A not-so-self-evident proposition: "God exists". The Conimbricenses and the Jesuit Attitude toward Thomas Aquinas

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Abstract

After sketching the questions involved in the crucially Scholastic proposition “God exists”, conceived as a one of the self-evident propositions from which human knowledge can build itself, this paper will track the Jesuit landscape, concluding with the place held by the Conimbricenses in the Scholastic tradition, and what this position meant with regard to the relationship between many Jesuit philosophers and Aquinas’s authority, which was more ambiguous than it has been commonly recognised.

Keywords: Jesuit Logic, Scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas, Ontology, Theory of Knowledge.

Resumen

Una proposición no tan evidente: "Dios existe". Los Conimbricenses y la Actitud Jesuita hacia Tomás de Aquino

Después de esbozar las preguntas involucradas en la proposición crucialmente escolástica "Dios existe", concebida como una de las proposiciones evidentes a partir de las cuales se puede construir el conocimiento humano, este documento hará un seguimiento del paisaje Jesuita, concluyendo con el lugar que ocupan los Conimbricenses en la tradición Escolástica, y lo que significaba esta posición con respecto a la relación entre muchos filósofos jesuitas y la autoridad de Aquino, que era más ambigua de lo que comúnmente se ha reconocido.
0. Background

The *Ratio studiorum* (the official plan of studies of the Society of Jesus) bound every Jesuit professor to follow Thomas Aquinas in theological matters and Aristotle, insofar as his theory was orthodox, in philosophy. Moreover, superiors had to pay close attention to the selection of professors for the teaching of theology, appointing only those whose adherence to Aquinas was publicly recognised.

This requirement was primarily intended to counteract a trend, which had begun to spread in Jesuit colleges (especially in Italy), of praising or even following impious philosophers, such as the Greek commentators or the Arabs, and of criticising Latin authors, Aquinas included, who were both medieval and – most important – Christian. But the rule in the *Ratio studiorum* was also meant as to prevent Jesuit philosophers conceding validity to – or, in the worst case, becoming sectarians of – “modern” philosophers, or becoming enamoured with their own theories instead of following the most common and safe authorities. The rule of not appearing as “sectarians” of anyone was a second pillar of Jesuit policies toward teaching philosophy (and theology). This meant that – according to the *Ratio Studiorum* – for a

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Jesuit teacher to distance himself from Thomas Aquinas on a particular aspect was sometime licit, though professors were required to do so only reluctantly. This rule shaped Jesuit theology and philosophy in such a way that Dominican Thomists have been criticizing as having betrayed true Thomism over time; indeed, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when neo-Thomism was fueled by the Church, harsh debates ensued between Jesuits and Dominicans about which Thomism had specifically to be revived. Most important, though, this rule let many Jesuit philosophers and theologians adopt an attitude that scholarship has often called “eclectic”.

Regarding theological issues, the term “eclectic” denotes, in a pretty generic way, a custom that many Jesuits maintained of trying to combine (or blend, find a way between, overcome) the two major traditions in universities, that is, Thomism and Scotism. Fuelled by the existence of two established chairs (as, for example, at the renowned university of Padua), one in viae Thomae, and the other in viae Scoti, the debate between the Dominican and Franciscan scholars provided two different models for Logic and demonstrative reasoning that had immediate and heavy repercussions for their respective theological paradigms.²

In the sixteenth century, the field of Thomism was largely occupied by Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469–1534), with his commented editions of the Summa, but some of his doctrines and – generally speaking – his

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broad interpretation of Aquinas were felt to be controversial by other Thomists. Let us remember that Cajetan held an ambiguous position toward the Lateran V condemnation of the theory of double truth (usually ascribed to Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) and his masterpiece *De immortalitate animae*).\(^3\) Francesco Silvestri “Ferrariensis” (1474–1528), John Capreolus (c. 1380–1444), and Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275–1334) composed a list of Dominican theologians who were largely recognised as strict followers – if not partisans – of Aquinas’s thought. Historiography has often failed to collect the names of the persistent and renowned Scotist tradition, until at least Bartolomeo Mastri (1602–1673), a celebrated professor in Padua also called “princeps scotistarum”.\(^4\) But Mastri came after the period we are focusing on, and could not be included in the frequent and generic references to the “Scotists” which many commentaries by Jesuit philosophers and theologians make between the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth.

Of course, references to Scotus and Aquinas covered fields larger than theology, for almost every philosophical topic could raise questions that might pertain to theology and/or might require a consistent system within which theology stood at the highest level. Most important, given the harshness that a dispute could entail because of its political implications (religious orders were not always so welcoming with each other), no reference, even to Aquinas or Scotus, could be considered


entirely safe from the charge of heterodoxy (if not heresy) by enemies. The strict connection between logic, philosophy, theology, and faith that was a distinctive trait of scholasticism, limitlessly extended the field of danger for any doctrine in any subject.

The result was that Jesuit colleges and universities took extreme care in shaping their curriculum, so as to avoid any negative implication for orthodoxy. Some scholars have extensively dealt with this issue, and particularly with how the Society managed the issue of controlling and censoring those professors whose doctrines were clearly at odds with the mandate of the Constitutions (and later, the Ratio studiorum). But the major point that these scholars indirectly made is that uniformity and safety of doctrine was a goal all but achieved by the Society on the eve of modernity. In order to patrol what was going on in classes, the Jesuits used either lists of prohibited doctrines not to be taught, or lists of mandatory propositions (each of which eventually failed), or – finally – some reforms to the subjects and practices of teaching that might narrow the range of possibilities for somebody to teach dangerous theories.

One of these reforms, for example, concerned the teaching of ethics. Although Ethics was an important part of Aristotle’s corpus, the Jesuits limited the time devoted to commenting on it to six months, and urged professors to provide no more than a succinct treatment

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of the major topics; the most detailed teaching on ethics was postponed to the Moral Theology classes. Similarly, the structure of Metaphysics allowed professors to postpone several issues pertaining to divine ontology to the class on Scholastic Theology.

However, these measures were less than successful in forestalling all possible issues which a professor of philosophy might raise with immediate repercussions on faith and orthodoxy. If this was true for major concerns about faith, what about the more nuanced, nay nebulous, consideration of “following Aquinas” that also a professor of philosophy had to keep in mind while commenting on Aristotle?

What I want to focus on is precisely one of these connective-points, where both orthodoxy and the obligation to follow Aquinas were at stake, and it was a matter of Logic: the evidence of the proposition “Deus est” (God exists), whose argumentation – strikingly as it might appear – stands at the core of every scholastic philosopher’s method for reasoning correctly, and thereby discovering the truth.

The value of this proposition with respect to several others, which might have functioned as examples for explaining self-evident propositions that Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics assumed as necessary to trigger knowledge, was a hot topic for Scholastic Logic. Scotists and Thomists diverged on the function of such a proposition, as had Scotus and Aquinas themselves. The clearer this divergence, the more challenging it was for a Jesuit logician to take a stand in the debate without questioning his loyalty to Aquinas or, conversely, appearing to be a sectarian of an authority, albeit one as safe as Aquinas was held to be.
After sketching the questions involved in the proposition “God exists”, conceived as a one of the self-evident propositions from which human knowledge can build itself (mostly relying on a beautifully clear paper by Petr Dvořák) this paper will track the Jesuit landscape, concluding with the place held by the Conimbricenses in this landscape, and what this position meant with regard to the ambiguous relationship between many Jesuit philosophers and Aquinas’s authority, as it was commonly recognised.

1. The necessity of self-evident propositions

Aristotle’s claim in the *Posterior Analytics* is that any human knowledge based on demonstrative syllogism (in other words, science) must ultimately derive from premises which cannot be demonstrated in themselves. To avoid the paradox caused by the *regressus ad infinitum*, Aristotle states that some premises must be self-evident in such a way as to trigger the process of knowledge, which is based on senses and experience. These premises are formed by nothing but terms and propositions, the former being part of the latter. Insofar as knowledge is based on definitions and judgments, and self-evidence is primarily applied to propositions, the focus of the first part of the *Posterior Analytics* is on premises as certain kinds of self-evident propositions.

The meaning of “self-evident” is basically given by Aristotle in two ways:

1) Known as to be true based on the meanings of the terms alone;

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2) Known to be true non-inferentially. That is, to acquire the status of self-evidence, a proposition cannot be demonstrated *a priori* and should exclude any middle term.

The first way implies the necessity of knowing the meaning of the terms that form a proposition, that is, the parts of propositions such as subject and predicate (or passion, as we will see later).

The second way applies to some kinds of propositions, which Aristotle subsumes under the name of “principles”. While the term “principles” include both propositions which stand at the origin of one or several sciences and those which stand at the origin of all sciences, those which Aristotle focuses on here are the latter, the most universal. These are called “first” principles.

The logical structure of such principles reflects their different functions:

a) the predication of an essential feature of a specific subject;

b) the predication of the first specific property of some subject;

c) the predication of some specific property of that which has a specific property on which it is ontologically based.

An analysis of these structures allows us to add a couple of formal criteria that propositions must satisfy in order to acquire the status of self-evident:

1) A self-evident proposition is that whose predicate is included in the essence of the subject;

2) That which cannot be denied without a contradiction.8

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Does the proposition “God exists” satisfy the criteria of a self-evident proposition as shown above? According to many scholastic and late-scholastic commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics*, this proposition was indeed included among those principles which are self-evident in themselves (*propositiones per se notae*).

Indeed, it predicates the essential feature of God which, in so far as it is essential, cannot be founded on anything ontologically prior. This commonly recognised argument meant for the Scholastics that the proposition satisfies the criteria of being impossible to demonstrate *a priori*, and having a predicate which is included in the essence of the subject. Nevertheless, the proposition seemingly fails to satisfy the criterion of being knowable as true by means of the mere knowledge of its terms. Indeed, the ontological gap between the object God and the limited minds of human beings makes the concept of God necessarily confuse to these minds. We don’t know what God really is, as Dvůřák points out. Consequently, this proposition fails to satisfy the last criterion of self-evidence, according to which a proposition cannot be denied without contradiction.

So, the question for Scholastics was: given that two criteria for self-evidence are not satisfied, what position should we hold on the proposition “God exists?”

Aquinas distinguishes between propositions which are self-evident in themselves (*secundum se*) but not to us (*non quoad nos*), and those which are self-evident both in themselves and to us. Scotus opposed that the identity of a proposition is given by its conceptualisation. Therefore, there are as many propositions as there are different conceptualisations. This meant that the proposition “God exists” is different if grasped by the blessed in heaven (who have a distinct knowledge of the

terms) or by learned man (who has nothing but a confused concept of God). Therefore – and this is the basic point – the proposition “God exists” is not self-evident in itself for human beings in the present life: it requires a proof. Human beings can know that the proposition is self-evident by faith only.

2. A Jesuit Distinctiveness?

The list of Jesuit authors whose teaching of Logic was widely renowned between the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth included Francisco de Toledo (1515–1582), Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599), Antonio Rubio (1514–1615), who taught in Mexico, the Polish Martin Smiglecki (1564–1618), Paolo Valla (1561-1622) and – of course – Sebastião do Couto (1567–1639). The Belgian Philippe du Trieux (1588–1653), and Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1578–1641) would be the pillars of the next generation of Jesuit Logicians, but their impact was only felt later in the seventeenth century.

As for what concerns our topic today, we should add that the proposition “God exists”, though logical in its core, was mostly debated on theological grounds. This is why, in the above-mentioned Dvořák’s survey, we find Luís de Molina (1535–1600), Gabriel Vazquez (c.1549–1604) and Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592–1667) as the only Jesuit authors he deals with, relying almost exclusively on their theological works.

Now, finding a distinctive Jesuit identity among such a long list of authors is tricky, and probably an endless or useless inquiry. But one trait appears to be quite common among them, and it pertains to the integrating tendency they shared when adopting a position between
Scotists and Thomists. Of course, integration can be a deceptive term. But the trend that one can find in both writings (published commentaries) and manuscripts (I have personally checked some notes on Logic courses held by Jesuits, still remarkably conserved in the archives) is that of striving to find a common ground on this specific topic on which both Scotus and Aquinas would agree. Such a thing is already remarkable, if seen in the light of the mandatory following of Aquinas that the Constitutions commanded. When two traditions were so evidently at odds with each other, as this was the case between Thomists and Scotists, one might fairly expect a Jesuit to take a stand for their mandatory authority. This did not happen. And the fact is apparently so stunning that Dvořák, though not so interested in stressing the common belonging of Molina, Vazquez, and Arriaga to the Society of Jesus, was (mis)led to entitle his chapter on them: “Scotists integrating Aquinas”.10

I said “misled” because it sounds like a provocation rather than a precise picture of the Jesuit attitude toward Scotus and Aquinas, even in Molina’s case as we’ll see later.

I would rather say that, whenever a Jesuit Logician felt compelled by the strength of Scotus’s argument despite it seeming plainly at odds with Aquinas, he tended to show that the two arguments could somehow be attuned, even though Aquinas was *absolute et simpliciter* right because of his fidelity to Aristotle’s text.

A typical case in this sense is Paolo Valla, who, it is interesting to note, taught at Roman College where somebody was able to transfer his notes on first principles and precognitions to Galileo Galilei (1564–1642).

As William Wallace shows in his edition of this crucial treatise, Galilei made a sort of copy-and-paste from these notes in order to outline what we can consider his early thoughts on scientific method and reasoning.11

In his *Logic*, Valla presents Aquinas and Scotus’s doctrines on self-evident propositions.12 Aquinas distinguishes between self-evident propositions in themselves (*secundum naturam*) and according to us, provided that the latter splits into those which are known by everyone and those which are known only by the learned. Scotus rejects this distinction, and claims that if a proposition is self-evident in itself, it must be self-evident also according to us; if it is not self-evident to us, then it is *per accidens* (accidental). Valla bases his argument about the compatibility of these doctrines on the different ontological relationships which Aquinas and Scotus intended for self-evident propositions. Aquinas speaks of propositions as connected to the intellect of human beings, which cannot penetrate things as the blessed in heaven do, and orders them explicitly under just one concept, as that form of knowledge which must be understood through its parts. On the contrary, Scotus speaks of propositions according to the nature of things, thus connected to whatsoever kind of intellect, angelic and divine included.

Therefore, it seems that Aquinas and Scotus build their arguments upon different meanings of “proposition”. Valla seems to infer that each of them would concede one another’s argument if they were atuned on the meaning of that term.

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12 I will quote from *Logica Pauli Vallii Romani in duos tomos distincta*, Louvain, Rouille, 1622 (abbreviation: *Logic*).
But – Valla admits – Scotus explicitly disagreed with Aquinas. And this disagreement lets Valla make a point on his loyalty to Aquinas:

Quia tamen Scotus non vult convenire cum S. Thoma, & nos agimus de cognitione humana, & de propositionibus primis, immediatis, & per se notis, respect intellectus humani, et cognitionibus illius; ideo absolute, et simpliciter videtur sequendor S. Thomas, cui maxime favet Aristoteles, qui etiam de humana, et naturali nostra cognitione loquitur.13

This statement does not prevent Valla from criticising the Thomists (though not Aquinas himself, at least not directly) few lines later, when the immediacy and self-evidence of a certain kind of proposition is at stake. Indeed, Scotists and Thomists disagreed on the immediacy of the proposition on which the first passion of a subject is predicated. Thomists such as Caietanuus, Silvestri, and Dominic of Flanders (ca. 1425–1479) held it as immediate. Scotists such as Francis de Mayrone (c. 1280–1328), James Bargius (f. 1518–1563), and Filippo Zaffiro Novariensis (f. 1567), held it as mediate. Once again, Valla tried to harmonise these doctrines by affirming that this kind of proposition is immediate in itself, but mediate according to us (as we need a definition to prove that a passion is primary for its subject). Despite Valla’s admission that reconciling these doctrines is difficult, Thomists are basically the target of many of his criticisms.

Molina – in his commentary on Posterior Analytics – is inclined to concede much more to Scotus than Valla did. According to Dvořák, Molina was the clearest mediator between Scotus and Aquinas. In his commentary

13 P. Valla, Logic, p. 228.
to the first part of Aquinas’s *Summa*, which was published in 1592, Molina holds that there is no proposition in things in themselves.\(^{14}\) There are propositions only where things are conceptualised by the intellect or signified by some linguistic expressions (oral or written). From this it follows that, strictly speaking, no proposition is self-evident in itself which would not also be self-evident to us, as Scotus rightly claims. The reason is that the proposition which conceptualises the extremes distinctly and sufficiently to grasp from the terms that the predicate belongs to the subject, is distinct from the proposition in which the extremes are not so conceived. The thing denoted by both propositions, however, is one and the same. Aquinas, speaking here of the self-evident proposition in relation to the thing signified, not as it is signified by some terms or conceptualised by some concepts, is absolutely right that there is such a thing as a self-evident proposition in itself, not to us, even though his terminology is not precise enough. This sense expressed by Aquinas is not negated by Scotus and, in fact, cannot be correctly negated.

To understand Molina’s doctrine, it is crucial to compare the position he developed in the commentary to Aquinas’s *Summa* with the course on Logic he gave about thirty years earlier (1564), whose notes he carefully recorded in a manuscript still conserved at the University of Évora.\(^{15}\) Given that Molina tried to have it published as a volume of the *Cursus Conimbricensis*,
and the influence this course had on Pedro da Fonseca, it is fair to conclude that it contained the most important of Molina’s arguments on the “Deus est” dispute.\textsuperscript{16} By looking into it, one can also obtain an insight about whether Molina changed his mind or developed his thought differently in the period which divides his course on Logic and his theological writings.

I mention the influence of this manuscript on Fonseca because of its subsequent story. It is known that Fonseca brought it (without the author’s permission, in fact) to Rome, when he moved there and started to edit his writings. This fact was later adduced by Molina as evidence of Fonseca’s plagiarism of his doctrines.

Finally, comparing the doctrines held by Molina in this manuscript with Couto’s might help to shed a light on the true influences that stood behind the editing of the \textit{Cursus Conimbricensis}, which was actually edited by Manuel de Gois (for the major part) and Couto himself.

The manuscript, which is entitled \textit{Explanationes in Aristotelis Analytica Posteriora}, does not show great differences to the commentary to the Summa, though it seems more inclined to defend Scotus’s reasons than the commentary. Indeed, according to Molina the question of the self-evidence of the proposition “Deus est” is a matter of several conclusions, which are based on his agreement with Cajetan’s proposed distinction between two modes of determining the meaning of things as they are signified by a proposition. One mode is the \textit{secundum se}, that is, without any reference to the terms or concepts which refer to the things in the propositions.

\textsuperscript{16} I tried to explain in detail this point in my volume on the Conimbricenses. See Casalini, \textit{Aristotle in Coimbra. The Cursus Conimbricensis and Education at the College of Arts}, New York, Routledge, 2017.
The other one is *ut significantur his vel illis terminis, ex quibus constat propositio*.

The first conclusion that Molina draws from this distinction is that if one takes the first mode under consideration, then both Aquinas and Scotus are right, because Scotus would concede to Aquinas his main argument: that the blessed have the immediate perception of the truth of the sentences “Deus est” thanks to their direct penetration of the terms, even though our understanding of the terms of that proposition is confused and obscure because of our creatural status.

The second conclusion is that, if we take the second mode under strict consideration, Scotus is completely right, as Cajetan also admits.

The third conclusion leads Molina to adopt a more careful attitude: he says that, since there is no proposition inherent in things in themselves, but only when things are understood by the intellect, or signified through uttered or written words, he therefore believes (*credo*) that it is not appropriate to state that a proposition is *per se* known in itself if it is not *per se* known by us, while it is appropriate that a thing can be *per se* known in itself and *per se* unknown to us. This argument points clearly to Scotus (two propositions, one of which has precise terms and the other confused terms, are distinct and different from each other while belonging to the same subject). But again, as Molina will explain in his commentary to Aquinas’s *Summa*, this position could be held as fitting Aquinas’s thought, though he used a not very precise terminology on this particular issue.

The fourth conclusion regards the meaning of this concept in Aristotle’s text, which Molina holds to refer only to propositions which are *per se* known in themselves AND known to us.
Couto, though, like Molina, following a concordist path between Aquinas and Scotus, offered a different solution, much more inclined to concede to Aquinas. He distinguishes three modes under which a proposition can be subsumed: 1) formal, as it pertains to concepts composing it; 2) material, according to the thing considered in themselves; and 3) the middle way, that is, according to the things as they are represented by concepts.\textsuperscript{17}

As Scotist and Thomists have considered only the first two modes, their debate fails as a linguistic dispute. Indeed, both Scotus and Aquinas were less then precise in expounding their arguments. Aquinas would not deny that a confused proposition has not any evidence in itself, and that it is different from the one from that can allow somebody to grasp what is self-evident in it; therefore, it is not \textit{per se nota}. And Scotus would not deny that things that lack any medium in themselves are capable of being known without any medium; therefore, they are \textit{per se} known.

When it comes to the third mode, Couto concedes that Aquinas is right, and Scotus is not. Dominican Thomists, such as Francesco Silvestri “Ferrariensis”, John Capreolus and Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, objected to Scotus that the terms in self-evident propositions are to be taken as objective (\textit{obiectivi}) rather than formal. Couto adds that objective terms can be efficient causes of a proposition either in act (thus corresponding in fact to formal concepts) or in potency (as being knowable, and corresponding to some concepts). In the former case, a confused knowledge of the terms involved in a

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis S.I. in universam Dialecticam Aristotelis}, Coimbra, Loureiro, 1606 (abbreviation: \textit{In dialecticam}), cap. 3, quaest. 2, a. 2.
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A proposition cannot be an efficient cause of any proposition *per se nota secundum se*. Nonetheless, as those terms are able to encompass (*terminare*) clearer concepts, they can rightly be said to be *per se* knowable. Therefore, the proposition they compose has to be called *per se nota secundum se*, and not *quoad nos*. Scotus is wrong in saying that only formal propositions are knowable. And a perfect potency can grasp the truth of a proposition whose terms we actually know only confusedly.

According to Couto, “God exists” is a proposition that lacks *a priori* any middle term, and no middle term can be figured out by human beings. Nonetheless it is not a self-evident proposition *quoad nos*, because this kind of propositions need the criterion of “having terms perfectly knowable by our intellect”, a criterion that “God exists” misses.

The core of Couto’s argument stands in his interpretation of Aquinas’s distinction between act and potency, actual knowing and knowability:

> Tota igitur opinionis, quam sequimur, in eo est, quod res non habens a parte rei medium distinctum, non accipit ab intellectu, ut hoc, vel illo modo cognoscatur; sed a se habet; ut a potentia perfecta clare percipiatur, absque ullo medio termino; sitque cognoscibilis, quantum ad rationem per se notae propositionis exigitur.\(^{18}\)

By reversing Dvořák’s title, one might describe Couto as a Thomist integrating Scotus, and find the reason for this in the need for the *Cursus* to present itself as a distinctively Jesuit product. This meant, as we saw above, to observe the rules of following Aquinas and not appear as a sectarian of any authority as stated by the

Society’s institute. However, Couto’s argument provides also evidence for its broader inclination to concede to human reason that power that a purely Scotist tradition would refuse.

It is interesting to note that, on this very same topic, the *Logica furtiva* which had been published in Germany under the name of Coimbra, offered a much more Scotist opinion than Couto did. In fact, the *Logica furtiva* offers the same conclusions as Molina. Based on Caietanrus’s distinction between how things are considered, that is, either in themselves or according those concepts of them, the author of the *Logica furtiva* concedes that both Scotus and Aquinas are right in the former case, but only Scotus in the latter one. He draws a final conclusion of the argument, by stating that

> Proprie loquendo dicendum est, omnem propositionem per se notam, secundum se, esse per se notam, quo ad nos; Ratio vero est, quia, quanquam detur res, quae secundum se sit per se nota: non tamen, quoad nos: tamen quia propositio non reperitur in rebus, secundum se acceptis: sed solum ut apprehenduntur ab intellectu, aut signantur his illis vocibus seu etiam scriptis: Idcirco proprie loquendo nulla est proposition per se nota secundum se, quae non sit per se nota nobis.19

What strikes of the argument made by the *Logica furtiva*, is the consistency with Molina’s ideas. That the structure of the commentary, including the order and titles of questions, was the same as Molina’s *Explanationes*, might help shed some light on the dispute about the origins of this commentary. Indeed, Stëgmuller holds the *Logica* rely on notes of classes held by Gaspar Coelho at Évora University in 1584, these classes being

19 *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu in universam logicam* (1604). *De posteriore resolutione*, lib. 1, quaest. 1, c. 183.
inspired by Francisco Cardoso’s dictated lessons in Coimbra (1571). Following Couto’s suggestion that the lessons published in the *Logica furtiva* were taught thirty years earlier in Coimbra by a teacher willing to publish them as his own product, João Pereira Gomes thought that the *Logica furtiva*’s traced back to 1575. In both cases, it seems reasonable that the teacher who actually gave these lessons was influenced by Molina’s classes, which he actually held in 1564.

**Conclusions**

In the concordist Jesuit scenario, the Conimbricenses’s doctrine appears to be less incline to concede to Scotus than other prominent Jesuits who had played a role during the long process of the Cursus’ edition.

The Conimbricenses were even less sympathetic with the Scotist solution than Valla, a great professor at the most patrolled and controlled of Jesuit School, the Roman College – whom one might fairly expect to follow strictly the dictate of Aquinas’s authority. But Valla’s commentary had to deal with the Italian academic culture, and his concerns were mostly addressed to Paduan Aristotelianisms which implied a skillful dodging between Christian safe authorities.

Portuguese environment was less touched by Paduan influence, and as we know from many remarkable papers published by the Revista filosofica de Coimbra and Revista de filosofia Portuguesa which focused on Coimbran philosophical trends, Scotism and Thomism seemed to be patterns more established with their own different solutions to the same issues.

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Published after a while of the large majority of the volumes, Couto’s commentary kept itself loyal to the mission of the Cursus: providing a manual which could serve (in the authors intentions) the Jesuit schooling network, keeping an eye to the rules that Society had established for safety and uniformity of doctrine.

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