

# IN DEFENSE OF BAROQUE SCHOLASTICISM

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to draw interest to a period, or rather a certain philosophical culture, which has been neglected so far by standard historians of philosophy. Although the authors of this period discussed many perennial philosophical and theological topics, their views and discussions are largely unstudied. The significance of these authors can be illustrated, for example, by the problem posed by nonexistent objects. Most contemporary discussions of this problem are inspired by the Austrian philosopher Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), although he is by far not the only important philosopher of the past who has addressed it. For the problem was also extensively discussed in medieval and post-medieval scholasticism, in the context of what were called “beings of reason.”<sup>1</sup> Until recently Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) has been regarded as representing the climax of these scholastic discussions.<sup>2</sup> In fact, however, Suárez stood at the *beginning*, rather than at the *end*, of an interesting and highly sophisticated philosophical culture, flourishing from 1597 (the year of the publication of Suárez’s *Metaphysical Disputations*) until round 1700. This culture should best be called “Baroque scholasticism.” Many more topics, besides beings of reason, could be mentioned as an illustration of important topics discussed by Baroque authors at the time, without their being adequately recognized and investigated by contemporary historians of seventeenth-century philosophy (God’s existence and attributes, transcendentals and categories, causality, intentionality, freedom and determinism, natural law, etc). Here

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, John P. Doyle, “Suárez on Beings of Reason and Truth”, in: *Vivarium* 25 (1987), p. 47–75; and *ibid.* 26 (1988), p. 51–72, and Nicholas Rescher, “Nonexistents Then and Now”, in: *Review of Metaphysics* 57 (2003), p. 357–381. For a detailed study of beings of reason in Baroque scholasticism, see my Ph.D. thesis, “Beings of Reason: A Study in Scholasticism of the Baroque Era” defended at the University of Buffalo in 2009 (it is electronically accessible through ProQuest/UMI Dissertation publishing). This article is a revision of the appendix of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> See Ludger Oeing-Hanhoff, “Gedankending (*ens rationis*)”, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie Bd. 3 (G–H)*, ed. Joachim Ritter (Basel, Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co. Verlag, 1974), col. 55–62.

I offer some ideas on why the study of the period has been until recently neglected and argue that more attention should be paid to it.<sup>3</sup>

It is a known fact that the scholastic tradition flourished in the West in the medieval period, but in reality it continued well into the Renaissance and the Baroque. In the minds of many of our contemporaries, this period is linked with Platonism (Ficino, Pico della Mirandola) for the Renaissance and with the rationalists (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) and empiricists (Locke, Berkeley, Hume) for the Baroque. Yet, according to the estimate of Charles B. Schmitt, there were fewer than five hundred editions of Plato before 1600, whereas there were an astonishing three to four thousand editions of Aristotle.<sup>4</sup> The situation was no different in the seventeenth century, except for the growing influence of Descartes and British empiricism toward its end. Thus, in the minds of historically informed philosophers, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries should be linked with the overwhelming reality of scholastic philosophy and its predominant, although not exclusive, Aristotelian basis. Unfortunately, it is hard to detect this fact from today's standard historiography written in English. With the exception of Suárez (and perhaps John of St. Thomas), seventeenth-century scholasticism seems still a virtually uncharted territory. Maurice Grajewski said sixty years ago: "Seventeenth century scholastic philosophy has suffered at the hands of historians. Not only is there a painful lack of histories of philosophy treating the Scholasticism of this period, but the few historians that mention it usually present an incomplete and distorted view".<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, these words are true today no less than they were then. Similarly, Martin Stone points out in *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, that

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<sup>3</sup> It needs to be said, however, that the interest in the period seems to be growing. Pereira, for example, has recently published two books manifesting the extent and value of Baroque philosophical and theological culture. See José Pereira: *Suárez: Between Scholasticism and Modernity*, Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press 2007; and José Pereira and Robert Fastiggi: *The Mystical Theology of the Catholic Reformation: An Overview of Baroque Spirituality*, Lanham, MA: University Press of America 2006. Nevertheless, the most extensive surveys by Baroque philosophy were published more than fifty years ago in several German articles: Bernhard Jansen: "Deutsche Jesuiten-Philosophen des 18. Jahrhunderts in ihrer Stellung zur neuzeitlichen Naturauffassung", in: *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 57 (1933), p. 384–410; "Zur Philosophie der Scotisten des 17. Jahrhunderts", in: *Franziskanische Studien* 17 (1936), p. 25–58 (Part I), p. 150–175 (Part II); "Quellenbeiträge zur Philosophie im Benediktineorden", in: *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 60 (1936), p. 55–98; "Zur Phänomenologie der Philosophie der Thomisten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts", in: *Scholastik* 17 (1938), p. 49–71; "Die scholastische Psychologie vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert", *Scholastik* 26 (1951), p. 342–63. These surveys are based on cursory reading of primary sources and are somewhat dismissive of the accomplishments of Baroque scholasticism. See also notes 7 and 27 below.

<sup>4</sup> See Charles B. Schmitt: *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, Cambridge, MA: Published for Oberlin College by Harvard University Press 1983, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Grajewski: "John Ponce, Franciscan Scotist of the Seventeenth Century", in: *Franciscan Studies* 6 (1946), p. 54.

“we remain in a position of profound ignorance about what is referred to as Aristotelian Scholasticism. With the exception of a number of recent studies that have sought to illuminate the thought of influential thinkers such as Galileo, Descartes, Hobbes, and Leibniz, by considering the context in which they worked, the institutional philosophy of the period remains unstudied by contemporary historians of philosophy.”<sup>6</sup>

This article is divided into four parts. The first argues that seventeenth-century scholasticism should be best labeled “Baroque scholasticism” (I). The second presents a brief account of its emergence (II). The third argues that this period should be viewed as a *sui generis* chapter in the history of ideas (III). The fourth gives reasons for its investigation (IV).

Although the article provides some information about Baroque scholastic culture, it is not intended to be a short history of Baroque scholasticism. The article offers only preliminary and general considerations of Baroque scholasticism, without treating in depth any particular Baroque author or topic. The same provisional character has the bibliography provided in the main text and in the footnotes; it by no means aspires to be exhaustive. Contemporary and future historians need to undertake many specialized studies in order to be able eventually to come up with a reliable and philosophically illuminating outline of the period. At the moment it is premature to attempt such an outline.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Martin W. F. Stone: “Aristotelianism and Scholasticism in Early Modern Philosophy”, in: *A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Nadler, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2002, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Historically oriented overviews include: Karl Werner: *Franz Suarez und die Scholastik der letzten Jahrhunderte*, Regensburg: republished by Burt Franklin, New York 1889; Martin Grabmann: “Die Disputationes Metaphysicae des Franz Suarez in ihrer methodischen Eigenart und Fortwirkung”, in: *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben* 1 (1926), p. 525–560; Karl Eschweiler: “Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts”, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens* 1, Münster i W.: Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft 1928; Max Wundt: *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1939, p. 251–325; Ulrich G. Leinsle: *Einführung in die scholastische Theologie*, Paderborn: Schöningh 1995; Paul Richard Blum: *Philosophenphilosophie und Schulphilosophie: Typen des Philosophierens in der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner 1998; Ernst Lewalter: *Spanisch-Jesuitische und Deutsch-Lutherische Metaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Iberisch-Deutschen Kulturbeziehungen und zur Vorgeschichte des Deutschen Idealismus*, Hamburg: Repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1935/1967. See also the Ueberweg series: Jean-Pierre Schobinger et al.: *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, begründet von Friedrich Ueberweg. Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts: Allgemeine Themen, Iberische Halbinsel, Italien*, vol. 1.1 and 1.2, Basel: Schwabe & Co. 1998; Schobinger et al.: *Grundriss der Geschichte ... England*, vol. 3.1 and 3.2, Basel: Schwabe & Co. 1988; Schobinger et al.: *Grundriss der Geschichte ... Frankreich und Niederlande*, vol. 2.1 and 2.2, Basel: Schwabe & Co. 1993; Helmut Holzhey and Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann: *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, begründet von Friedrich Ueberweg. Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts: Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation, Nord- und Ostmitteleuropa*, Basel: Schwabe & Co. 2001. For an evaluation of this series, see Christoph Lüthy: “What To Do With Seventeenth-Century Natural Philosophy?”

Finally, although in my opinion Baroque philosophical culture is valuable not just for historians but also from the systematic point of view, this claim will not be substantiated in an article such as this, which deals primarily with historical considerations.

## I. LABELS

In the seventeenth century, an “alternative” philosophical culture runs parallel to the well-known culture of so-called “modern philosophy,” which is usually “presented as a contest between two philosophies – Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism.”<sup>8</sup> This culture had its own agenda (which was, however, not entirely dissimilar to the agenda of “modern philosophy”), a standard set of assumptions, and its own technical language and methods. Both in the Protestant and Catholic parts of Europe and the Americas, it was at home in universities, seminaries and other institutions of higher learning and it was “the mainstream philosophy of the time.” The roots of this culture lie in the Middle Ages but many new elements had been integrated into it during the Renaissance. This culture reached its peak between 1630 and 1680 and it was still alive in the mid-eighteenth century, in the works of such authors as Luis de Losada (1681–1748). There are probably only two philosophers from this tradition whose names might be occasionally heard outside of the small circle of experts: the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez and the Portuguese Dominican John of St. Thomas (also known as João Poinset). The two are paradigmatic representatives of this culture but by far not the only interesting ones.

Historians of philosophy use various labels to refer to this culture. Some of these labels, such as ‘late medieval,’ ‘Renaissance,’ ‘early modern Aristotelianism/scholasticism,’ are inaccurate, whereas others, such as ‘Second scholastic,’ ‘Counter-Reformation philosophy,’ might carry unwelcome connotations.<sup>9</sup> My suggestion is to call this culture *Baroque scholasticism* and take it to

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A Taxonomic Problem”, *Perspectives on Science* 8 (2000), p. 186–191. The only overview of Baroque philosophy based on detailed *in-depth* topical investigations was published in Czech: Stanislav Sousedík: *Filosofie v českých zemích mezi středověkem a osvícenstvím*, Praha: Vyšehrad, 1997 (a German translation appeared recently: *Philosophie der frühen Neuzeit in den böhmischen Ländern*, Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog 2009). It covers, however, only philosophy in the Czech lands.

<sup>8</sup> See Richard Popkin: *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought*, Leiden – New York: E. J. Brill 1992, p. 90. Although Popkin has shown convincingly the inadequacy of the “two-party view” of seventeenth-century philosophy (rationalism vs. empiricism) by identifying “a third force” (a combination of science, theosophy, and millenarianism) (pp. 91–119), he underestimates the sociological and intellectual importance of seventeenth-century scholasticism, which in fact might be called “the first force.”

<sup>9</sup> For a list of labels in use, see also Marco Forlivesi, “A Man, an Age, a Book,” in: *Rem in se ipsa cernere*. *Saggi sul pensiero di Bartolomeo Mastri (1602–1673)*, ed. Marco Forlivesi, Padova:

be the successor of *Renaissance scholasticism*, both being phases of *Postmedieval scholasticism*.

Let me take up first the inaccurate labels. The main problem with the term 'late medieval scholasticism' is that, in spite of the well-known difficulties in establishing the boundaries of the Middle Ages, it is too far-fetched to call any seventeenth-century philosophers "medieval." And to mean by 'medieval' merely "being inspired by medieval thinking" would not do, for many contemporary thinkers, such as Norman Kretzmann or Peter Geach, would have to be turned into "very late medievals" as well. Some have suggested that the distinguishing feature of medieval philosophers is their concern to "measure their philosophical speculation against the requirements of Christian doctrine."<sup>10</sup> This will, however, turn into medieval figures not just Justin Martyr (mid-second century) and Suárez, who is anyway considered by some to be "the last chapter in the history of medieval philosophy," but even some contemporary thinkers such as Elisabeth Anscombe or Karol Wojtyła. This would not make the term useful.<sup>11</sup>

What about the terms 'early modern' and 'Renaissance'? Historians of philosophy commonly use 'modern' or 'early modern' for philosophers from Descartes onward.<sup>12</sup> According to this usage, the history of philosophy between Antiquity and the Enlightenment is divided into medieval, Renaissance and early modern. This language, however, is at odds with the practice of general historians who mean by 'modern period' the times since the end of the Middle Ages. According to their convention, whatever the end of the Middle

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Il Poligrafo 2006, p. 106–110. Forlivesi himself prefers the label 'Academic philosophy'. This label is appropriate on its own but it does not delimit the period/culture chronologically. It is close in meaning to "scholasticism" and if we adopt it we could speak of 'Renaissance' or 'Baroque Academic philosophy'.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Vincent Spade: "Medieval Philosophy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2005 Edition), ed. Edward Zalta, URL = (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-philosophy/>).

<sup>11</sup> The vagueness of concepts applied to culture and its history is not surprising. Even though cultural periods do have a "distinct physiognomy" (see Paul Oskar Kristeller: *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Columbia University Press 1979, p. 17), there are countless respects in which a thinker of one culture may be compared to a thinker of another culture. What makes Augustine more similar to Aquinas than to Proclus? What makes Suárez more similar to Ockham than to Descartes? One could find countless similarities and dissimilarities and it is futile to search for the single key property.

<sup>12</sup> "The modern period in the history of philosophy is conventionally supposed to begin in the seventeenth century, with the *Novum Organon* (1620) of Sir Francis Bacon (c.1561–1626) and the *Discourse on the Method* (1637) of René Descartes (1596–1650). Bacon and Descartes were not isolated thinkers, and their writings are everywhere influenced by the work of their predecessors and contemporaries. Nevertheless, it is not arbitrary to credit them with initiating modern philosophy, since between them they destroyed the assumptions, the methods, and the language which had been the common property of philosophers since the early Middle Ages." – Roger Scruton: *Modern Philosophy: An Introduction and Survey*, London: Sinclair – Stevenson 1994).

Ages is, the seventeenth century is by no means *early* modern times; rather it overlaps with what art historians call ‘the Renaissance.’ But suppose that we disregard the other conventions and stick to the practice of historians of philosophy. Should we call the scholasticism of the seventeenth century, ‘early modern’ or ‘Renaissance scholasticism’? The latter option has been more common. Frederick Copleston, for instance, deals with Suárez and a few post-Suarezian authors under the heading ‘the Scholasticism of the Renaissance.’<sup>13</sup> The same is true of Charles H. Lohr, who published his bibliography of the Aristotelian commentaries from 1500 to 1650 under the title ‘Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries.’ Yet Renaissance scholasticism is supposed to end with the Renaissance, doesn’t it?<sup>14</sup> Consequently, it is somewhat awkward to say that Rodrigo Arriaga published “a Renaissance scholastic work” (namely the newly revised *Cursus philosophicus*) in 1666, almost fifteen years after Lorenzo Bernini’s *The Ecstasy of St Theresa* (1652) and more than sixty years after Claudio Monteverdi’s *Vespers for the Blessed Virgin* (1610), paradigmatic works of Baroque art. It would have been hard for Renaissance scholastics to flourish in the midst of burgeoning Baroque architecture, sculpture, music, painting, literature, and drama. Moreover, “Renaissance scholastic works,” such as Losada’s three volume *Cursus philosophicus*, were published in the eighteenth century (1724–1735) too. Hence, if we want to use the terminology of art history, we should adopt the term ‘Baroque’ and drop ‘Renaissance.’

But let us go back to the term ‘modern.’ We need to distinguish a culturally-laden and a culturally-neutral meaning of the term. The latter designates a historical period which simply starts at a certain point in time. As mentioned above, there is a discrepancy between what historians in general and what historians of philosophy take as the beginning of modern times but, whatever it is, Descartes and Bacon are modern philosophers. Hence their contemporaneous colleagues, such as Suárez or John of St. Thomas, must also be modern philosophers – in this culturally-neutral sense.

In the culturally-laden sense ‘modern’ designates familiar assumptions, goals, methods, and the terminology that has progressively gained importance

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<sup>13</sup> See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy. Vol. 3: Late Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1953).

<sup>14</sup> According to Kristeller the Renaissance ends by sixteenth hundred (see *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, 18), according to Heinrich Kuhn (“Aristotelianism in the Renaissance,” in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2005 Edition)*, ed. Edward Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2005/entries/aristotelianism-renaissance/>) in 1648, and according to Schmitt (see *Aristotle and the Renaissance*) and Lohr (Charles H. Lohr, “Metaphysics,” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Charles B. Schmitt, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988, p. 537–638) by the middle of the seventeenth century.

in Western history of philosophy. Modern philosophical culture in this sense has a certain “physiognomy” that sets it apart from pre-modern medieval philosophical culture.<sup>15</sup> Suárez and most of the seventeenth century scholastics (*pace* Ferrater Mora as we shall see) do not belong to modern philosophy in this culturally-laden sense of ‘modern.’ For one thing, modern philosophy is epistemology-driven, whereas the *standard* seventeenth century scholasticism is meta-physics-driven. For another, modern philosophy is science-driven, whereas the standard seventeenth century scholasticism is theology-driven. I say “standard” for it is a myth to consider seventeenth century scholasticism a philosophical monolith. There were even self-professed scholastics who combined scholasticism with Cartesianism, such as the French Franciscan Antoine Le Grand (1629–1699), or with Baconism, such as the Spanish Jesuit, working in Rome, Sebastian Izquierdo (1601–1681).<sup>16</sup> Such “modern scholastics” or “semi-modern scholastics” in the culturally-laden sense were perhaps a minority against the background of mainstream scholastic Aristotelians of the Baroque era, but they existed as well.

At this point one could object that ‘scholasticism’ implies Aristotelianism and so there cannot be such a thing as *modern scholasticism* in the culturally-laden sense of ‘modern.’ In other words, the objection would argue that if Le Grand and Izquierdo are moderns, they are no longer scholastics. So let us consider the term ‘scholasticism.’ As in the case of ‘modern,’ one should distinguish various meanings. In a narrow sense, scholasticism is a philosophical method and a system of thought, rooted in Aristotle and Aquinas, with close ties to the

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Kenny, for instance, writes: “The writings of the classical philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe form a continuous and coherent chapter in the history of philosophy. Despite the many differences of doctrine between them, the major philosophers between the time of Descartes and the time of Kant address a broadly similar agenda by broadly similar methods. When Descartes wrote, the Aristotelian tradition had come to the end of the productive development of the Middle Ages; after Kant’s death, European history began to fragment into schools that barely communicated with each other. But in the period between Descartes and Kant the differences between ‘empiricist’ philosophers in Britain and ‘rationalist’ philosophers on the Continent were minor in comparison to their shared presuppositions and goals.” – *The Oxford Illustrated History of Western Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994, p. 107. Kenny is right in claiming that modern philosophy has a certain kind of Gestalt; however, it is a mistake, as we shall see, to say that “when Descartes wrote, the Aristotelian tradition had come to the end of productive development.”

<sup>16</sup> There were also other sorts of scholastics. For instance, the Italian Capuchin Valerian Magni (1586–1661) considered himself an anti-Aristotelian follower of Augustine and Bonaventure, while at the same time he applied modern experimental methods. Magni was the first to publish the discovery of the vacuum – independently of Toricelli; he was also interested in Galileo’s works. See Stanislav Sousedík: *Valerián Magni: Kapitola z kulturních dějin Čech 17. století*, Praha: Vyšehrad 1983; S. Sousedík: *Philosophie de frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 114–139.

Catholic Church of the Latin West.<sup>17</sup> In this historically-laden sense, someone may wish to disqualify Le Grand, Izquierdo, and others from being scholastics, for, in spite of their impeccable Catholic credentials, they were not faithful Aristotelians. There is, however, a broader sense, according to which scholasticism is any professional institutionally-based philosophical culture which is characterized, at least in times of health, by comprehensiveness, team-work, rigor, systematicity, and friendliness to an organized religion.<sup>18</sup> Le Grand, Izquierdo, and many others were clearly scholastics in this broader sense.<sup>19</sup> This means that the scholastic culture taken in its broader sense should not be called *Aristotelianism*, because this downplays the significant role of Plato, and later of Descartes and Bacon, for some philosophers *within* this culture. It is true that Aristotle plays *by far* the greatest role for these philosophers, but to be an Aristotelian requires a more sincere commitment to Aristotle's views than just "taking Aristotle into account."<sup>20</sup>

The meaning and usefulness of the term 'Counter-Reformation philosophy,' has been explored by José Ferrater Mora in "Suárez and the Modern Philosophy."<sup>21</sup> He asks, whether there is such a thing as modern philosophy in opposition to Counter-Reformation philosophy. While there may be differences in stress between the two traditions, such as the attempt to start from scratch vs. rootedness in tradition, or this-worldliness vs. the existential priority of Christian faith, there are also fundamental similarities:

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<sup>17</sup> According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, 'scholasticism' is a word which appeared in English round 1782 and means "a philosophical movement dominant in western Christian civilization from the 9th until 17th century and combining religious dogma with the mystical and intuitional tradition of patristic theology, especially of St. Augustine and later with Aristotelianism." The related noun 'scholastic' appears in 1644, the adjective in 1596. These words came into English from the Latin *doctores scholastici* which, since the ninth century, applied it to those who taught the seven liberal arts or theology. The Latin word comes ultimately from the Greek 'σχολάζειν', which means "to have leisure for something (such as study)".

<sup>18</sup> Timothy B. Noone lists three "overarching traits" of scholastic thinkers: rigorous argumentation (*ratio*), dialogue with Aristotle and other predecessors (*auctoritas*), and the coordination of philosophy with faith (*concordia*) – "Scholasticism", *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, eds. Jorge J. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2003, pp. 55–64.

<sup>19</sup> In the broader sense one may apply the term 'scholasticism' even beyond the context of Western Catholicism to Protestantism (see Willem J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker: *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, Baker Academic 2001) and in fact even to other religious traditions (see José Ignacio Cabezón, *Scholasticism: Cross-Cultural and Comparative Perspectives*, State University of New York Press 1998). Thus we may speak of varieties of scholasticisms, such as Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Byzantine-Orthodox, Buddhist, medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and modern, among others.

<sup>20</sup> For the recent debate concerning this point see Forlivesi: "A Man, an Age, a Book", pp. 102–106.

<sup>21</sup> See José Ferrater Mora: "Suárez and the modern philosophy", in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953), pp. 528–547.



*The interest in philosophy, and in philosophy capable of affording a complete explanation of the world and of the human person in rational terms, is common alike to modern philosophy, to Protestants since Melancthon, and to the so-called Counter-Reformation philosophers.*<sup>22</sup>

Ferrater Mora suggests that “Counter-Reformation philosophers are *to a certain extent* ‘modern’ philosophers” and so their scholasticism is something that belongs to the “modern spirit.” Without explicitly acknowledging this fact, Ferrater Mora continues, we cannot explain why the paradigmatic philosophers of modernity, such as Descartes or Leibniz, take seriously the scholasticism of the time, and why only a few years after the antischolastic flames of the Reformation the scholasticism à la Suárez became unprecedentedly popular all over Europe, including the Protestant countries:

*[T]he outstanding importance of Suárez was really due to the fact that he was the first to erect a systematic body of consistent metaphysics at a time when people seemed to want something more than a series of Aristotelian commentaries, or than a rhetorical philosophy like Peter Ramus’s, or even than a vague skeptical philosophy.*<sup>23</sup>

Now it cannot be denied that Suárez, John of St. Thomas and others qualify as ‘Counter-Reformation philosophers.’ Nevertheless, this term gives an impression that these thinkers *reacted* against the Reformation. And although it is true that they wrote occasional polemical works against one aspect of the Reformation or another, their main *philosophical* works, such as Suárez’s *Metaphysical Disputations*, have nothing to do with the Reformation; in fact most of these works were equally regarded in both Protestant and Catholic countries. Furthermore, the term ‘Counter-Reformation philosophy’ undermines the very thesis Ferrater Mora himself defends, namely that the philosophy of Suárez and the likes is *almost* as modern as the philosophy of Descartes and the likes. (I disagree here with Ferrater Mora, so I am not worried about this point, but Ferrater Mora should have been.)

Finally, we come to the term ‘Second scholastic.’ This term was proposed by the Italian confrere of Suárez, Carlo Giacon.<sup>24</sup> The term originally seems to presuppose the Thomistic picture, according to which the history of scholasticism can be divided into the *First scholastic* (the Golden Age) in the thirteenth century, reaching its apex in Aquinas and starting its decline in Scotus and

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<sup>22</sup> Ferrater Mora: “Suárez and the modern philosophy”, p. 531.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> See Carlo Giacon, *La seconda scolastica*, Milan: Fratelli Bocca 1946. This three-volume pioneer work has been recently republished (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore 2001).

Ockham, and the *Second scholastic* (the Silver Age) in the sixteenth century, reaching its apex in Suárez (counted a fellow Thomist for the purposes) and starting its decline under the influence of Descartes and Bacon.<sup>25</sup> I am somewhat skeptical about this picture, for scholasticism seems to be a multifaceted continuous movement with various peaks and dips for various “schools” and regions. A Thomistic decline may coincide with a Nominalistic revival, or vice versa. A decline in one country may coincide with a revival in another. On the other hand, the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century does seem to be a significant blow to the thriving scholastic culture, and mid-sixteenth century Spain does seem to be the beginning of the spectacular scholastic revival (lasting, as I would say, at least until the 1680s). Thus, although I do not share the common preference for Aquinas over other scholastic authors, the intuitions about the Golden and Silver Ages might prove to be roughly correct in the end. If we avoid a priori Thomistic criteria of evaluation, the term ‘Second scholastic’ may be a good term for the entire period of postmedieval scholasticism (hence its meaning is broader than ‘Baroque scholasticism’).<sup>26</sup>

At this point an objection might be raised that I merely indulge in tedious verbalism here. My answer is that labels have power. If something is called ‘middle age’ and lies in between ‘classical age’ and ‘revival age,’ then only a few will spend their time investigating it. Similarly, if something is called ‘Renaissance scholasticism,’ the humanist criteria of evaluation tend to be applied (and if something fails to satisfy such criteria, it is bad for the something). Again, if we label some period ‘late medieval’ and a chapter on it appears in a book with the subtitle ‘From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100–1600,’ we will probably not spend much time to read anything later than Suárez’s *Metaphysical Disputations*. A good and accurate label is needed in order to motivate and facilitate unbiased and thorough research.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> One speaks also of the *Third scholastic* at the turn of the last century. By far, the Third scholastic does not reach the qualities of the Second, let alone the First scholastic. However, besides many insignificant authors of the Third scholastic, there are also some that stand out, such as Joannes Josephus Urráburu: *Institutiones philosophicae*, 8 vols., Vallisoleti 1908, and Josephus Gredt: *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*: 13. ed. *recognita et aucta ab Eucharius Zenzen*, 2 vols., Barcelona: Herder 1899/1961.

<sup>26</sup> The complexity of the development of scholasticism from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century is shown by Forlivesi: “A Man, an Age, a Book”, pp. 48–98. Forlivesi rejects the term ‘Second scholastic’ for similar reasons as I do.

<sup>27</sup> See also Lüthy, “What To Do With Seventeenth-Century Natural Philosophy?” Forlivesi (“A Man, an Age, a Book”, p. 48–98) offers the best synthesis and evaluation of what has been reached in this field so far. Standard historians of philosophy, however, such as Kenny (see *Oxford Illustrated History*), persist in dividing the history of Western philosophy between Socrates and Kant into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern; hence the Renaissance and Baroque scholasticism are left out from this division. Only a few historians do not neglect this period when taking up a study

## II. EMERGENCE

It is not uncommon to speak of Renaissance scholasticism as a philosophical movement coinciding with what is generally called Renaissance art. Why is it then that almost nobody speaks of Baroque scholasticism during the time in which Baroque art flourished?<sup>28</sup> There are at least three reasons. First, the term has bad connotations. As Merriam-Webster puts it, the Baroque is “a style characterized by grotesqueness, extravagance, complexity, or flamboyance.” Hence those who are sympathetic to authors such as Suárez or John of St. Thomas out of respect do not call them “Baroque.” Second, it is generally assumed that scholasticism died with Suárez so that, properly speaking, there is no scholastic philosophy after him – the Baroque era has art but no philosophy. Third, the few who do acknowledge the existence of the scholastic tradition in the Baroque era assume that it had no “distinct physiognomy” – scholasticism lived in the Baroque but only in the thoughtlessly conserved facade inherited from a glorious past.

This article does not address these three reasons in general, for such task would have been too large. It simply aims to indicate that (1) what seems to be “extravagant complexity” is rather an admirable accomplishment required by the difficulty of the problems involved, (2) there is nothing wrong in being ‘Baroque’ (similarly as in art we do not take this term to be derogatory any more), and (3) scholasticism after Suárez has features that justify distinguishing the Renaissance and Baroque phases of postmedieval scholasticism.

I discuss the differences between Renaissance and Baroque scholasticisms in the next section. Let me now turn to some similarities between them.

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of the history of a particular problem: Wilhelm Risse: *Die Logik der Neuzeit, vol II. (1640–1780)*, Stuttgart – Bad Cannstadt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag 1970, and Jennifer E. Ashworth: *Language and Logic in the Postmedieval Period*, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company 1974, in the history of logic; Edward Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of space and vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981, in the history of the notions of space and the vacuum; Theo Kobusch: *Sein und Sprache. Historische Grundlegung einer Ontologie der Sprache*, Leiden: Brill 1987, in the history of the ontology of language; Leen Spruit: *Species intelligibilis, vol. 2 (Renaissance Controversies, Later Scholasticism, and the Elimination of the Intelligible Species in Modern Philosophy)*, Leiden – New York – Köln: E. J. Brill 1995, in the history of the notion of *species intelligibilis*. For the comprehensive bibliography of the relevant literature, see Forlivesi (“A Man, an Age, a Book”, pp. 29–40). For bio-bibliographical information on hundreds of Renaissance and Baroque scholastic authors, see *Scholasticon*, ed. Jacob Schmutz, URL = [www.scholasticon.fr](http://www.scholasticon.fr).

<sup>28</sup> In English I have noticed the term ‘Baroque scholasticism’ only in Gerald McCool, “The Christian Wisdom Tradition and Enlightenment Reason”, in: *Examining the Catholic Intellectual Tradition*, eds. Anthony J. Cernera and Oliver J. Morgan, Fairfield: Sacred Heart University Press 2000. As far as I know the term was first coined by Eschweiler (“Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik”, p. 307). Forlivesi (“A Man, an Age, a Book”, p. 112–114) also seems to be sympathetic to it, although he rather uses the term ‘Academic philosophy’.

A major transformation of the scholastic tradition occurred in the Renaissance, so that both Renaissance and Baroque scholasticisms resemble each other more than they resemble medieval scholasticism.

In a very simplified way, one could argue that the Renaissance revival of scholasticism was initiated by Dominicans and transformed into the Baroque by Jesuits, with the addition of the strong voice of Franciscans later on. Dominicans were committed to Aquinas, Jesuits had nominalistic and empiricist tendencies, and Franciscans were committed to Scotus.

The Dominican initiators of the Renaissance revival of scholasticism were first French and Italian, then German and Hispanic. The latter played the major role in the formation of Baroque scholasticism.<sup>29</sup> This was quite opportune, for Spain was in its Golden Age and its cultural and political power spread from Bohemia to Peru. Spanish culture became relatively isolated from the “disturbing” influence of anti-Christian humanism, Reformation, and skepticism, and this isolation, together with good economic conditions and the commitment of both the elite and ordinary people to Catholicism created an excellent niche for scholastic philosophy.<sup>30</sup> The important figure in the formation of Renaissance scholasticism in Spain was Francisco de Vitoria (1492–1546), a charismatic teacher, deeply influential in spite of the fact that he published very little during his lifetime.<sup>31</sup> Vitoria studied at the University of Paris, which was predominantly nominalist. He creatively enriched his Thomistic synthesis with elements of nominalism and humanism without compromising the fundamental Thomistic tenets. Today he is known primarily for his landmark work on the ethics of war, but the case could be made that his circle also prepared the way for modern economics.<sup>32</sup> Vitoria had several outstanding Dominican students and

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<sup>29</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me the importance of non-Hispanic initiators of the Dominican revival of Thomism, such as Hervaeus Natalis (1260–1323), Johannes Capreus (d. 1444), and Peter Crockaert (1465–1514) in France, Dominicus de Flandria (ca. 1425–1479), Chrisostomus Javellus (ca. 1470–1538), and Tommaso de Vio, known as Cajetan (1469–1534), in Italy, and Petrus Nigri (1434–1483) in Germany.

<sup>30</sup> See Jorge J. E. Gracia: *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers 2000, p. 70–87. By ‘anti-Christian humanism’ I mean a certain kind of humanism, not that humanism as such is anti-Christian. As Kristeller has shown, humanism as such is not a philosophical but a cultural movement oriented toward the study of literature, languages, moral thought, and oratory, inspired by the models provided by the Ancients (See Paul Oskar Kristeller: *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains, A revised and enlarged edition of "The Classics and Renaissance Thought"*, New York: Harper and Brothers 1955/1961).

<sup>31</sup> See Gregory M. Reichberg: “*De Indis and De Iure belli relectiones* (1557): Philosophy Meets War”, in: *The Classics of Western Philosophy*, eds. Jorge J. E. Gracia, Gregory M. Reichberg and Bernard N. Schumacher, Malden, MA: Blackwell 2003, pp. 197–203.

<sup>32</sup> See Murray N. Rothbard, “New Light on the Prehistory of the Austrian School”, in: *The Foundations of Modern Austrian Economics*, ed. Edwin Dolan, Kansas City: Sheed and Ward 1976.

colleagues that spread their version of intellectually vigorous scholasticism from their basis in Salamanca to other places within the reach of Hispanic power.<sup>33</sup>

A major event of the sixteenth century, which in fact contributed to its transformation into the Baroque, was the foundation of the Society of Jesus in 1534, by the Basque soldier Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). One of the greatest cultural forces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries quickly developed from his original group of six companions. The Jesuit activity had two priorities: missions and education. By the time of Ignatius's death, there were already seventy-four Jesuit colleges in Europe and the Americas, with growing missionary, scientific and intellectual networks in Asia.<sup>34</sup> Due to the tireless work of the Jesuits, an ingenious blend of medieval systematic thought, humanist scholarship, natural science, mathematics and technology spread from Europe to the Americas and Asia. The Jesuits were by no means the only actors in this drama, but they were clearly one of its main intellectual motors. The two major Jesuit philosophers of the sixteenth century were the Spanish Francisco Toledo (1532–1596) who wrote many commentaries on Aristotle, such as *De anima*, and Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599), dubbed “the Portuguese Aristotle” who wrote innumerable reprinted *Elementary Dialectics (Institutionum Dialecticarum)* (1564) and *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* (1577). The latter is a beautifully done work which includes not just the Greek text, a Latin translation, and detailed exegetical discussions, but also systematic treatments of topics inspired by the Aristotle's work, going, however, well beyond it. In a sense, Fonseca's commentary stands even today as a model of good philosophy done historically.<sup>35</sup> Fonseca also supervised the writing and the publication of the *Coimbra Commentaries on Aristotle* (five quarto volumes first published

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<sup>33</sup> For instance: Domingo de Soto (1494–1560) advanced the Thomistic synthesis by commenting on several works that Aquinas did not (*Summulae* of Peter of Spain, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Aristotle's *Categories*). In his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, Soto anticipated Galileo's discovery of the uniform acceleration of material objects. Domingo Bañez (1528–1604), known today mainly for his involvement in the controversy over grace and freedom, published some outstanding commentaries on Aquinas's *Summa*. Diego Más (1553–1608) composed a systematic work in metaphysics ten years before that of Suárez. It is not as comprehensive and influential as Suárez's *Metaphysical Disputations*, but strictly speaking it is Más who could be credited with publishing “the first large treatise on metaphysics composed in the West that is not a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.” The list of brilliant Spanish Dominicans could go on.

<sup>34</sup> Among other things, the Jesuits were the founders of Chinese–Western comparative philosophy. Prosper Intorcetta (1625–1696) and his team translated the classical works attributed to Confucius into Latin in 1687, while Martino Martini (1614–1661) translated Suárez's *Metaphysical Disputations* into Chinese (the translation remains unpublished). Various studies of Chinese philosophy were published, for instance, by François Noël (1651–1729). See Josef Kolmaš: “François Noël (Franciscus Natalis): Philosophica Sinica”, in: *Fragmenta Ioanna Collecta* 8, 2008, pp. 41–70.

<sup>35</sup> See Jorge J. E. Gracia: *Philosophy and Its History: Issues in Philosophical Historiography*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press 1992.

between 1591 and 1606). The Jesuits were influential not only due to a number of great personalities, but institutionally as well: in 1599, they published *The Official Plan for Jesuit Education (Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Iesu)* which was a product of eighteen years of labor, debates and experimentation. This plan gave an institutionally-codified position to philosophy as an autonomous discipline for the first time since antiquity.

The Scotistic school of the Franciscans underwent a great revival later, since the beginning of the seventeenth century. The landmark event for them was the first splendid edition of Scotus's *Opera omnia* in 1639. The first students of Scotus were heterogeneously-minded thinkers: some tried to follow Scotus strictly, others, such as the French Franciscus Mayronis (d. 1325) or the Italian Nicholas Bonetus (d. 1344), only loosely. The Scotistic school in the narrower sense of involving an agreement on some fundamental doctrinal and methodological points emerges only during the fifteenth century. The two peaks of Scotism come round 1500 (e.g. Antonio Trombetta, d. 1517) and then in 1650. With a few exceptions, all major Scotists were members of the Franciscan Order, in particular the Conventuals, which was the parent stem founded by St. Francis in 1209, and the Observants, constituted in 1517. The Capuchins, constituted in 1619, were not very active as scholars and did not adopt Scotus, but Bonaventure, as their Master. The influence of Scotism, however, extends far beyond the Franciscan family, and some argue that it is the dominant force in seventeenth-century scholasticism.<sup>36</sup>

For the most part, Baroque scholasticism had a Catholic and Hispanic character. Nevertheless, in German Protestant countries there was a revival of scholasticism too, starting with the work of Cornelius Martini (1568–1621) in Lutheran universities and Clemens Timpler (1567/8–1624) in Reformed institutions. Cornelius Martini published his *Metaphysica commentatio* in 1605, Clemens Timpler his *Metaphysicae systema methodicum* in 1604. It seems that Baroque Protestant scholasticism emerged independently of Suárez, since the *Metaphysical Disputations* became known in Germany only in the Mainz edition (1600). Timpler explicitly points out<sup>37</sup> that he could take Suárez into account only too late in writing his book.

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<sup>36</sup> See Jansen: "Zur Philosophie der Scotisten"; Grajewski: "John Ponce"; and Felix Bak: "Scoti schola numerosior omnibus aliis simul sumptibus", in: *Franciscan studies* 16 (1956): 144–165. See also Jacob Schmutz: "L'héritage des Subtils, Cartographie du scotisme de l'âge classique", in: *Les Études Philosophiques* (2002), pp. 51–81. The influence of Scotism on Descartes was noticed by Roger Ariew: *Descartes and the Last Scholastics*, Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press 1999, pp. 39–57. It is, however, dubious that there was any direct Scotistic influence on Descartes. Scotistic ideas influenced non-scholastic authors indirectly via the Jesuits, see e.g. David Clemen-son, *Descartes' Theory of Ideas*, Continuum 2007, 7–14.

<sup>37</sup> C. Martini also published independently of Timpler. This suggests an interesting question: What brought about the remarkable interest in systematic metaphysics in three confessional groups

As pointed out earlier, Baroque scholasticism recognized the autonomy of philosophy, but it was predominantly “theology-driven.” This means that it still saw theology as the discipline of the highest authority and the object of the final ambition for the most talented. Hence, even though philosophical *arguments* were never compromised by theological intrusions, the selection of philosophical problems was motivated primarily by their applications in theology. Beside this theological scholasticism, there was also scholasticism driven by mathematics, science, and technology, especially in Jesuit Colleges, but this type of scholasticism is more practical than speculative.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, for a long time, the “standard” theologically oriented scholastics were biased against their scientific colleagues – the work of the latter was considered unscientific. Mathematics was looked down upon in that it did not involve syllogisms but “imagination” and only syllogisms were believed to constitute real proofs. The crucial person in dispelling some of the bias against mathematics, at least among the Jesuits, was the German Christopher Clavius (1538–1612), called “the Euclid of his Century.”<sup>39</sup> For many years, the mathematical and conceptual-theological tradition within the Jesuit order lived side by side, sometimes without much interaction.<sup>40</sup> In the latter part of the seventeenth century some Jesuits, such as Giovanni Battista Tolomei (1653–1726), who was probably inspired by Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606–1682), began to apply mathematical methods to philosophical and theological problems.<sup>41</sup>

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at around the same time? The emergence of Protestant scholasticism independently from Suárez is defended by Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik*, against Eschweiler, “Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik”. See also Lewalter: *Spanisch-Jesuitische und Deutsch-Lutherische Metaphysik*.

<sup>38</sup> The Jesuits made many significant contributions to astronomic observation, instrument construction, measurement, calendar theory, timekeeping, calculation, geography, mathematics, linguistics, and so on. In general, however, the Jesuits did not do research in medicine and biology, although some other scholastic authors did. An instance is Joannes Marcus Marci (1595–1667), one of the most important Catholic intellectuals in seventeenth-century Bohemia. Marci died as a Jesuit but he spent his life as a married layman. After 1620 he became a professor of medicine in Prague. Apart from medicine and biology, he published works in physics, philosophy and theology. See Ivana Čornejová, Jiří Marek, Eva Procházková, Petr Svobodný, Alena Šolcová, and Stanislav Sousedík: *Jan Marek Marci: Život, dílo, doba*, Lanškroun: Rosa, 1995; and Sousedík: *Philosophie der frühen Neuzeit*, pp. 139–161.

<sup>39</sup> See James M. Lattis: *Between Copernicus and Galileo: Christoph Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Arriaga, for instance, did not make any attempt to introduce mathematical considerations into philosophy, although he edited and published the work of his colleague Gregory of St. Vincent (1584–1667), that Leibniz heavily drew upon in his discovery of calculus. See Karl Eschweiler: “Roderigo de Arriaga S.J.: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Barockscholastik”, in: *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft* 3 (1931), p. 278; Marcus Hellyer: *Catholic Physics: Jesuit Natural Philosophy In Early Modern Germany*, South Bent, IN: University of Notre Dame Press 2005.

<sup>41</sup> See Petr Dvořák and Jacob Schmutz, eds.: *Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz: The Last Scholastic Polymath*, Praha: Filosofia 2008.

### III. DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

Whereas the basic history of Renaissance scholasticism is more or less known, our knowledge of Baroque scholasticism is much more rudimentary.<sup>42</sup> In fact, with some exaggeration, we may say that historians of philosophy (especially Anglo-American) know *nothing* about it. One of the reasons for this fact is that the differences between Renaissance and Baroque scholasticisms are not sufficiently understood. This section highlights some of these differences.

One important feature of Baroque scholasticism has already been noted in the previous section. Baroque scholasticism is a blend of three philosophical schools, namely Jesuit, Scotist, and Thomist. Whereas the sixteenth-century (Renaissance) scholasticism was characterized by Dominican and Jesuit exegesis of Aristotle, the seventeenth century is dominated by the more progressive and diverse schools of the Jesuits and the Scotists.<sup>43</sup>

A second feature of Baroque scholasticism is a great concern for systematic thought.<sup>44</sup> The passion for systematics and complexity may be clearly seen in Baroque music and architecture. Although Copleston assumes the standard view of “Renaissance” scholasticism being dead by mid-seventeenth century, he notes some changes in this respect around the time of Suárez:

*Both Dominicans and Jesuits looked on St. Thomas as their Doctor. Aristotle was still regarded as ‘the Philosopher’; and we have seen that Renaissance Scholastics continued to publish commentaries on his works. At the same time there was gradually effected a separation of philosophy from theology, more systematic and methodic than that which had been generally obtained in the medieval Schools. ... We find, then, the gradual substitution of philosophical courses for commentaries on Aristotle [emphasis mine].<sup>45</sup>*

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<sup>42</sup> See Marcial Solana: *Historia de la Filosofía Española*, vols. 1–3, Madrid: Real Academia de ciencias exactas 1941.

<sup>43</sup> True, the Thomists continued to produce solid works and there were other religious orders with their contributions, but these are, at least from the sociological point of view, not very influential (pace the widespread misconception, such as Nuchelmans’s: “Thomism is undoubtedly the most influential school of thought in late-scholastic philosophy”, see Gabriel Nuchelmans: *Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition*, Oxford – New York: North Holland Publishing Company 1980, p 7). Beside Poinsot and Araújo, the most important Baroque Thomistic authors were the French Dominican Antoine Goudin (1639–1695), the Austrian Benedictine Ludwig Babenstuber (1660–1726), and the Carmelites in Alcalá (*Complutum*) and Salamanca who published a complete philosophical and theological cursus between 1608–1704. See Jansen: “Zur Phenomenologie der Philosophie”, and Pereira and Fastiggi: *The Mystical Theology*.

<sup>44</sup> See Pereira: Suárez.

<sup>45</sup> Copleston: *A History of philosophy*, p. 344.



This leads to a third feature, namely a much looser attitude toward Aristotle (and thus Aquinas). Suárez routinely complains about how disorganized the corpus Aristotelicum is; others, such as Caramuel even cease to be soi-disant Aristotelians. We may observe progressively freer attitudes toward the philosophical authority of Aristotle, Aquinas or Scotus.

The fourth feature concerns the increasing preoccupation of Baroque scholastics with the intra-mental “world.” Baroque authors describe the world with the sharpened awareness that the responsible description and explanation of it needs to take into account the act of describing and explaining itself, that the world is not simply “mirrored” by our minds. They carry out what might be called “epistemic” or “cognitive ontology” which constantly switches back and forth between the epistemic and ontic viewpoints. Unlike the modern authors such as Descartes or Locke this does not, generally speaking, compromise their metaphysical and epistemological realism but they all share intense interest in the “first-person” perspective. This can be documented, for instance, by their passionate discussions about beings of reason.<sup>46</sup>

The last feature has to do with individualism vs. community attitudes.<sup>47</sup> Modern non-scholastic philosophers develop their views with little regard for what the larger philosophical community thought and wrote; their argumentation took into account views of only a handful of authors. Also, their treatises often take up particular issues without intending to develop a comprehensive, all-embracing philosophical system. And even if they do intend to develop such a system, its drift may be original but it often lacks precision. In contrast, scholastic philosophers (both in the Renaissance and the Baroque) took into account a large number of works, arguments, and positions; their aim was usually to classify and present all possible answers to a question before answering it in their own way. Moreover, they shared terminology, agenda, and training and this enabled them to reach the level of detail in their discussions which is unparalleled in non-scholastic philosophy at the time. Scholastics, in contrast to modern individualists, looked at themselves as workers in the large network. But there is a difference between Renaissance and Baroque scholastics: In the Renaissance the rule was not to name living adversaries and most authors shied away from originality. In the Baroque, individual personalities came much more clearly to the fore. Baroque authors engaged in extensive

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<sup>46</sup> See Forlivesi: *ibid.* p. 113; Daniel D. Novotný: “Prolegomena to a Study of Beings of Reason in Postsuarezian Scholasticism, 1600–1650”, in: *Studia Neoaristotelica* 3 (2006), pp. 117–141; Daniel D. Novotný: “Forty–Two Years after Suárez: Matri and Belluto’s Development of the “Classical” Theory of Entia Rationis”, in: *Quaestio: The Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 8 (2008).

<sup>47</sup> See Blum: *Philosophenphilosophie und Schulphilosophie*.

polemics with each other and in spite of “obligatory” references to some past philosophers (e.g., Aquinas and Scotus), they seem progressively less concerned with history and hermeneutics – this is true especially of the Jesuits. It was the current status of the debate that most concerned them. In many respects Baroque culture resembles contemporary “English philosophy” as described by Scruton:

*Let us say merely that contemporary English philosophy is modern in the true sense of the word ... It attempts to build on past results and, where they are inadequate, to supersede them. Hence English philosophy pays scrupulous attention to arguments, the validity of which it is constantly assessing; it is like science, a collective endeavor, recognizing and absorbing the contributions of many different workers in the field; its problems and solutions too are collective, emerging often ‘by an invisible hand’ from the process of debate and scholarship.<sup>48</sup>*

This is not to deny that there are dissimilarities between the two cultures as well:

*Modern philosophers are not system-builders in general: or, at least, their systems are peculiarly bare and unconsoling ... Since the turn of the century, philosophical problems, and arguments have usually been introduced through articles, often devoted to some minute work of logical analysis, and sparking debates which to an outsider may seem extremely arid and in any case pointless when set beside the aching questions of the human spirit. Learning to take an insider’s view of the debates, and to discover that they are not arid at all but, on the contrary, addressed to the most important human questions, is an exciting intellectual adventure. But it is hard work, and nothing can be learned without the patient study of difficult texts. The only mercy is that – with few exceptions – the greatest works of modern philosophy are short.<sup>49</sup>*

Unlike contemporary Anglo-American philosophers, Baroque scholastics were system-builders par excellence. Every Baroque philosopher aspired to write a complete *cursus*, comprehending “all of philosophy.” No one was considered an accomplished philosopher without having a comprehensive philosophical system, going from logic through natural philosophy to metaphysics and ethics. There was no division of labor within philosophy. Hence, “hot”

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<sup>48</sup> Scruton: *Modern Philosophy*, p. 1. Interestingly, Scruton’s description of contemporary “English” (read: analytic) philosophy fits better Baroque scholastics than early modern non-scholastic philosophers – the late descendants of the modernist *conquistadores* become more similar to the extinguished tribe than they are to their glorious forefathers. Contemporary analytic metaphysics, so dissimilar to early modern epistemology-driven philosophy, would be another common denominator of “English philosophy” and Baroque scholasticism.

<sup>49</sup> Scruton: *Modern Philosophy*, pp. 2–3.

philosophical problems and arguments were discussed through various editions of huge volumes. Within these mammoth works, dozens of parallel discussions were going on. This means, sadly for us, that there is no mercy in Baroque scholasticism; none of their major works is short.

#### IV. – WHY TO STUDY BAROQUE SCHOLASTICISM?

Contemporary Anglo-American historians of philosophy either completely overlook scholastic philosophy of the Baroque or their description of it is quite inadequate. Let me justify this claim with the example of three major synthetic works that have attempted to cover seventeenth-century scholastics: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, and *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*.<sup>50</sup> Each of these otherwise outstanding works fails completely when it comes to Baroque scholasticism. The faults of these works are not by commission but by omission. When something is said, it is usually correct but it is almost nothing. These works do not relate basic facts of seventeenth-century scholasticism; they show no knowledge about major Jesuit or Scotistic philosophers of the time; and they do not gather a proper bibliography in English, let alone in other languages. At the deepest level the problem with the current state of Anglo-American knowledge of Baroque scholasticism is not just ignorance of elementary facts but the second-order ignorance of its own ignorance, which is not even aware of the lack of knowledge in this area. Perhaps, this is a phenomenon of Everybody's Land = Nobody's Land: the Renaissance and later medieval scholars take the seventeenth century as too late and seventeenth-century scholars focus primarily on nonscholastic authors.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg, and Eleonore Stump: *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100–1600*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982/1988; Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, and Jill Krayer, eds.: *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988/1991; Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998/2003.

<sup>51</sup> To be more specific in my criticism of the standard historiography let me mention, for instance, *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. The book is to be praised for superb articles on non-scholastic philosophy and for not entirely ignoring the scholastic mainstream. Suárez even made it to the list of canonical authors worthy of having the titles of their works abbreviated (pp. xv–xvii). Apart from Suárez, however, no major post-Suarezian scholastic philosopher is discussed. There is a list of primary literature (pp. 1472–1586), which includes, besides Suárez: Collegium Complutense (without indicating whether Carmelites or Dominicans are meant – they were two), Collegium Conimbricense, Punch (without mentioning his main rival Mastri, the *princeps scotistarum*), John of St. Thomas, Rubio, Śmiglecki, and Vázquez. The names of Toledo and Fonseca also appear, although the two lived and died in the sixteenth century. Equally, if not more, important Jesuit thinkers such as Arriaga, Compton Carleton, Hurtado, Izqui-

Why so few seventeenth-century scholars pay attention to the Baroque philosophy? There are at least two reasons. First is that research on the Baroque is difficult. Any “English-speaking student bold enough” to study it needs to face (1) a linguistic barrier, namely humanistic Latin, (2) the lack of helpful secondary literature, (3) a general skepticism as to the value of what he or she is doing, and (4) the enormous complexity and length of Baroque scholastic works.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Baroque scholastic works are not just long and highly complex taken individually, but they are also linked to each other by innumerable references, sometimes explicit but mostly implicit. Scholastic authors freely borrowed from each other and what seems to be an original argument might be in fact just a currently fashionable *topos*. Most controversies of the time have to do with disagreements about the analysis of some traditional slogan which they all accept as a platitude. Hence, the real disagreements of Baroque authors are often hidden to the eye of superficial readers and the only adequate way to understand them is through a patient and in-depth comparative research.

A second reason why Baroque scholasticism gets so little attention has to do with its *sui generis* philosophical culture and the need to approach it without bias and a priori evaluations in terms of standards foreign to it. The bias toward the Baroque comes from at least three sources. The first is inherited from the fathers of modern philosophy and their superficial, outsider knowledge of the scholastic culture of their time.<sup>53</sup> Descartes, for example, disliked scholastic authors, such as Toletus, Rubio, and the Coimbrans (AT III, 185) that he learned from in La Flèche. On the other hand, he praised Eustache de

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erdo, and Oviedo, among others, do not leave a trace. Most appalling is the absence of Caramuel. And not only is the primary bibliography deficient, but even the secondary one. Thus, for instance, even the must-read books of Ignacio Angelelli: *Studies on Gottlob Frege and Traditional Philosophy*, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel 1967, and Larry Hickman: *Modern Theories of Higher Level Predicates: Second Intentions in the Neuzeit*, München: Philosophia Verlag, 1980) in English and Kobusch's *Sein und Sprache* and Blum's *Philosophenphilosophie und Schulphilosophie* in German are not listed, let alone several important articles and studies in Spanish. The translations of John of St. Thomas into English are also ignored (even though there is a French translation in the list). Even more serious complaints could be raised about other books in the Cambridge History series. Indeed, I am not aware of a synthetic history of seventeenth-century scholasticism in English that would go substantially beyond Copleston's *A History of Philosophy*. The recent German scholarship is in far better condition, and even though I am only imperfectly acquainted with French, Italian and Spanish scholarship, it is certainly much better informed. For similar criticisms see Lüthy: “What To Do With Seventeenth-Century Natural Philosophy?”, pp. 178–186.

<sup>52</sup> See Stone: “Aristotelianism and Scholasticism”, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> As Stone observes, “For the most part, contemporary historians of philosophy tend to imitate the disparaging comments that ‘modern’ philosophers ... directed at their scholastic teachers” – “Aristotelianism and Scholasticism”, p. 8.

Saint Paul (1573–1640). Anybody, who has ever looked into the works of the four mentioned authors, will agree with Dennis Des Chene:

*Eustacbius's Summa quadripartita, which Descartes called "the best book ever written on this matter," is, to put it bluntly, not. It is a kind of Cliff's Notes condensation, mainly of the Coimbrans, from whom Eustacbius sometimes takes whole sentences verbatim. It is extremely sparing in its citations of authorities ..., it often gives no arguments for its conclusions, and it rarely considers alternatives or objections. I am inclined to think that Descartes, who had no patience for details, little regard for authority, and an aversion to dialectic, liked it because it was unequivocal, comprehensive, and short.*<sup>54</sup>

Modern nonscholastic philosophers were for the most part *dilettantes*, whereas scholastic philosophers were *professionals*. Their perspectives differ and hence we should not take the judgment of Descartes and Locke as the last word.<sup>55</sup> It is, of course, an interesting question why in the end the moderns won over the scholastics but we should not presume that this has anything to do with winning a fair philosophical dispute.<sup>56</sup>

The second source of prejudice against Baroque scholasticism comes from the Thomistic historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth century. John of St. Thomas was considered to be the best Thomistic author and Suárez the

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<sup>54</sup> Dennis Des Chene: *Physiologia: natural philosophy in late Aristotelian and Cartesian thought*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1996), p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Today, the differences between insiders and informed outsiders are no less apparent than they were in the time of Descartes. For instance, the BBC's program *In Our Time* announced the results of a popular poll of "the greatest philosopher" in July 2005. The vote was preceded by weeks of presentations by professional scholars on their favorite philosopher, thus the vote was made by an informed public. The results were surprising even to the moderator himself (Melvyn Bragg): Marx (27.93%), Hume (12.67%), Wittgenstein (6.80%), Nietzsche (6.49%), Plato (5.65%), Kant (5.61%), Aquinas (4.83%), Socrates (4.82%), Aristotle (4.52%), and Popper (4.20%). Such results could be hardly expected from contemporary professional philosophers. John R. Shook has half-seriously tried to compile an ordered list, which comes much closer to what I would expect the results to be among today's Anglo-American professionals (except for Buddha): Plato, Kant, Aristotle, Hegel, Leibniz, Aquinas, Hume, Buddha, Descartes, and Nietzsche. URL = <http://www.pragmatism.org/shook/greatest.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> The moderns won not because they were smarter than the scholastics (they were not), nor because they had science (the scholastics had it too), nor because they were non-Christians (except for Hume and Spinoza they were mostly Christians too). In my opinion, the reasons for their victory have to do with their status of being laymen living in a secular environment, existentially independent from ecclesiastic institutions. Also, their works are much shorter, written in a personal style of national languages. It was also unfortunate that Baroque authors bought into a false cosmology. There were authors, such as Arriaga, who favored heliocentrism, but his view was seen as "extreme" and exceptional. See Sousedik: *Philosophie de frühen Neuzeit*, p. 84 (*Filosofie v českých zemích*, p. 103), and Edward Grant, "Were there Significant Differences between Medieval and Early Modern Scholastic Natural Philosophy?", in: *Noûs* 18 (1984): 5–14. When the scholastics lost the cosmology battle, the impression was that all philosophy that these people did was wrong.

best non-Thomistic author. Other Baroque authors were believed to be inferior and sometimes even “decadent.” Hence they did not deserve to be carefully studied. Some historians went even further and stressed the gap between the medieval genius (Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham) and the second-rate and derivative nature of the Renaissance and Baroque scholastics.<sup>57</sup>

The third source of prejudice comes from experts on Renaissance philosophy (both scholastic and non-scholastic). For instance, Charles H. Lohr, a confere of Suárez and a great pioneer of Renaissance Aristotelian research says:

*Cursus philosophicus ... was meant to be an answer to the syncretism, skepticism and new encyclopedism which threatened the scholastic view of the world. ... An increasing narrowness was consequently a second characteristic of the cursus. Whereas writers like Pereira and Suárez had still attempted to master the entire tradition, the philosophy professors of post-Tridentine Catholic schools had less and less direct knowledge of Greek and Arabic sources and even a very limited acquaintance with their own medieval Latin authorities.*<sup>58</sup>

Lohr assumes that since “post-Tridentine professors” had less direct knowledge of Greek and Arabic sources, they were “increasingly narrow.” In fact, most of these professors *did not care* for the Greeks and the Arabs. They were interested in issues and arguments, not so much in history as such. Hence, although they are less accomplished as historians of philosophy, this does not mean that they do not make any progress from the systematical, problem-solving, point of view. Lohr continues:

*Because their teaching was directed in each case to the members of a specific religious community, they stressed the importance of its uniformity. Disturbed by the doctrinal confusion which marked the Renaissance period, they tended increasingly to return to the teaching of one of the great thirteenth-century doctors. ... Summaries of scholastic philosophy were composed in Spain by the Jesuits Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza and Francisco de Oviedo, the Dominican John of St. Thomas and the Carmelite college of Alcalá; in France by the Cistercian Eustachius a S. Paulo (who is said to have an influence on Descartes); in Italy by the Jesuit Cosma Alamanni and the Franciscans Bartholomeus Mastrius and Bonaventura Bellutus; and for use in Germany and Eastern Europe by the Jesuit Roderigo de Arriaga.*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Needless to say, fundamentally Thomistic convictions as such do not necessitate biased historiography, they just often lead to it.

<sup>58</sup> Lohr: “Metaphysics”, p. 619.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

It is true that most of the scholastic philosophical literature was directed to a specific religious community, but it would be wrong to think that such literature was “uniform” – not even within a given community.<sup>60</sup> The Baroque period (especially from 1620 until 1680) was marked by great controversies both across and within divides of the philosophical schools. Controversies are mostly recorded in subsequent revisions of various *cursus*, and they are constant and explicit. Also, as already indicated above, Baroque professors did not care that much for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was common practice to enlist Aquinas as an authority, but he could very much look as a Scotus or an Ockham. It should be also pointed out that it is strange to list Eustachius’s little pocket book next to the great works of Matri, Arriaga and others (the list has also important omissions). Eustachius’s work is truly a mere “summary of scholastic philosophy.” Other works on the list, however, are “summaries” only in the sense in which, for instance, David Armstrong’s *Universals and Scientific Realism* is a “summary of analytic metaphysics.”<sup>61</sup>

It would be premature to make a definitive evaluative judgment about the qualities of Baroque scholastic culture. Moreover, there are various aspects which need to be considered. First, creativity: With few exceptions, Baroque scholastics did not try to create completely new systems or come up with quite new perspectives. They were creative in spite of their efforts not to be, but the creativity is not their strongest suit.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the kind of sources that Baroque authors take into account: In general, with the exception of Suárez, they did not try to take too many historical sources into account. Beside a few standard classics (Aristotle, Aquinas, Scotus, and various commentators) they mainly discussed the views of their living colleagues. Thirdly, the diversity of topics: Every author aspired to deal with every standard issue. Within the framework of standard issues, various new sub-topics emerged but relatively rarely completely new topics emerged. The advantage of this approach was that issues were treated with the knowledge of the overall place in a comprehensive

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<sup>60</sup> Also the mere fact that some philosophy is done within a closely-knit community should not taint it. From the antiquity we see that communities bound together by some fundamental convictions may produce outstanding results (e.g., Pythagoras’s sect, Plato’s Academy, Aristotle’s Lyceum).

<sup>61</sup> Lohr further claims that “Suárez stood not so much at the beginning as at the end of a long tradition” (*ibid.*, p. 615). However, if one studies exemplary Baroque works patiently and in depth, one can see quite the contrary. Moreover, not all Baroque scholastic philosophy was *cursus*-writing. Focused studies (today we would say ‘essays’), such as Izquierdo’s *Pharus scienciarum* (1659), which took up the Baconian project of *New organon*, or Caramuel’s *Leptotatos* (1681), which developed the idea of a construction of a new artificial onto-language, were also immersed in this “*cursus*-tradition.”

<sup>62</sup> The sense in which the Renaissance and Baroque scholasticism was and was not creative is well described by Forlivesi, “A Man, an Age, A Book,” 40–48.

philosophical system; the disadvantage was that nobody became a specialist in one or a few issues only. Fourthly, the quality of argumentation: This is the strongest point of Baroque authors. The detail and density of their argumentation is enormous. Their works could be abbreviated and some tangential issues left out, but in general the complexity of their arguments is not due to superficial rhetoric but to the inherent difficulty of the issues they dealt with. The philosophical culture of the Baroque age has certainly limitations but it is also one of the most advanced and sophisticated cultures in the history of philosophy. Its main virtue consists in trying to approach important philosophical issues with detailed methods of rigorous analysis and argumentation, while placing them into the context of a comprehensive theory.<sup>63</sup>

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## SUMMARIUM

### Defensio Scholasticae Barocae

*Franciscus Suárez (1548–1617) communiter fere ad hoc tempus “ultimus Medii Aevi philosophus”, qui praeclarae scholasticae traditioni finem posuerit, esse visus est. Huius tractationis thesis autem est, eum re vera cultum mirum disciplinarum et artium philosophicarum non sane terminavisse, sed magis incepisse. Cultum hunc, qui saeculo decimo septimo duodevicesimique principio florebat, “Scholasticam Barocam” optime appellandum esse arguitur. Deinde quaeritur, qua re de huius cultus investigatione hodierna philosophiae historia lingua Anglica scripta nihil curat, causae quaedam huius negligentiae indicantur, ad maiorem animadversionem Scholasticae Barocae adhortatur.*

## SUMMARY

### In Defense of Baroque Scholasticism

*Until recently Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) has been regarded as the “last medieval philosopher,” representing the end of the philosophically respectful scholastic tradition going back to the Early Middle Ages. In fact, however, Suárez stood at the beginning, rather than at the end, of a distinguished scholastic culture, which should best be labeled “Baroque scholasticism,” and which flourished throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In this paper I offer some ideas on why the study of this philosophical culture has been so far neglected by the mainstream Anglo-American philosophical historiography and argue that more attention should be paid to it.*