

## SOME REMARKS ON PETER OF SPAIN`S THEORY OF *SUPPOSITIO*

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**Abstract** The present paper aims to reconsider our approaches to the *suppositio* theory (in the particular case of Peter of Spain`s *Summaries of logic*) in light of a new hypothesis of the double nature<sup>1</sup> of medieval logic. Starting from the existing points of view, i.e. the theory of *suppositio* as a theory of reference and *suppositio* as a theory of an untranslatable, this paper will examine their underlying commitments to the nature of medieval logic. Such an analysis will entail for the former approach a commitment to a formal nature, while for the latter to a non-formal one. The possibility of a new approach emerges when both natures can be traced in Peter`s theory.

**Keywords** *suppositio*, logic, reference, Peter of Spain, *Summaries of logic*, properties of terms

### 1. Introduction

When we put ourselves in front of the task of rendering a philosophical concept from medieval Latin into a modern language, we may almost always be confronted with a dilemma regarding how to do it: ought we to render it in a manner more familiar and accessible to us contemporaries? or should we rather stay faithful to the text in particular and to the medieval authors in general, rendering it in a manner that is closer to their form and use of the concept?

The general difficulty that this dilemma poses, i.e. of deciding what option is better, can also be felt in the contemporary studies of *suppositio*, the theory about the main property of categorematic terms from *logica modernorum*. Regarding the *suppositio* conceptual apparatus, Dutilh Novaes identifies in the contemporary literature two lines of thought or two approaches: “the historical line” and “the systematic line”.<sup>2</sup> In spite of a difference in method<sup>3</sup> she finds a common trait in

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<sup>1</sup> By the expression “nature of logic” I understand the defining character or aspect of logic.

<sup>2</sup> See Catarina Dutilh Novaes, *Formalizing Medieval Logical Theories*, Vol. 7, Logic, Epistemology and the Unity of Science (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 8. On the one hand, we have “the historical line [which] is primarily concerned with the establishment of reliable

both approaches, that of rendering the *suppositio* theory as a theory of reference.<sup>4</sup> But what she calls the historical line of thinking really seems to present an opposite characteristic, that of rendering the term and concept of *suppositio* through a calque, as an untranslatable. The arguments for this approach are made explicit in Alain de Libera's article in the *Dictionary of untranslatables*<sup>5</sup> and the presence of it can be seen in numerous works before De Libera's intervention.

But, in the case of the *suppositio* theory, the way in which we render a concept is not the result of a mere philological decision, but a philological decision doubled by a philosophical one. This means that at the basis of our own philosophical approach stands a particular conviction about medieval logic. If a clear-cut distinction between the two approaches on the theory of supposition is possible, then we can identify the corresponding commitments on medieval logic. If for the historical line of thinking we have a particular methodology described by dealing with the text in a descriptive, comparative, non-critical manner, plus a choice of rendering the concept of *suppositio* as close as possible to the medieval way of thinking, then this endeavour presupposes a particular commitment to medieval logic, one that considers it to be different in nature from modern logic. Accordingly, if the systematic line of reasoning has a critical point of view that comes from modern logic and philosophy of language, plus a choice of rendering the concept of *suppositio* as reference, then they must commit to the fact that both the medieval logic and the modern logic share a common nature, so that the first one can be studied with the tools of the second one (let us call them the difference and the non-difference thesis.) That being said, further clarifications about the theory of *suppositio* could be made in connection with our approach on medieval logic.

In this paper, I shall try to show that in the particular case of Peter of Spain's theory of *suppositio*, we can identify, on the one hand, a formal aspect of medieval logic, the common trait shared with the modern logic or philosophy of language, and, on the other hand, a non-formal aspect of it, the specific, intuitive

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editions of the original Latin texts, with the identification of historical threads of influence among the different authors, and so forth". On the other hand, we have "the systematic line", in which "philosophers of logic [...] estimate that some of the theories and ideas developed by medieval logicians can be fruitfully applied to current problems of philosophy of logic and language. In order to do so, they take up the task of 'reconstructing' medieval logical systems so that the latter acquire the form to which philosophers and logicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are accustomed."

<sup>3</sup> See *Ibid*, 8–9. The first line of dealing with the theory of *suppositio* has a perspective about medieval logic from within, a non-critical attitude towards it. The second one comes with a perspective from the modern logic and philosophy of language, a critical one, making an assessment from outside of medieval thinking.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Alain de Libera, "Supposition" in *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, ed. Barbara Cassin (Princeton University Press, 2014), 1097–1102.

and particular trait. The identification of this double nature of medieval logic in the theory of *suppositio* is important, because it makes us re-evaluate the two approaches that the contemporaneous exegesis offers. If the historical approach has at its core the difference thesis and the systematic or critical approach has the non-difference thesis, then a third approach may exist, one that must partially include both. If the theory of *suppositio* presents the formal and the intuitive or specific aspects of medieval logic, then maybe we must not rush to consider *suppositio* either a fully untranslatable term, or a term or concept that can be equated with the concept of reference.

The first part of my paper includes a discussion about the possible commitments to medieval logic and their implications concerning the *suppositio* theory. Here I shall consider medieval logic as having three possible natures: formal, non-formal and both formal and non-formal. Of these, I shall test the third nature in the case of Peter of Spain's theory.

The second part will try to show how and to what extent Peter of Spain's theory can be called formal. I shall try to achieve this objective in two ways. On the one hand, by pointing out the fact that Peter's conceptual apparatus can fit in the larger picture, that describes an evolution of the medieval terminology in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries towards formalization. On the other hand, by describing the way in which Peter of Spain defines *suppositio* in *Summule logicales*.

The third part will be concerned with the non-formal aspect of medieval logic. By an etymological analysis on *suppositio* words, by identifying some uses of those before having a logical, grammatical or theological qualification, and by showing some paraphrases regarding the *suppositio* concepts that are found in Peter's work, I shall try to suggest that the medieval logic is expressed in an intuitive and natural manner which compensates its lack of a rigorous formal character.

## 2. The nature of medieval logic

The problem that the theory of *suppositio* in general, and Peter of Spain's theory of *suppositio* in particular have in common starts to emerge when we ask ourselves "What is a theory of *suppositio*?". The answer is not as simple as one might expect. From the beginning, we must mention that if we speak about the theory of *suppositio* in general, there is already a difference between the Oxford and the Parisian<sup>6</sup> tradition. In addition, we find the difference from one author to the other within each tradition, therefore a general answer to the question is hard to give. What we can acknowledge is that the way the concept of *suppositio* is rendered can influence the answer to our question. From what we have seen so far, we have two possible solutions and they seem mutually exclusive:

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<sup>6</sup> See Alain de Libera, "The Oxford and Paris traditions in logic," in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg, E. Stump, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 174–187.

S1. The theory of *suppositio* is a theory of reference, '*suppositio*' is 'reference'.

S2. The theory of *suppositio* is a theory about an untranslatable,<sup>7</sup> '*suppositio*' is 'supposition'.

Both cases have their own shortcomings and ramifications. Some of them are discussed in the current literature,<sup>8</sup> others will be mentioned below. But what is important from my perspective, is that the first one implies choosing to render the concept in question in a form that is more familiar to us than to the medieval scholars, in a form that resembles something that we already know and already have at our disposal today.<sup>9</sup> The second possibility is to render it in a form that is closer to medieval scholars, in a form rather unfamiliar and strange to us, by a linguistic calque. But this negative quality of being strange bears a positive effect. The strange form of the word, through the character of being strange, offers us a hint that invites us or the readers to make an extra effort for the process of understanding to take place. This implies that, in this second way, we assume the existence of a distance between us and the concept that we want to understand, and the possibility to surpass that by making it more familiar to us, by following the hint, the strange aspect of the word. This is acquired by trying to understand the history and the context of that concept, by looking where the wordform is pointing.

The commitment to S1 or S2 entails, in my opinion, a commitment to the non-difference or difference thesis regarding medieval logic. In other words, if we equate the theory of *suppositio* with the theory of reference, we implicitly acknowledge that the nature of medieval logic and the nature of modern logic or philosophy of language is common; if we accept the terminological and conceptual untranslatability, we implicitly acknowledge that the medieval logic is somehow different from our aforementioned disciplines. If we disagree with this kind of reasoning, thinking that we can adopt S1 without the non-difference thesis, or S2 without the difference thesis, then we can be accused of anachronism or ignorance. Anachronism, because to study a medieval concept with a modern conceptual tool

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<sup>7</sup> See Barbara Cassin, ed., *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, vii. As E. Apter via B. Cassin puts it, an untranslatable is a concept that is left in the way it is in its original language, by reason of "instability of meaning and sense-making, the performative dimension of sophistic effects, and the condition of temporality in translation". Probably more appropriate for our case, we can understand the expression of *suppositio* as an untranslatable, a concept that is a specific product of medieval thinking to such an extent, that we can only understand it in Latin with the conceptual apparatus of medieval logicians, hence in their own terms and context.

<sup>8</sup> See Alain de Libera, "Supposition", 1097–1102, and Catarina Dutilh Novaes, *Formalizing Medieval Logical Theories*, 17–30.

<sup>9</sup> When I say 'x refers to y', 'y is the referent of x', 'the relation between x and y is a relation of reference', the auditor understands quite well what I say, and is not necessary to offer him a theory of reference to understand my message.

could be a faulty method, when there is no common nature between the disciplines where those concepts appear. Ignorance, because we must not neglect the new possibilities, offered by our modern disciplines, of answering some old questions when it is legitimate to do so. Thus, if we agree that for the acceptance of one approach we must commit to the corresponding thesis regarding medieval logic, then we must sketch what the nature of medieval logic could be.

Regarding the nature of medieval logic, we can find two positions, supplemented by a third, which synthetically includes the first two.

The first position sustains a non-difference thesis, namely that the nature of medieval and modern logic is formal.<sup>10</sup> In the contemporary studies, we can find a tendency of searching for the formal aspect of medieval logic and so of considering it formal in nature (at least to some extent). From the work of Alfonso Maierù *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica* (1972) to the collective studies reunited in the volume *Formal Approaches and Natural Language in Medieval Logic* (forthcoming), the topic of the formal aspect of medieval logic is a much debated one. Although we cannot say that medieval logic has a formal nature either in the sense of a formal system<sup>11</sup>, or in the sense of a formal logic<sup>12</sup>, I think we can agree that it presents a formal nature, as conceptual rigour. In this broad sense, the character of formal is understood as a tendency of using a specialised language which is partially distinct from the natural one and which avoids conceptual ambiguities. Although we do not have a pure formal language, we have some concepts like categorematic and syncategorematic terms, and the ones that are pertaining to the ontology of grammar, that allow us to talk about a form of a proposition or the structure of a sentence. From this perspective, we can find similarities in principles between terminist logic and the propositional analysis used by analytic philosophy, so that it will seem legitimate to adopt S1.

The second position sustains a difference thesis, a difference in nature between medieval and modern logic. In *A history of formal logic* (1961) Bocheński states that in spite of the similarities between the medieval and contemporary logic

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<sup>10</sup> For the different senses of formal and formalization in logic see Catarina Dutilh Novaes, *Formalizing Medieval Logical Theories*, 215–292, and Catarina Dutilh Novaes, “The different Ways in which Logic is (said to be) Formal”, *History and Philosophy of Logic* 32 (2011): 303–332.

<sup>11</sup> Roy T. Cook, *A dictionary of Philosophical logic* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 124. “FORMAL SYSTEM – A formal system (or calculus, or deductive system, or formal calculus, or logistic system, or syntactic system) is a formal language supplemented with a set of axioms and/or rules of inference specifying which sequences of formulas from the language are to count as derivations”.

<sup>12</sup> Formal logic: W. Marciszewski, *Dictionary of logic as applied in the study of language* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1981), 183. “a theory which investigates the structure of sentences and of deductive inference by a method which abstracts from the content of sentences and deals only with their logical form”.

(after all, he speaks about a formal medieval logic), there is a fundamental difference between the medieval and contemporary formalism. This difference consists of the fact that scholastic logic deals with an ordinary or common language, that of Latin language, while contemporary logicians have developed an artificial language.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the difference in the language leads to differences in the tools used by those two types of logic, and finally to differences between the degrees of formalization. But this remark must be taken with a pinch of salt. Although medieval theories of logic were expressed in Latin, this Latin was not as common and ordinary as we may think. It was the language of universities, of the clergy, of the official institutions, so it was a highly regimented one. Nevertheless, the non-formal aspect of medieval logic offers our theory of *suppositio* a specific character, different from our modern ones, as Bocheński and ultimately De Libera seem to suggest.

The third position, that which synthetically includes the other two, can be found in a negative form in the works of authors like Laurent Cesalli. In his short introduction, *What is medieval logic after all? Towards a scientific use of natural language*, the author talks about two constraints of the medieval logician. On the one hand, we have the formal constraint, the desire of medieval logicians “to have at their disposal a language which would be sufficiently free from ambiguities and other semantic distortions to be suitable for the purpose of demonstrative science”<sup>14</sup>; on the other hand, we are faced with the material constraint, defined by the fact that “the language with which medieval logicians primarily worked was not an ideal, purely formal language but a natural or (semi-natural) one, namely Latin”.<sup>15</sup> The positive version of this position will transform the formal and material constraints of the logicians into formal and material aspects that pertain to the nature of medieval logic. This way, the formal nature of medieval logic will deal with the character of being highly conceptually regimented, sketching clear delimitations between concepts. The material or non-formal nature of medieval logic will have to deal with the intuitive character of the natural or semi-natural language that was being used. By adopting this third position we can avoid the implications of S1 and S2 without fully rejecting them or the corresponding thesis.

If we agree with the last viewpoint on medieval logic in general, then this double nature of logic, formal and non-formal, can be identified in the particular cases. In the following two sections, we shall try to show the extent to which Peter of Spain's theory of *supposition* from *Summule logicales* presents such characteristics.

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<sup>13</sup> See I. M. Bocheński, *A history of formal logic* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), 173.

<sup>14</sup> L. Cesalli, “What is Medieval Logic After All? Towards a Scientific Use of Natural Language” *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 52.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

### 3. The formal aspect of the *suppositio* theory

In this section, we shall try to show how we can identify the first character of medieval logic, that of being formal, in the theory of *suppositio*. For this purpose, we must take into account the origin and the evolution of the *suppositio* theory until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when it reaches a maturity stage in the work of Peter of Spain. That being said, the formal character of the theory in question understood as conceptual rigour can be found, on the one hand, in the conceptual evolution of this theory before the *Summule logicales*, and on the other hand, in the way Peter of Spain deals with the theory itself in his work.

#### 3.1 The evolution of the concept of *suppositio* in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century

Today, the common belief about *logica modernorum*,<sup>16</sup> i.e. 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century “branches of logic invented by medieval thinkers, such as the theory of properties of terms”<sup>17</sup> which cannot be found in the Aristotelian logic, is that it is the specific product of the medieval Latin thinkers. Contrary to Prantl’s thesis, it is not a Latin adaptation of Arabic or Byzantine doctrines.<sup>18</sup>

Within *logica modernorum*, the mature theory of *suppositio*, the theory that describes a particular property of a term within the terminist logic, seems to have been rooted in three medieval disciplines: grammar, logic and theology. As the scholarly literature suggests, we can particularly identify uses of the *suppositio* conceptual apparatus in the early stage of its development. Broadly, most of the work concerning grammar and logic is present in Rijk’s two volume book *Logica modernorum* (1962, 1967), which was updated by the collection of studies edited by Bos, *Medieval Supposition Theory Revised* (2013).

Regarding the grammatical tradition of using the *suppositio* conceptual apparatus, Rijk points out that at Priscian we can find ‘*suppositum*’ with the sense of a grammatical subject of a verb, while ‘*substantia supposita*’ stands for “the acting individual thing”.<sup>19</sup> Peter Helyas (about 1140–1150) preserves the same sense of grammatical subject in the use of *supponere* and *suppositio*<sup>20</sup> so that for medieval scholars, ‘*subiectum*’ and ‘*suppositum*’ will have had the same meaning, i.e. the grammatical subject and the subject-matter of a proposition.<sup>21</sup> But the subject-

<sup>16</sup> For the division of medieval logic see L. M. De Rijk, ed., *Logica modernorum I. A contribution to the history of early terminist logic* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 14–15.

<sup>17</sup> John Marenbon, *The Many Roots of Medieval Logic: The Aristotelian and the Non-Aristotelian Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1.

<sup>18</sup> See L. M. De Rijk, ed., *Logica modernorum I. A contribution to the history of early terminist logic*, 18.

<sup>19</sup> L. M. De Rijk, ed., *Logica modernorum II, Part one. A contribution to the history of early terminist logic* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), 527.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. to put “as grammatical subject”, “the act of putting as grammatical subject”.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

matter of propositions will have soon come to be designated by *substantia*, which in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in grammarian's tradition had some ontological implications, since *substantia* or *existentia* designated the individual thing. This way, the commentaries on Priscian will use the expression *supponere* as an equivalent for the expression *to signify substance* (individual) or *to signify substance with quality* (individual and universal).<sup>22</sup> But the minor ontological implications are evaluated at another level in Sten Ebbesen's works.<sup>23</sup> While for Rijk in grammar tradition *suppositio* is an intra-propositional property, for Ebbesen it is something different, "the bearer of the form". So, from Apollonius, Priscian, Peter Helyas to other 12<sup>th</sup> century grammarians, this sense is well preserved and transmitted.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of the intra-propositional or extra-propositional meanings of the *suppositio* terminology in grammar its existence and its possible influence on medieval terminist logic cannot be denied.

Besides the influence of grammar on the 13<sup>th</sup> century theory of *suppositio*, modern literature talks about an early development of its conceptual apparatus in logic. Rijk states that "the doctrine of fallacy seems to have been, together with twelfth century grammatical theories, at the very basis of terminist logic".<sup>25</sup> Starting with the rediscovery of Aristotle's works on logic in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in the logic commentaries on his works we can observe, as Ebbesen points out, a particular development of *suppositio* terminology in three stages.<sup>26</sup> At first, until the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *appellatio* terminology is a fully developed one in comparison with *suppositio*.<sup>27</sup> But starting with 1190, *suppositio* and *appellatio* are used indiscriminately until the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the concept of *suppositio* slowly started to replace that of *appellatio*. In this century *suppositio* conceptual apparatus begins to evolve into a full-blown theory and like in Peter of Spain's case, *appellatio* will become a special type of *suppositio*.

Another trail of influence, this time from theology, is discussed by Ebbesen, Kneepkens, De Libera and Valente. They subscribe to the idea that the 13<sup>th</sup> century theory of *suppositio* is influenced by the Porretan theology. As Ebbesen points out, Kneepkens suggests that the conceptual apparatus found in the grammatical works of Peter Helyas is borrowed from Gilbert the Porretan.<sup>28</sup> In the same collective volume dedicated to the theory of *suppositio*, Valente argues that *suppositio* terms

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Sten Ebbesen, "Early Supposition Theory (12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century)", in *Histoire Épistémologie Langage* 3/1 (1981). *Sémantiques médiévales: Cinq études sur la logique et la grammaire au Moyen Âge*, 35–48, and Sten Ebbesen, "Early Supposition Theory II" in E. P. Bos, ed., *Medieval supposition theory revisited* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 60–78.

<sup>24</sup> See Sten Ebbesen, "Early Supposition Theory (12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century)", 37–38.

<sup>25</sup> L. M. De Rijk, ed., *Logica modernorum II, Part one*, 492. In spite of the fact that the grammar tradition was more influential.

<sup>26</sup> See Sten Ebbesen, "Early Supposition Theory II".

<sup>27</sup> The *suppositio* in the logical tradition is believed to be *what may be subsumed under a term*.

<sup>28</sup> Sten Ebbesen, "Early Supposition Theory II", 61.



are used by Gilbert in the sense of “an action performed by the speaker, not a property of terms”,<sup>29</sup> namely the act of referring to a subsisting thing<sup>30</sup> through a subject term. In spite of this, some of his pupils have a different approach. The author claims that in the works of his students, *Summa Zwettlensis* and *Dialogus Ratii et Everardi*, the language tends to be objectified into a formal system of terms. In the former work, we have *suppositio* in the sense of a property of a subject term in a proposition that refers to something<sup>31</sup> and a classification of the types of *suppositiones*. In the latter, *suppositum* is, as in the former, the referent of a name, if it is considered to be independent of a proposition, and the signification or subject-matter of a proposition, if it is considered to be in a proposition<sup>32</sup>. In this sense *supponere* will be a function of a name, *officium*, of referring to something.<sup>33</sup> In conclusion, in the Porretan theology, the *suppositio* terminology evolved from being an action pertaining to the speaker, to a property pertaining to the term of a proposition.

Seeing this brief historiography sketch, we can draw two conclusions. The first one is that the changes in the way *suppositio* was used cannot be spotted only from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century logic, when we can speak of a full-blown theory, but in each discipline as well. In grammar, logic and theology, in early stages, we do not have a unitary way of using a *suppositio* conceptual apparatus. There are variations from one text to another, so that it is difficult to say that we have one specific sense of *suppositio* or *supponere* for grammarians, one for logicians and one for theologians. The second one is that through equating *suppositum* and the grammatical subject, subject-matter or the act of speaking, the 13<sup>th</sup> century offers a different use of this concept. *Suppositio* will slowly become the property of a term in a given proposition of sending outside of language, at an extra-linguistic entity. But the final product of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a fully developed theory with a classification of types of *suppositio*, is obtained after a long interplay between the concept of *suppositio* and *appellatio*. The evolution captured in the history of the concept in question does nothing but mark the gradual increase of formality understood as conceptual rigour. From a

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<sup>29</sup> Luisa Valente, “Supposition theory and Porretan theology: *Summa Zwettlensis* and *Dialogus Ratii et Everardi*” in *Medieval supposition theory revisited*, 122.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 127: “It seems that by *suppositio* here the *Summa* means the name itself as used as subject term in a proposition, by *appellatio* the name considered independently from its being used within the proposition, and by *supponere* the action performed by names when used as subject terms in propositions—and not by speakers or authors—and consisting in referring to some objects (*subiecta*)”.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 135: “From the double signification of names derives their double function: that of referring to (*supponendi*) the *subsistens*, *suppositum* or *persona* when the name is placed as subject term in a proposition, and that of predicating (*apponendi*) the form or quality when it is used as predicate term”.

concept without a defined meaning, often confused with *appellatio*, without a theory, proper rules or classification types in the early stages, *suppositio* had become, by the time Peter of Spain wrote his book,<sup>34</sup> a well-developed theory.

### 3.2 Peter of Spain's theory of *suppositio* in the treatise *Summaries of logic*<sup>35</sup>

In the previous section we have tried to show the way in which the *suppositio* theory in general had evolved before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, becoming more and more conceptually coherent. In this section, we shall try to show its formal nature in a particular case, that of *Summule logicales* of Petrus Hispanus. By briefly presenting his<sup>36</sup> theory about *suppositio*, we shall discuss some of his conceptual distinctions and show how this concept represents the main property of his terminist logic, depending on which of all other properties of terms are defined.

His *Tractatus* subsequently called *Summule logicales* is composed of 12 tracts,<sup>37</sup> of which the first 5 and the 7<sup>th</sup> are dedicated to *logica antiqua*, and the 6<sup>th</sup> tract alongside with the last 5 deal with *logica modernorum*, more precisely with *proprietas terminorum*.

In the second paragraph of the 6<sup>th</sup> treatise, *De suppositionibus*, , we encounter the first important concept for the definition of *suppositio*, namely the signification (*significatio*) of a term: "*Significatio termini, prout hic sumitur, est rei per vocem secundum placitum representatio*".<sup>38</sup> "The signification of a term, as used here, is the conventional representation of a thing by an utterance".<sup>39</sup> Further in the same paragraph, Peter states that the condition for an expression to signify a thing (*res*), is to signify a universal or a particular one, since each thing is either a particular or a universal.<sup>40</sup> The things are distinguished from signs (*signa*), so that the universal and particular signs (quantifiers) are not terms in the strict sense as the

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<sup>34</sup> According to the assumption of the latest bilingual edition, the text was written in the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, see Peter of Spain, *Summaries of logic*, text, translation, introduction and notes Brian P. Copenhaver with Calvin Normore and Terence Parsons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> For references I shall use Peter of Spain (Petrus Hispanus Portugalensis), *Tractatus, Called Afterwards Summulae logicales, First Critical Edition from the Manuscript*, ed. L. M De Rijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), (abbr. SL.); Peter of Spain, *Summaries of logic*, (abbr. SI.)

<sup>36</sup> Today it is acknowledged that Peter of Spain's terminist logic is not as original as one might think. A great part of his *proprietas terminorum* is taken from *Summule antiquorum*, see SL, preface.

<sup>37</sup> *I De introductionibus, II De predicabilis, III De predicamentis, IV De Sillogismis, V De locis, VI De suppositionibus, VII De Fallacis, VIII De Relativis, IX De Ampliationibus, X De appellationibus, XI De Restrictionibus, XII De distributionibus.*

<sup>38</sup> SL. VI, 2, l.11–12

<sup>39</sup> SI. 6, 2,

<sup>40</sup> Although in SL XII,5 that which is signified by quantifiers seems to be considered a *res*, because *res* is of two kinds.

terms that signify a universal or particular, although they signify in some way too<sup>41</sup>.<sup>42</sup> He seems to suggest that there are 2 types of significations, one of the substantival name (*nomen substantivum*) and one of the adjectival name or verb (*nomen adjectivum vel verbum*). The first one signifies a substantival thing (*rei substantive*) and the second an adjectival thing (*rei adiective*)<sup>43</sup>. But the fact of being substantive (*substantivatio*) and the fact of being adjective (*adiectivatio*) are not modes of signifying but modes of the things that are signified.<sup>44</sup> The ontological import of the theory of signification seems evident. As Klima concludes, Peter's difference in the theory of signification is not founded on the modes of significations but on the modes of things,<sup>45</sup> in such a way that even what we can call quantifiers signify some sort of thing. On this foundation of the theory of signification, Peter will start the construction of the *suppositio* theory. Thus, of the two types of names, only the substantive one has the property of *suppositio*, therefore the substantive name can be the subject of the action exercised by *supponere*. The other type of name only has the property of *coppulatio*.

Starting from paragraph 3 to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> treatise, the main subject of the discussion will be the definition and classification of the *supposito* concept. That being said, we have something that we can call the general definition of *suppositio*: "*Suppositio vero est acceptio termini substantivi pro aliquo*"<sup>46</sup>. But the taking of a substantive term in place of something, i.e. *suppositio*, is different from the conventional representation of a thing by an utterance, i.e. *significatio*, because the former is applied on a term that already has the latter. For a *suppositio* to take place, the term that performs the action of *supponere* must already have a signification made by the imposition of an utterance upon a thing.<sup>47</sup> Another difference between *significatio* and *suppositio* can be seen in the numerous examples that Peter offers. Almost always<sup>48</sup> when he talks about the *suppositio* of a particular term, this term is

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<sup>41</sup> Sl. 12, 5 "every/all signifies neither the universal, nor the particular. The other type of thing however, is a condition of the thing that can be a subject or predicate, and it is that thing which this sign every/all signifies."

<sup>42</sup> See Sl. 6,2.

<sup>43</sup> Sl. translates "*rei substantive*" with "things as substance" and "*rei adiective*" as "a thing as modifier". It seems to me that the translation is forcing the grammatical sense of the expressions into an ontological one.

<sup>44</sup> Idem.

<sup>45</sup> Gyula Klima, "Two *Summulae*, Two Ways of Doing Logic: Peter of Spain's "realism" and John Buridan's "nominalism". The two *Summulae* and the "nominalism/realism" distinction" in: [http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/FILES/Two%20Summulae%20\(2\).pdf](http://faculty.fordham.edu/klima/FILES/Two%20Summulae%20(2).pdf), 6–7 (accessed on 19.05.2017).

<sup>46</sup> Sl. VI,3, 1.8–9

<sup>47</sup> See Sl.6,3

<sup>48</sup> Sl. VI,4, 1. 5–6. "*Accidentalis autem suppositio est acceptio termini comunis pro eis pro quibus exigit adiunctum. Ut 'homo est'; iste terminus 'homo' supponit pro presentibus; cum*

given in a propositional context which determines the thing the term can stand for, e.g. “ut cum dicitur *homo currit*, iste terminus *homo* supponit pro Sorte vel Platone, et sic de aliis”<sup>49</sup>. In the case of signification, we do not have such a context-dependent approach.

Besides the differences between *significatio* and *suppositio*, the classification of the latter is of great importance for showing the formal aspect of this theory. A schema of this categorization can already be found in the introductory study of Rijk’s edition.<sup>50</sup> Starting with SL VI, 4 Peter distinguishes between nine types of *suppositio* in 5 divisions. The first one is between *suppositio communis* and *suppositio discreta*. The difference is given by the type of subject term. The former has a common term, like ‘*man*’; the latter has a discrete term, which seems to be a proper name like ‘*Socrates*’ or a name with a demonstrative pronoun as ‘*that man*’. From here until the end of the classification, only the *suppositio communis* branch will be further divided. Thus, the next pair, *suppositio naturalis* and *suppositio accidentalis*, will be types of *suppositio communis*. *Suppositio naturalis* is “taking a common term in place of all those that is naturally suited to be shared by, as ‘*human*’ used by itself suppositis of its own nature for all the humans who were, who are, and who will be”.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile *suppositio accidentalis* is defined as the taking of a common term in place of those things that are demanded by the other term, with whom the common term is bounded in the proposition.<sup>52</sup> The next distinction of *suppositio accidentalis* is between *suppositio simplex* and *suppositio personalis*. *Suppositio simplex* is “taking a common term in place of the universal thing signified by it”.<sup>53</sup> In the examples “*Human is a species*” and “*Animal is a genus*”, the terms do not stand for any particular thing but for the thing in common, the universal. *Suppositio personalis* “is taking a common term in place of those below it, as when someone says ‘*a human runs*’ that term ‘*human*’ suppositis for those below it”<sup>54</sup>. The last pair is *suppositio determinate* and *suppositio confuse*, both pertaining to the *suppositio personalis*. The first one is that in which the common term is taken either indefinitely, e.g. ‘*A man runs*’, either with a particular sign, e.g. ‘*Some man runs*’.<sup>55</sup> The important remark that Peter makes is that in his examples the term ‘*man*’ stands for every man, not only for those who are actually running. So, this is the point where he underlines the independence of the property of a term to stand for

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*autem dicitur 'homo fuit' supponit pro preteritis; cum vero dicitur 'homo erit', supponit pro futuris”.*

<sup>49</sup> SL. VI, 3, l. 10–13

<sup>50</sup> See SL., p. LXXVII

<sup>51</sup> Sl. 6,4

<sup>52</sup> See SL. VI, 4, l. 5–6.

<sup>53</sup> Sl. 6,5

<sup>54</sup> Sl. 6,7

<sup>55</sup> See SL VI,8, l.13–16.

something from the truth-value of the proposition in which that term appears. The term '*man*' does not stand only for those men that make the proposition true, because "Aliud enim est supponere et aliud est reddere locutionem veram pro aliquo".<sup>56</sup> The last type, *Suppositio confuse* "is taking a common term in place of many by means of a universal sign, so that when someone says '*every human is an animal*', that term '*human*' is used for many by means of the universal sign because it is used for anything whatever that it supposits for".<sup>57</sup> This type of *suppositio* can take place either by necessity of the sign, or by the necessity of thing, the last being refuted later. By necessity of sign, the term '*human*' stands for each and every man and it is doing so in the mobile way, when a descent to each can be made like in the example 'Every human, therefore Socrates'. When the descent is not permitted for a term, it is said to have immobile confused *suppositio*, e.g. '*Every human is an animal; therefore, every human is this animal.*'<sup>58</sup> from the premise we cannot obtain the conclusion.

The discussion about *suppositio* is supplemented in the other 5 tracts of terminist logic by: the thematization of relative terms, comparative pronouns and adjective (SL VIII), the restriction and enlargement of the domain of things, for which a term can stand (SL IX, XI), the property of term named *appellation* (SL X), the taking of a common or singular term in place of an existing thing, and distribution (SL XII), the multiplication of a common term by the universal sign.

From this brief sketch we can observe that Peter of Spain's theory of *suppositio* presents a high degree of conceptual rigor. First, he distinguishes between *signification* and *suppositio*. The first is a property of a substantive and adjectival term to represent, by convention, a thing by means of an expression. *Suppositio* is a property of a substantival term within a propositional context to stand in the place of a thing that is already a significant of an utterance. The way in which this process happens depends, on the one hand, on the nature of the word, and on the other hand, on the other linguistic elements with which the term makes the proposition. In the theory of *suppositio* from *Summaries* we do not stumble upon an indiscriminate use of the concepts *suppositio* and *appellatio*, as in other 12<sup>th</sup> century texts. Moreover, *appellatio* is defined like a particular case of *suppositio*, namely the taking of a common term in place of an existing thing. In addition, Peter arrives at a successive division of the *suppositio* types, identifying about 7 modes in which a term is said to stand in place of a thing. Since in *suppositio* a certain substantive term takes the place of all the things for which it can stand in the propositional context, and not only for those things which make the proposition true, this theory differentiates itself from a semantic theory of truth.

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<sup>56</sup> SL. VI, 8, l. 19–20.

<sup>57</sup> Sl. 6,9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

All these conceptual differences, on the one hand, of *suppositio* regarding the other properties of terms, and on the other hand, those made within the theory of *suppositio*, show that Peter of Spain had tried to define his concepts as clearly and univocally as possible.<sup>59</sup> In the light of the things presented above, I consider that in the theory of *suppositio* from *Summaries* we can find the formal nature of logic understood in a wide sense, as conceptual rigour, i.e. we find the presence of technical specialised concepts.

#### 4. The intuitive or non-formal nature of medieval logic

Although in the theory of *suppositio* we deal with a well defined conceptual apparatus, which frames specialised uses of various concepts, the language in which they are expressed is Latin. In spite of the fact that in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Latin was not so much of a natural language like in the classical period, for the medieval universities it was still a language in which one thinks, talks and writes, a *lingua franca*. This fact challenges us to testify for the second nature of logic, namely, the naturality and the intuitiveness of the language in which it is expressed. In this sense, we shall try to offer an etymological analysis of '*suppositio*', to present some uses of this term that pertain neither to logic, nor theology, nor grammar, and in the end to search for explanations or replacements of our concept in the *Summule* through some paraphrases.

##### 4.1 The etymological analysis

In classical Latin, the substantive *suppositio*, *suppositionis* of the third imparisyllabic declension seems to come from de verb *suppono*, *supponere*, *supposui*, *suppositus*. At its origins, it was formed of the prefix *sub* and the verb *pono*, *ponere*, *posui*, *positus*, whose main meaning is to put, to place, to set. *Ponere* with the *sub* prefix, and in the end *supponere*, means to put or place under, to put in place of something, to substitute. We can find both the substantival form of *suppositio* and the verbal form in *Summule*. Usually the substantival form is used more when Peter defines what the theory of *suppositio* is and which its types are. In the expressions of the form '*x habet suppositionem z*', the term *x* has a *suppositio* of type *z*. In the expressions of the form '*x supponit y*', thus where we deal with the verbal indicative use of the word, *x*, a certain substantive propositional term, *stands for*, or according with the classical language, *is put in place of*, or *substitutes y*, in a given proposition. In accordance with participle forms, from which the substantive forms have appeared, *x* from the last expression will be the *supponens* (active present participle), that which *supposit*, thus that which *is put in place of another* or *substitutes*, and *y* will be *suppositum*, the extra-linguistic entity which has been substituted. But we must mention that expressions with the form '*x est [...]*', where *x*

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<sup>59</sup> The place of logic in the medieval curriculum and the age of the students is also a factor for this kind of enterprise.

is a term from the *suppositio* family, which marks the beginning of a definition, can be found only in the case of the substantive form, *suppositio*. Peter does not define separately what a *suppositum* is, like in the case of *suppositio*, but he lets the definition of the former to be intuitively understood through the grammar of the latter.

The rendering of this concept by means of the paraphrase, thus in accordance with the natural language, offers a certain degree of intuition for the understating of the *suppositio* theory; however, this kind of approach is deficient both with regard to the economy of the words used and with regard to the formal aspect of the theory. In the absence of some adequate participles and in the presence of some qualifications that both already exist in modern languages (e.g. supposition as assumption), *suppositio* as untranslatable seems to be appealing. But beyond this, we can agree on the fact that the *suppositio* terminology from *Summule* has an intuitive and natural sense, seeing that resembles the sense of *suppositio* and *supponere* from ordinary Latin, which seems to have at their origins the joining of *sub* and *ponere*.

#### 4.2 The unqualified use of 'suppositio'

Another argument for an intuitive sense of the *suppositio* theory is that in Latin we can find uses of this terminology which do not seem to be logically, theologically or grammatically qualified. Although this subject remains in great parts unexplored, the contemporary exegesis on the *suppositio* theory talks about a juridical use of this term. In this sense, *suppositio* means the fraudulent substitution of something.

We can spot an instance of this use in Plautus's (c. 254–184) play *Captivi* 1030. In what we can call the epilogue of the play, the company tells the audience that the play was made in accordance with the virtuous habits (*ad pudicos mores facta haec fabula est*) and so one cannot find vicious intrigues (*subigationes*), love affairs, money schemes and fraudulent substitution of children (*pueri suppositio*) in it. This sense, which is often attributed in the medieval imaginary to the cuckoo, who lays its eggs in another bird's nest,<sup>60</sup> makes us conclude that *suppositio* has a particular meaning in ordinary language before being a regimented term in the university disciplines. Its common sense of substitution, de action of putting something in another's place, is quite close to Peter's sense, to stand for something, to stand in place of something. The difference seems to be that in the natural language, the term suggests the action of putting something in another's place, or of substituting a thing with another, while the term from terminist logic suggest the existence of a relation between a linguistic entity and an extra-linguistic one.

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<sup>60</sup> The expression "*Cuculus ova sua supponere amat alaudae, palumbi aut currucae*" seems to originate in Aristotle, *Historia animalium* IX, 29 and it is possible to be found in the medieval paradoxography literature.

#### 4.3 Paraphrases equivalent with the definition of *suppositio* in *Summaries*

Besides the *suppositio* terminology, Peter uses a natural language in his work, in his definitions and explanations, namely terms that are not logically regimented. The expression '*acceptio pro aliquo*' from *suppositio* definition: "*acceptio termini substantive pro aliquo*", taking the substantival terms in place of something, can be an example. Saying '*Acceptio termini x pro y*', ultimately means to paraphrase the expression '*x supponit y*' or '*x supponit pro y*', namely '*x has suppositio*', or '*he stands in relation of suppositio with y*'.

From the definition of *appellatio*, "*Appellatio est acceptio termini communis pro re existente*",<sup>61</sup> the taking of a term in place of a thing that exists, in contrast with *suppositio* and *significatio* "*suppositio et significatio sunt tam de re existente quam de re non existente*",<sup>62</sup> we can observe that the perfect passive participle forms of *supponere* (*suppositus*, *supposita* and *suppositum*) have a textual counterpart, *res*, *rei*, the thing. What Latin grammar tells us by means of an almost negative language, by these participle forms, e.g. *suppositum*: that which has been substituted, that for which a certain term stands, in some places we find the same thing expressed in a positive way, by means of the term *res*, *rei*, the thing.

This being said, we can see in the examples above that the *suppositio* terminology from *Summaries* presents counterparts in paraphrases expressed in natural language. Those provide some intuitive information about what the formal concepts used in theory are and how they really work.

### 5. Conclusions and final remarks

In this paper, I tried to show how the double nature of medieval logic, understood on the one hand as a tendency towards formalization, i.e. conceptual rigour, and on the other hand, as a non-formal attitude, i.e. the naturalness and intuitiveness of the language in which it is expressed, is present in the particular case of the *suppositio* theory from *Summule logicales*. If, after the arguments given, we can say that the theory of *suppositio* presents this characteristic, then I think that a new approach which acknowledges the double nature of medieval logic could overpass some difficulties raised both by the *suppositio* as reference approach and by *suppositio* as untranslatable. In conclusion, the methodological options offered to us by the contemporary exegesis and presented above, become nothing more than mere commitments to one particular aspect of the nature of medieval logic. If we terminologically and conceptually equate *suppositio* with *reference*, then we consider the former more formal than it is. If we consider *suppositio* an untranslatable in the contemporary language, and thus we equate *suppositio* with its corresponding calque *suppositio*, then this theory becomes a product of medieval philosophy that is too specific and more dependent on the context in which

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<sup>61</sup> SL. X, 1, l. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* l. 9–10



appeared. That being said, I think that by only considering these two aspects of the theory, the formal and non-formal nature, we can try to elaborate a new project of conceptualization and translation of the *suppositio* theory in a modern language. All these efforts aim to try to answer the question: “What is the theory of *suppositio* and for what purpose was it made?”.