argument from God's prescience to there being no future contingents that thinkers had been discussing since Boethius. In Grosseteste's formulation, the problem centres around God's immutability.

(1) If God knows something, it is, was or will be. (Meaning of 'know')
(2) God knows my sitting. (Divine omniscience)
(3) Your sitting is, was or will be. [9]

He points out that (1) is obviously necessary, and then argues that (2) is also necessary: God's knowledge is infallible and immutable. From immutability, he says, it follows that God cannot do (taken in a wide sense, to include being and knowing) otherwise than he does. If God knows something, he cannot not know it – in this case, given that he knows your sitting, he cannot not know your sitting; that is to say, God necessarily knows it.[10] Grosseteste then cites the principle of modal logic that a conclusion from two necessary premisses is itself necessary. (3) is therefore necessary, and since your sitting tomorrow is neither past nor present, it is something that must take place in the future necessarily. "Therefore", Grosseteste concludes, "your sitting tomorrow is not contingent; therefore, it does not come from your free choice; and therefore, for the same reason, anything of the same sort. And so free choice does not exist". Grosseteste sketches one way of countering this argument, by holding that the necessity in (1) is not fully-fledged necessity, but what Anselm calls 'sequent' necessity and Boethius 'conditional' necessity, 'which brings nothing about'.[11] Grosseteste speculates that if (1) is necessary in just this attenuated sense, then, although (2) is necessary, what follows – (3) – remains contingent.

Grosseteste prefers, however, to attack the argument against free choice from a

[9] DLA 1.1.4 (14:29-31).
[10] DLA 1.1.4 (14:34-37): "si hanc sessionem scit Deus, non potest non scire eam, cum eius scientia sit infallibilis et immutabilis. Et si non potest non scire eam, de necessitate scit eam; et si de necessitate scit eam, ipsum scire eam est necessarium." All translations are my own.
[11] DLA I.3 (22-28).

different direction, by denying that from the immutability of his knowledge it follows that God cannot do otherwise, and so blocking the inference that God cannot not know what he knows. Grosseteste is enabled to do so by making what he considers to be a key logical distinction: the same sentence can be necessary in that its truth has no ending, but contingent in that it could have without a beginning not been true.[12] Grosseteste applies this distinction to God's knowledge:

> "God, knowing *a*, can not know *a*" is similarly ambiguous, because it can be understood to mean that God has the power (*posse*) to not know it after knowing it, and in this sense it is false. Or that he has the power without qualification to not know it in the future – to not know it, that is, continuing from not knowing it in eternity without beginning.[13]

Although Grosseteste begins from a logical distinction, he realizes that the truth and falsehood of the sentences in question need metaphysical grounding. At some points he writes as if it lies in the existence or non-existence of *dicta*, what sentences say. He refers to "truths about the future" such as that Antichrist will come to exist and explains that "when their truth exists it cannot have non-existence after existence", but that "there is a power (*posse*) that they were true from eternity and without beginning, and a power that they were false from eternity and without beginning".[14] But he makes it clear that the eternal power of the *dictum* that Antichrist will come to exist to have had and not to have had truth without beginning is nothing other than God's power (*posse*) to will and know, or not to will and not to know, from eternity and without beginning that the Antichrist will exist.[15]

According to Grosseteste, this power is both prior to its act and yet it is nothing other than the knowing and willing. The priority, he explains, is not temporal nor even in nature, but "causal", like the priority of the Father to the Word or of animal to human in the generic hierarchy.[16] The priority allows for the distinction between God taken as the agent of the act in question that he in fact wills and knows, and – what is causally prior – God not qualified in this way.[17]

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[12] DLA I.7.12 (44:83-86): "in eadem propositione ex parte aliqua est necessitas propter hoc quod non finibilis est eius veritas, et ex parte alia contingentia, quia quae est vera potuit sine initio non fuisse vera, ex qua potentia sequitur rerum contingentia [...]"

[13] DLA I.7.16 (44:106-109): "Et similiter est haec duplex, 'Deus, sciens *a*, potest nescire *a*', quia potest intelligi quod habet posse ad nescire post scire, et sic est falsa; vel quod habet posse nescire simpliciter in futuro – nescire, dico, continuatum cum nescientia aeterna sine initio."

[14] DLA 2.6.3 (134:14-18): "Et tale est 'Antichristum fore futurum' et veritates omnium eorum quae sunt de futuro, quia eorum veritas, cum est, non potest habere non esse post esse, ut supra ostensum est. Est tamen posse ad hoc, ut ab aeterno et sine initio fuerint vera, et posse ad hoc, ut ab aeterno et sine initio fuerint falsa." There is a parallel passage in the earlier recension at 1.7.4 (40:20-24), which talks explicitly of *dicta*, but does not actually give an example.

[15] DLA 1.9.5 (54:73-77), as noted by Lewis in his Introduction (xlviii), who considers that Grosseteste "leaves this idea undeveloped".

[16] DLA 1.9.1 (50:5-18).

[17] DLA 1.9.1 (52:25-29).

Does Grosseteste think that rational beings other than God, angels and humans, have this power? He quotes, with apparent agreement, Anselm's principle that the power (*posse*) for free choice temporally precedes the volition itself: at the very moment when I will, I cannot not will, because to do so would entail the contradiction of willing and not willing at the same moment.[18] Grosseteste uses the temporal process of human free willing to provide an illustrative analogy to God's non-temporal willing. The divine nature not qualified as performing a given act of volition (which can not will what it wills) is like human free will "naked" of its act before it wills, the divine nature as agent of the act (which necessarily wills what it wills) is like human free at the moment when it is actually willing.[19] As an imaginary example to make what he has just said clearer (*ad iam dictorum evidentiam*), Grosseteste takes the case of an angel or the first human whose power of free choice is not created before he first wills in act, adding that we should consider his state to be that of an instant or eternity. He considers it obvious that the angel or human would have had free will and would therefore have had "in the same indivisible instant along with the act of one of the opposites the power for the opposite act" (*cum actu unius oppositorum habuisset in eodem invisibili uterque posse ad actum oppositum*).[20] All this is, though, completely hypothetical. Grosseteste believes that, in reality, humans and angels exercise their free will over time, not instantaneously; rather he holds that what fundamentally allows the will to choose is not the temporal priority of power to act, but, as in God, its causal priority and the distinction between the will regarded in itself and the will as agent of a given volition.[21]

The power for opposites in an instant does not, Grosseteste continues, answering objections he had earlier raised to his own theory, go against Aristotle's view that "what exists, when it is, necessarily exists" (Aristotle's principle of the necessity of the present: see *On Interpretation*, 19a23), because it is not being said about one and the same thing in the same way that it is necessary, and its opposite is possible (*non redit praedicatio necessitatis et possibilitatis oppositi super simpliciter idem et eodem modo consideratum*).[22] Grosseteste thus interprets Aristotle's principle as allowing the will, regarded not as the agent of the particular volition to *a*, to have, even at that very moment of willing to *a*, the power not to will to *a*.

[18] Anselm writes in *De concordia* 1.3, edited by F. Schmitt, *S. Anselmi opera omnia* II (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1946), 251:20-23: "Itaque quod vult libera voluntas et potest et non potest non velle, et necesse est eam velle. Potest namque non velle antequam velit, qui libera est, et cum iam vult non potest non velle, sed eam velle necesse est, quoniam impossibile illi est idipsum simul velle et non velle." Grosseteste quotes this (slightly changing the start) at DLA 1.9.2 (52:33-36). In the second version (2.8.3 [154:33-37]) he paraphrases the passage.

[19] DLA 1.9.2 (52:36-42).

[20] DLA 1.9.5 (54:57-73).

[21] Cf. DLA 1.9.2 (52:43-45): "vel forte utrimque eam facit prioritas causalis et subiecti, super quod redit praedicatio diversa, diversa consideratione.Sed manifestior est distinctio ubi comitatur prioritas temporalis."

[22] DLA1.9.6 (54:79-83). The objection is made at DLA 1.7.2 (46:9-12).

Grosseteste's Change of Direction: God in Himself Cannot Do Otherwise

One criticism Grosseteste needs to tackle is that, if God knows *a*, then the possibility for otherness without change, that he does not know *a* (in the sense that from eternity he did not now *a*), is empty because it is impossible for it to be actualized. He answers by explaining that the possibility in question is a "rational possibility" and "the same rational possibility is of the [two] opposites, and whichever of the opposites exists, it is brought into act, because it is one and the same for both of them."[23] The idea of a rational possibility comes from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (IX.2 – 1046b, cf. also *On Interpretation* 13 – 22b-23a*).* Aristotle is talking about powers and contrasting the way in which an irrational thing that is hot has the one-way power to make other things hot, but a human being who has learned medicine can make someone well or ill. Grosseteste goes far further when applying this idea to God, claiming in effect that his power to do *a* and not to do *a* is numerically one, and so God actualizes his power not to will *a*-at-t1 by willing *a*-at-t1.[24] This idea is of a piece with the third of three themes Grosseteste brings up at the end of his discussion of prescience.

The first of these themes is developed only in the later recension. There Grosseteste explains how God knows in exactly the same way the existence of a future thing (his example is Antichrist), as he knows its non-existence before and after it exists.[25] The second theme, although related to this one, is found in both recensions: it is the distinction between God's relation to creatures of creating them and being their lord, on the one hand, and knowing them on the other. It is put differently in the two recensions, but the idea is that when a creature ceases to exist, God's relation of being creator and lord of it simply vanishes, without any change in God. But this is not the same for God's knowing that a creature exists. If God came to know that the creature began to exist or ceased to exist, God would change.[26] This point shows why it is important for Grosseteste to insist (as he does in the second recension) that God does not come to know such things. Rather, he knows in exactly the same way the existence and non-existence of things in time.

The third new theme is partly disguised by these two others. Grosseteste seems to be thinking as he is writing, without clearly demarcating his different points. In the sections immediately preceding, Grosseteste has been trying to deny that God cannot do or know otherwise than he does, while upholding divine immutability: what God knows could have been different without God's ever having to have changed, because God might never have known *a,* but rather not known *a*. But now he resiles from this position. In the case

[23] DLA 1.9.7 (56:86-88): "[...] quia est possibilitas rationalis et eadem oppositorum, et utrum oppositorum sit, in actum suum educitur, cum ad utrumque sit una et eadem."
[24] Normore ("Scotus, Modality", 170) points out Grosseteste's assumption that the opposite powers are numerically one, although there is no evidence that Grosseteste extended it, as he suggests, to rational beings other than God.
[25] DLA 2.8.9; 158:86-88, 90-92.
[26] DLA 1.9.11 (58:130-138); 2.8.10-11 (158:97-112).

of an angel which wills *a* (Choice 1) but retains in that very instant the power not to will *a* (Choice 2), there is a difference in the angel depending on whether it makes Choice 1 or 2. These are different volitions, and so the angel is different, depending which it has, although the angel might be unchanging in making the choice, because it happens at the first instant of its existence. But this is not the case for God, "because, although he has the power for the opposite of that which he has (i.e., when he is Φ-ing he can not-Φ), in no way because of this would he be diverse or other or something else from what he is".[27] Or as the second recension puts it:

> In [God] considered absolutely the knowledge by which he knows that Antichrist exists if he is going to exist and the knowledge by which he knows that he does not exist, if he is not going to exist, is entirely the same. And in the same way to will and not to will in him are the same, although in creatures their diversity begins. For if in God himself they were diverse, he would not be the simplest substance, but a composite and mutable one.[28]

There is a moment in the second recension where, on a quick reading, Grosseteste seems to contradict himself on this point. Developing the idea that God knows in exactly the same way the existence and non-existence of something in time, he says:

> I do not say that [God] knows in the same way that Antichrist exists if he is going to exist, and that he does not exist if he is not going to exist, because this is impossible.[29] (2.8.9; 158:88-89)

In fact, there is no contradiction, because Grosseteste does not claim that God knows the existence of Antichrist or his non-existence if he does not exist *in the same way*, but by the same knowledge considered *absolutely*, and so there is no difference in him, absolutely, whether he knows the one or the other.[30]

For Grosseteste, then, in the end it is not enough that God does not change in any way.[31] In addition, he cannot be in any way different in himself, he cannot in himself do or know otherwise than he does, although he has the power to bring about, without himself being changed, different things from those in fact he does. Considered absolutely, Grosseteste's God has no alternative ways of action, but when God is considered along with his relations to creatures, then there are alternatives. These relations turn out to be Grosseteste's fundamental tool for reconciling God's single, immutable act of will with the

[27] DLA 1.9.9 (156:102-107).
[28] DLA 2.8.8 (158:78-82).
[29] DLA 2.8.9 (158:88-89).
[30] In the second recension, DLA 2.8.11-12 (158:97-160:119), Grosseteste makes very clear that God's knowledge of the same thing existing and not existing in time is by exactly the same way (*modus*).
[31] In the excellent doctrinal analysis in the Introduction to his edition (DLA, xli-liii), Lewis does not draw attention to this important turn in Grosseteste's argument. In "Power and Contingency", 220-223, however, Lewis does discuss this part of *De libero arbitrio*, recognizing the problems it creates for the coherence of his theory, but without underlining that Grosseteste is here insisting on a stricter view of God's inability to be otherwise than mere immutability.

claim that the effects of that will, the history of the created universe, might have been different. There are, he says,

> from eternity innumerable and eternal different relations of him to created things, and even if there had not been going to be created things, there would still have been innumerable eternal relations to their absences.[32]

These relations have little ontological standing. Grosseteste denies that they are God, but is willing to tolerate the view of some that each relation, taken singly, is God (2.9.10; 56:118-58:122). In the later recension, Grosseteste discusses these eternal relations, and the *dicta* which can be analysed into them, in detail (2.8.18-42; 166-184). In one sense, he suggests, relations can be understood as the essence on which a relation is founded, and on account of which the relation is said to exist. It is in this sense that these relations are God. If the relation is understood, however, as the ordering (*ordinatio*) of the two related things, then "this relation neither is the [divine] essence nor is something else than it" (*nec est ipsa essentia nec aliud ab ipsa*).[33]

Peter John Olivi

Olivi's discussion comes in a context very different to Grosseteste's. Olivi is not, like Grosseteste, answering a classic argument from God's foreknowledge to the non-existence of human freedom of the will. Olivi starts, rather, at the other end. He is writing about human free will, the subject of the long q. 57 of his *Quaestiones* on the second book of the *Sentences.* That "there is in human beings freedom of choice (*liberum arbitrium*)", that "something should be recognized in human beings through which they can do some things freely" – the matter at issue in q. 57 – is to Olivi both most obviously true and of central importance to the rest of his thinking. His remarks at the beginning of his response could scarcely be less understated:

> It should be held without any trace of doubt that we have freedom of choice. For this is so certain that denying it goes contrary to the clearest deliverances and experiences of truth, and destroys all the goods of rational nature. The contrary position cannot be founded or maintained except through the most false of principles, which at once overturn everything true and good.[34]

Olivi bases his "top-down" approach to free will – as Robert Pasnau has described it – on the obviousness to us in our everyday experience of life that we are free to make choices. He examines seven pairs of opposed attitudes, which make up much of the fabric

[32] DLA 1.9.10; 56:116-118.

[33] DLA 2.8.39; 180:366-367. Note that the *ordinatio* of which Grosseteste speaks is a genuine polyadic property – a relation of the post-Fregean sort that medieval authors are supposed not to have known about. Grosseteste wisely refuses to grant such an item any independent existence.

[34] OL *resp.* (316).

of our experience: anger and mercy, friendship and enmity, pride and shame, gratitude and ingratitude, subjection and lordship, hope and lack of confidence, solicitude and carelessness. None of these attitudes would be possible, he argues, without free will. If we lack free will, then our behaviour is false and perverse, and founded on a basis that is completely false and perverse – and this is impossible; and it is also impossible that when following a course that makes us better and perfects every good in us, as we do when we suppose we have free will, we should be following the greatest of falsities.[35]

Olivi on the Will's Simultaneous Power for Opposites

Q. 57 begins, as expected in a *quaestio*, with a series of arguments, each intended to prove the position Olivi rejects. One of them (10), reduced to its essentials, is as follows:

> (4) At the moment when a cause produces an effect, it is able not to produce it. (Premise for *reductio*)
> (5) At the moment the cause produces an effect, both the cause and the effect are in act. (Nature of causality)
> (6) At the moment when an effect exists it is possible that it does not exist. (4,5)
> (7) It is not the case that (4) (By *reductio*, because (6) is impossible according to Aristotle's principle of the necessity of the present – see below).
> (8) If it is not the case that (4), then every cause produces its effect necessarily.
> (9) Every cause produces its effect necessarily. (7,8)
> (10) The will is a type of cause. (Assumed premise)
> (11) The will has no freedom of choice. (What produces its effect necessarily does not do so freely).[36]

This first stage of the argument, (4)–(7), depends on Aristotle's principle that "what is, when it is, necessarily is". The idea behind this principle is that what is now the case, at this very instant, cannot be changed, although it could be for the next instant, and at the instant before it could have been. There is switch in front of me turned to the "Off" position. Even supposing it can turn instantaneously to the "On" position, it cannot be in that position in this very instant, because it is in fact in the "Off" position, no more than it could have been on five minutes ago, if it was in fact off then. Aristotle is not at all trying

[35] OL *resp.* (317 and 316-323); see Robert Pasnau, "Olivi on human Freedom", in *Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248-1298). Pensée scolastique, dissidence spirituelle et société*, edited by A. Boureau and S. Piron, Études de philosophie médiévale 79 (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 15-25.

[36] OL arg. 10 (308): "Omnis causa, dum operatur seu dum est in hora qua operatur, non potest non operari, quoniam res, dum est, non potest non esse et, dum fit, non potest non fieri et, dum facit, non potest non facere; dum autem causa operatur, tunc non solum ipsa est actu operans, sed etiam suus effectus tunc est actu et fit actu; si igitur tunc posset non operari illum effectum, tunc simul possent contradictoria esse vera, scilicet, ipsum effectum esse et non esse et simul fieri et non fieri et ipsam causam simul facere et non facere; sed si non potest non operari, dum operatur, semper quando agit, necessario agit; ergo et cetera."

to argue that everything is determined, a position he rejects completely. Rather, he is putting forward an intuitively obvious point, with which most people in his time would have agreed, and most people today too (philosophers perhaps excepted!). Yet the second stage of the argument moves from what has been established by Aristotle's principle to a determinist conclusion. It does so because of (8), which most of Olivi's predecessors would have rejected. (8) requires that, for a cause not to be necessary, then at the same instant as it causing *a*, it must be able not to cause *a*. This, arguably, is an unreasonable demand, where the cause in question is the human will.

When we normally think about our freedom to choose what to will, we have in mind the freedom to choose what we shall will at the next instant. To take again the example of the switch. We would normally think that I have free choice with regard to it if it is off now and I am able to will at the next instant to turn it on. It would be unreasonable to demand that at this instant, when I am not willing to turn it on, I can will to turn it on. My freedom to will at the next instant is all that is needed for incompatibilist freedom of agency and so to avoid the terrible moral consequences that many philosophers believe follow from denying it.

This line of thought seems to have been usual among philosophers before Olivi. Olivi himself recognizes this as the position of "some", who answer that "the power [of the will] is not to opposites with respect to the present, but only with respect to the future" (*potentia non est ad opposita respectu praesentis, sed solum respectu futuri*).[37] Olivi cites Hugh of St Victor, but Hugh was probably looking back to Anselm, whose Principle, that when I will I cannot not will, because to do so would entail a contradiction, was quoted approvingly by Grosseteste.[38] Peter the Lombard puts forward the same position in the *Sentences* (II, d. 25), which Olivi and the other scholastic theologians were commenting, and it is maintained in Olivi's own time by Henry of Ghent.[39]

Olivi, however, expressly rejected this position, and he justifies this view at length in q. 57. His central argument is as follows:

> But this position expressly destroys free choice and all that has been said above. For it is clear that free choice cannot in fact perform a future act in the instant that precedes that future act. Therefore with regard to this preceding instant, when free choice is in it, it cannot make actual the opposite act, and it cannot [make it actual] in the instant to come, because it is not yet there, and when it is there all the less will it be able to do so, because [according to the position] the power for opposites is said to be with respect to the future, not the present.[40]

[37] OL ad 10 (348).
[38] See above, n. 17.
[39] See Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory", 161-162.
[40] OL ad 10 (349): "Sed istud expresse destruit liberum arbitrium et omnia supra dicta; constat enim quod liberum arbitrium actum futurum non potest de facto agere in nunc quod praecedit illud futurum. Ergo pro illo nunc sic praecedenti, dum est in eo, non potest actu in opposita, nec

Olivi is saying that, according to the position held by Hugh of St Victor and others:

(12) The will that Φs at t1 cannot at t1 not-Φ at t1, and

(13) The will that Φs at t1 can at t2 not-Φ at t2.

Olivi then adds the following principle, which he considers obvious: "Free choice cannot in fact perform a future act in the instant that precedes that future act", that is to say:

(14) At t1 the will cannot Φ at t2, and cannot not-Φ at t2.

Olivi then asks where the power for opposites, in which he considers free choice to consist, is to be found: not at t1, because, suppose that the will is Φ-ing at t1, then his opponents have ruled out by (12) that the will can at t1 be not-Φ-ing at t1; but not at t2, because (14) rules out that at t1 the will can be not-Φ-ing at t2, and – just as happened with t1 – (12) rules out that, when the will is Φ-ing at t2, it can at t2 be not-Φ-ing at t2.

In a way, Olivi's position is obvious. What I actually will is something I control from instant to instant, and so the only way that I can will something at t1 is to will it at t1. If, then, human free will really is a power for opposites, a two-way power, the power actually to will *a* or not to will *a*, it must be a power than can be exercised at a single instant with regard to that instant. Still, as already suggested, Olivi seems to be demanding a lot for there to be freedom of will. His opponents are not suggesting that our will can act in the future – they would accept (14). Rather, they consider that it is enough for freedom (as indicated in [13]) that my will can will at t1 to leave the switch off at t1, and at t2 not will to leave the switch off at t2 and so will to turn the switch on at t2. Olivi does not consider this enough, because to the ordinary requirement for human freedom – that we can make choices and, incompatibilists will add, that these are choices between genuine alternatives – he adds a special demand about the nature of the will: that it acts as a first cause, a mover that is itself unmoved.[41] Given this conception of the will, it is easier to see why he insists that it is has the power to choose either of two alternatives at the same instant, and so the power to choose at t1 not to Φ at t1 even when its choice at t1 is to Φ at t1.

Olivi, then, given his conception of the human will, cannot reject (8), and so he needs to find another way of avoiding the conclusion (11), that there is no human free will, that follows from (4)–(10). To do so, he must either reject Aristotle's principle or show that it is compatible with (4). Olivi chooses this second option. Aristotle, he explains, is saying that the existence of something cannot go together with its negation. He did not mean that "the cause, at the moment when it is producing the effect, is necessarily determined and inclined to producing it" (*causa, dum operatur ipsum effectum, est necessario determinata et inclinata ad ipsum producendum*) – a position that would remove "liberty not just from us but from God".[42]

pro nunc futuro, quia nondum est ibi, et quando erit ibi, tunc respectu eius hoc minus poterit, quia potestas oppositorum dicitur esse respectu futuri et non respectu praesentis."

[41] See Pasnau, "Olivi", 22-23, citing Olivi, *In secundum librum sententiarum*, q. 58 resp., ed. Jansen, 411 and OL ad 5 (342).

[42] OL ad 10 (348).

John Duns Scotus

The discussion in Scotus, like Grosseteste's and unlike Olivi's, comes in the context of tackling the much-debated problem of how to reconcile divine prescience with human freedom. There is, though, an important difference in the angle of approach. Grosseteste's concern is to reject a powerful formulation of the argument that moves from God's foreknowing everything to there being no contingency. Scotus, indeed, deals in passing with this argument in various formulations, but he structures his discussion around a deeper problem about contingency: from where does it arise? Grosseteste is willing to assume that there is contingency, so long as arguments against it from divine prescience can be refuted. Scotus has a different viewpoint. It is not that he doubts in any way that there is contingency, which he considers a necessary condition for human free will. If nothing happened contingently, all human and political society would be destroyed, and virtue, punishment and reward rendered unnecessary.[43] Yet he writes as if he regarded, as well he might within the framework of Aristotelian physics, necessary causation as the default position. If there is to be contingency, it must be introduced from somewhere. But from where? Scotus gives his answer by arguing against Aquinas's position.

Scotus on the Origins of Contingency

According to Aquinas, God wills necessarily, not contingently, and contingency arises in the passage from this first cause and its proximate effects to its ultimate ones.[44] Aquinas offers, as an illustrative comparison, the germination of a plant, which is contingent although its primary cause, the motion of the sun, is necessary.[45] Scotus claims not to understand this position. If God causes necessarily, he argues, then, given his omnipotence, all secondary causes will cause necessarily too, because "if a cause that moves because it is moved is moved necessarily, then it moves necessarily, and this applies to every mediate cause right down to the final effect".[46]

According to Scotus, the origin of contingency is to be found in God himself: in God's will and its act in relation to other things (*in voluntate divina (vel actu eius) comparata ad alia a se*). If God's will caused necessarily, then everything would come about of necessity.[47] Scotus's task will be to explain how the divine will can cause contingently.

The two difficulties that stand in the way of accepting that God causes contingently had already been considered by Olivi and Grosseteste. There is, first, the Problem of the Instant. How can a single instant of time provide room for the openness to opposites

[43] R, d. 39-40, qq. 1-3, nn. 25-30 (471-473).
[44] R, d. 39-40, qq. 1-3, nn. 10-11 (468-469).
[45] *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 14, a. 13, ad. 1 (cf. also his Commentary on the *Sentences* I, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5). Scotus refers his readers explicitly to the *Summa Theologiae* Book 1.
[46] R, d. 39-40, qq. 1-3, n. 13 (469): "[...] causa quae movet quia movetur, si necessario movetur, necessario movet, et sic de qualibet causa media usque ad ultimum effectum."
[47] R, d. 39-40, qq. 1-3, nn. 31-32 (473).

necessary for freedom of will? Olivi, as has been seen, had to answer this question because he thought that, for there to be freedom of the will, a two-way choice has to exist at an instant. Scotus in fact accepted this position, but in any case, he and Grosseteste were also faced with the problem because they were both thinking primarily about God's free will and they held that God exists in an instant-like eternity. Second, there is a problem about immutability. How can God will contingently – that is to say, be open to willing *a* or not willing *a* – and yet be, not merely unchanging, but unchangeable? The problems are closely connected, because the explanation of how a two-way choice need not involve change will also show how it is possible at an instant; and, indeed, Scotus, like Grosseteste, approaches the problem mainly as one about immutability. There is, however, another aspect to the problem about immutability, the Special Immutability Problem, which is brought out by Grosseteste's change of direction at the end of his account.

Scotus and the Problem of the Instant

Scotus considers that God "can will nothing except in eternity or the one instant of eternity". God is "contingently the cause of *a* (any given thing) through a single willing in this single instant".[48] It was Olivi who most probably provided Scotus with the tools to explain how such an instantaneous willing can be contingent, even though he was concerned with human and not divine will. Olivi thought that *any* free willing has to take place at a single instant, at which the willer retains the power to will the opposite. Scotus adopts this unusual position about human will. Given that humans will contingently, he claims that "in the same instant that it is a cause [the will] is able to will the opposite, for otherwise it would cause necessarily at that instant".[49] Scotus's outlook is, however, less radically opposed than Olivi's to the widespread view that we are free to will the opposite only at the next instant, not the present one. Olivi bases human freedom of choice entirely on our capacity to will opposites at the same instant. Scotus, by contrast, recognizes our will's potential to opposites in succession – that I can will *a* at t1, and not will *a* at t2 – as evident and as providing an obvious ground for our free will.[50] This sort of potential for opposites in succession is, however, limited to changeable things. It is the human will's less obvious sort of potential for opposites, at an instant, in the manner of Olivi, that allows Scotus to use our willing to explain how God too can will contingently.

[48] R, d. 39-40, n. 43 (477): "Deus enim nihil potest velle nisi in aeternitate sive in instanti uno aeternitatis, et mediante unico velle in illo unico instanti contingenter est causa ipsius *a*."
[49] R, d. 39-40, n. 42 (477): "Sed voluntas nostra in illo instanti in quo elicit velle sive causat, vult contingenter, et in eodem instanti ut est causa eius potest velle oppositum (alias tunc necessario causaret in illo instanti)."
[50] R, d. 39-40, nn. 40-41 (476-477).

Suppose, Scotus suggests,

> that my will just existed for one instant of time, it would contingently elicit the act of willing in that instant (and would be able to be meritorious), not because it existed before at another instant, but because it freely and contingently elicited that act of willing.

The same, he says, goes for God's will (*sic voluntas divina*):

> In that instant of eternity in which it produces *a*, there could be not-*a*. Otherwise it would follow that, when it is a cause, *a* would be necessary.[51]

But what, Scotus asks, is this power (by which it can not produce *a*, at the instant it is producing *a*)? Like Olivi, Scotus explains it using the idea of natural, as opposed to temporal, priority. It does not precede its act by duration, which would involve mutability,

> but it is a power naturally prior to the contingent act. Therefore, the will, which is naturally prior, can be along with its opposite without durational ordering[52] –

that is to say, the power to produce *a* and not to produce *a*, that is the will, coexists in the same instant-like eternity with the volition to produce *a* (and not not to produce *a*), because the will as a power is naturally, but not by duration, prior to the will's willing.

Like Olivi, Scotus has to explain how this approach is compatible with Aristotle's principle that what is, when it is, necessarily is. Scotus envisages an opponent arguing that, given Aristotle's Principle, since there is only one instant of eternity, whatever God wills in it he wills necessarily. Scotus explains, in response, that this would be true if Aristotle's words were interpreted as meaning that whatever-is-when-it-is is necessary But, he suggests, this is not how they should be understood. Rather, Aristotle's principle means that whatever is, is necessarily-when-it-is; and from this qualified sort of necessity (necessity-when-it-is) no inference can be made to unqualified necessity.[53] Another of Scotus's replies is very close to Olivi's. The opponent cites the rule that, if *p* is false at t1, it is not possible that it is true at t1, but only at some other instant. To maintain his view, Scotus would have, therefore, to maintain that what he admits is in fact false at an instant (that I do not will *a*, when at the instant I am willing *a*) is not false. Scotus denies that the rule is correct, citing like Olivi the underlying cause as justification: at t1 "the other opposite [e.g. my willing not to *a*, when in fact at t1 I will to *a*] can be true, by the power of its naturally prior cause, through which it can be made true" (*aliud oppositum potest esse verum potentia suae causae prioris naturaliter, per quam potest verificari*).[54]

[51] R, d. 39-40, n. 43 (477).
[52] R, d. 39-40, n. 44 (477): "[...] sed est potentia prior naturaliter actu contingente; ergo prius naturaliter voluntas potest esse cum opposito illius sine ordine durationis."
[53] R, d. 39-40, n. 45 (478) Objection; nn. 49-50 (478-479) Response.
[54] R, d. 39-40, n. 48 (478) Objection; n. 56 (480) Response.

Scotus goes on to make the single remark in this whole discussion that might be taken as proposing a new modal theory. Suppose there were just one instant of time and at it everybody was disputing, it is possible, he says, that in this instant they were not disputing.[55] But this comment should be understood in the light of the causal explanation he has just given. Scotus is not contrasting one possible one-instant world where everyone disputes and another possible one-instant world where they do not, but maintaining that our power to dispute is a two-way power, to dispute and not to dispute, and this power is naturally prior to its being exercised one way at the same and only instant. Neither, then, in this response, and even less in those to the other objections, does Scotus develop a different view of modality from Aristotle's.[56] Rather, he is trying to show that his Olivi-esque theory of willing can withstand the sort of criticisms his peers, versed like him in Aristotelian logic and metaphysics, would be likely to make.

Scotus and the Special Immutability Problem

In so far as mutability involves change from one instant to another, by showing that the will has a two-sided power even in a single instant, Scotus shows how the will can be two-sided – a precondition, he believes, for freedom – without mutability. But there remains the Special Immutability Problem. Is it enough to show that God cannot change from one time to another or must God be unable to be otherwise in an even stronger way, as Grosseteste argues in the final part of his discussion? Grosseteste ends by holding that God in himself, and so God's willing, considered internally, cannot be otherwise than it is. God is, in himself, no different whether his eternal will is that Antichrist should exist or is not that Antichrist should exist. Grosseteste leaves the difference to be explained entirely by God's relations to other things. What is Scotus's attitude to the Special Immutability Problem?

Two of his replies to objections clearly indicate that, for Scotus – unlike Grosseteste – God might have willed otherwise than he does, although God's will cannot change from one time to another. One of these objections is that, since God foreknows immutably, he foreknows necessarily.[57] Scotus answers by explaining that "immutable" has a wider extension than "necessary". What is immutable cannot be otherwise successively, what

[55] R, d. 39-40, n. 56 (478) : "[...] si non esset nisi unum instans temporis et omnes disputarent, dico quod in eodem instanti poterant non disputare [...]"

[56] To Objection 2 (R, d. 39-40, n. 46 [478]), that his position implies it is possible to will and not to will *a* at the same instant, Scotus answers (nn. 51-52 [479-480]) that this does not follows, just as from (i) body A can occupy place *x* at t1 and (ii) body B can occupy place *x* at t1, it does not follow that (iii) body A and B can both occupy place *x* at t1. Objection 3 simply begs the question and Scotus repeats (R, d. 39-40, n. 54 [480]) his point that *prius naturaliter potest stare cum opposito posterioris naturaliter* (i.e. the naturally prior two-way power of volition to *a*/not to *a* can exist at the same instant as the naturally posterior volition to *a*, although this volition is incompatible with the volition not to *a*).

[57] R, d. 39-40, n. 5 (468).

is necessary can neither be otherwise successively nor non-successively.[58] If this distinction is to be a reason for rejecting the objection, Scotus must be saying that, although God's will cannot be otherwise successively, it can be otherwise without succession, and so it is not necessary. Scotus goes on to say that the power that applies to God is immutability, because what is immutable cannot be otherwise than it was before, and contrasts mutability with not being (in any way) able to be otherwise.[59] A little later, rejecting the assertion that "whatever is not *a* and can be *a*, can begin to be *a*", Scotus says that the entailment is not formally valid, but holds with regard to things that are changeable because they lack a form. By contrast, he says, "in eternity [...] which exists without a beginning God can have a form that he does not have without change" (*in aeternitate autem, quae est sine inceptione, potest Deus habere formam quam non habet sine mutatione*).[60]

At first sight, however, Scotus's explicit analysis of how God wills might seem to suggest, contrary to these passages, that the divine will cannot be otherwise in any way at all. Scotus begins by saying that, because God's will acts in a perfect way, in making the comparison between our will and his we must eliminate anything imperfect. Our will is two-sided (*indifferens*) with respect to diverse acts, and, through them, to diverse objects and many effects. Our will's relationship to effects is, however, merely secondary, and its relationship to different acts involves change and so imperfection. Our will, though, is like God's in its two-sidedness with regard to its objects. But for God, this two-sidedness is not, then, a matter of having many acts. Rather, the act of the divine will

> is one and simple and two-sided with regard to different objects. But it is necessary with regard to its first act. But it is related through it to other things contingently. In this way, therefore, the divine will is not two-sided with regard to opposite acts, as something actually willing is formally, but it is two-sided through one act, because this act is unlimited and infinite.[61]

Scotus, it could be argued, is insisting here, like Grosseteste, that any being otherwise, not just mutability, cannot be in God himself but only outside him and in relation to him. But this would be a misinterpretation. When Scotus says that God's will is "necessary with regard to its first act", he is talking about how God is simply by having the nature he does – he is saying it is necessary that God has a will. He is not talking about the contents of God's will, the result of its operating, which is its second act.[62]

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[58] R, d. 39-40, n. 67 (485).
[59] R, d. 39-40, n. 68 (485).
[60] R, d. 39-40, n. 73 (487).
[61] R, d. 39-40, n. 38 (476): "[...] actus eius, scilicet divinae voluntatis, est unus et simplex et indifferens ad diversa obiecta; habet tamen se necessario ad actum primum, tamen mediante illo se habet ad alia contingenter. Sic ergo voluntas divina non est indifferens ad actus oppositos, ut est actu volens formaliter, sed per unum actum est indifferens, quia illimitatus et infinitus."
[62] The distinction between *in actu primo, in actu secundo* is well explained in Scotus, *Reportatio I-A*, II, 591-592 (Glossary).

The account in the earlier Oxford *Lectura* leaves no room for doubt:

> [...] the divine will in a single volition wills in eternity that the stone exists and is able in eternity to will that the stone does not exist [...] in such a way that the divine will, in so far as it operates within God (*ad intra*), and so is prior to its effect, can produce and not produce its object [...][63]

According to Scotus, then, God himself, internally, with regard to his will, *can* be otherwise than he is, although he cannot change.

Conclusion

Although the discussions in Grosseteste, Olivi and Scotus have been linked together because of what they tell, supposedly, about the history of modality, their real pertinence lies in what they show, taken together, about the history of conceptions of the will. All three authors make the ordinary distinction between the will as a power for two-way acts of volition from these volitions themselves, but then go on to do something special. To be actualized at a given instant, a two-way power has to be determined one way or other: so, for instance, at t1 I will to *a*. But these authors insist that, even at this instant, the two-way power remains: at t1, although at t1 I will to *a*, because of this power I can not will to *a* at t1. Grosseteste explains the point by distinguishing between the power with the act chosen and the power naked of the act. Olivi uses the idea of natural (non-chronological) priority of the two-way power to its act, and Scotus follows him; both of them also explain this priority as causal. Grosseteste does not think that this analysis is pertinent to the normal process of human free willing, which is successive in time, but it explains how God's will, without ever changing, can be other than it is and so allows him to reject a powerful argument from divine prescience to necessitarianism. Olivi, by contrast, holds that only because the two-way power of willing remains at every instant, naturally prior to the volition, is there any free will, for humans or for God. Scotus apparently accepts Olivi's argument for this position, but he is mainly interested in using it so that, by a comparison with our own process of willing, we can understand how God can will contingently, without change in the single instant of eternity, since otherwise, he holds, everything would be necessary.

The outlook shared by Grosseteste, Olivi and Scotus is sharply different from that which would characterize thinkers who were using, or moving towards, the idea of possible worlds. Possible worlds are parallel to each other. One of them, indeed, is actual, and other possible worlds are closer or more distant from it, but each possible world is equally possible. The three Franciscan thinkers, by contrast, introduce an idea of priority and posteriority, and do so strictly in the context of powers to act, not that – as in a possible worlds type theory – of how things are. There is indeed a link between their thinking about the will and questions about how things are and might have been, about

[63] *Lectura* I, 39, n. 54; Jaczn *et al.*, *Contingency,* 128.

the modal history of the universe. The link is provided by God's will. Calvin Normore is right to claim that Scotus is a modal monist and that for him "to assert a possibility is to attribute a power to something".[64] Grosseteste and Olivi also take this view. All three thinkers see human free will as one source of possibilities, and in the texts by them examined here both Grosseteste and Scotus argue that God's will is the ultimate foundation for possibility.

Some readers of Scotus would query this conclusion about him. They, like those who first pointed out the relationship between his discussion and those in Grosseteste and Olivi, would point out that Scotus moves beyond these two predecessors precisely by shaping their thoughts into a new modal theory. According to Dumont

> [Scotus] distinguished sharply, in ways that Olivi did not, the different levels of possibility that it implied, both logical and real. What is more, Scotus drew out the logical consequences of this theory of will and gave them accurate expression by expanding considerably the tools of logical analysis for modal statements.[65]

Lewis goes further in his comparison:

> Despite the deeply theological setting of Scotus's account of the possibility of things, his views, unlike Grosseteste's, lend themselves to a development of a modal theory divorced from theological concerns, a development that ultimately led to contemporary notions of modality formulated in terms of logical compatibility or possible worlds.[66]

Scotus's texts do not bear out this distinction between him and the two earlier authors. Certainly, in the *Lectura* version and the Apograph, when Scotus introduces the will's non-successive two-way power, he says that it is accompanied by a "logical power" (*potentia logicalis*) or "logical possibility" (*possibilitas logica*).[67] But Scotus's point here is simply that no logical contradiction is involved. Indeed, the way in which he explains the logical possibility in the Apograph expressly refers to the causal priority of the will to the volition: "For the opposite of willing *a* does not logically contradict the will as first act (i.e. the existence of the will as a two-sided power), even when it is willing not-*a*" (*voluntati enim ut actus primus, etiam quando producit hoc velle, non repugnat oppositum velle*).[68] Scotus's analysis of the logic of statements about necessity is certainly more elaborate than Grosseteste's or Olivi's, but he uses, if in a more complex way than usual, the traditional tools of distinguishing between composite and divided senses (wide and narrow-scope modal operators). Lewis emphasizes that Scotus, unlike Grosseteste, wants to show that there is an interpretation of the words of Aristotle's principle ("What is, when it is,

[64] Normore, "Scotus, Modality", 161.
[65] Dumont, "The Origin", 167.
[66] Lewis, "Power and Contingency", 225.
[67] Lectura I, 39, nn. 49-59 (Vos Jaczn, *Contingency,* 116-118); Apograph, n. 16 (Scotus, *Opera omnia* VI, 418:16-22).
[68] Apograph, n. 16 (Scotus, *Opera omnia* VI, 418:17-19).

necessarily is") under which it is false.[69] But Scotus is not trying to reject Aristotle's principle, merely wrong readings of it. As he says explicitly in the Apograph: "No true sense of this sentence says that an existence, at the instant when it is, is necessary, but only that it is necessary in a qualified way – necessary-when-it-is."[70] Lewis also, like a number of commentators, points to the sense in which in Scotus "the possibility or impossibility of things is not grounded *ex parte Dei*".[71] This is a complicated issue, but Lewis himself seems to accept that God is responsible for what is possible except that what are compatible or incompatible is a given, even for him.[72] God, then, is constrained by the most basic laws of logic (as most philosophers, Descartes arguably apart, have agreed) – and nothing else.

The Franciscan discussions examined here do not, therefore tell a story about changing ideas of modality, but rather about developments in thinking about freedom of the will, especially God's will. The most striking of them lies in the difference between Grosseteste, who finally demands that God cannot be in any way otherwise, and Scotus, who is content so long as God is shown to be immutable. It is a big change in outlook, and Scotus's role in reaching it deserves further investigation.

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[69] Lewis, "Power and Contingency", 214.
[70] Apograph, n. 18 (Scotus, *Opera omnia* VI, 23:1-2).
[71] Lewis, "Power and Contingency", 214.
[72] I discuss this question in a little more detail (with references) in "Medieval Modalities", 154-155.