PART II

THE AUTHORS

1

Adam of Wodeham

REGA WOOD

Adam de Wodeham (d. 1358) was a philosopher theologian at Oxford University, who earlier had taught at Franciscan seminaries in London and Norwich. A theologian in the Franciscan tradition, Wodeham emphasized the contingency of salvation and the dependence of the created world on God. He was a subtle and precise thinker deeply concerned with logic and semantics.

Wodeham was proud of his debts to the Franciscan doctor, JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, and to the great Franciscan logician, WILLIAM OF OCKHAM. Wodeham respected Scotus enough to study his works carefully in the original manuscripts and to accept his views in doubtful cases. He prepared an abbreviation of Ockham's theology lectures, wrote an introduction to his lectures on logic, and defended his views against attack.

Wodeham was a brilliant interpreter of Ockham and Scotus, and his allegiance to their views was responsible in part for their continued influence. More subtle than Ockham, he nonetheless trenchantly defended Ockham's views. More preoccupied with logical questions than Scotus, Wodeham was deeply impressed by the rigor of Scotus's arguments.

WALTER CHATTON and PETER AURIOL were two other Franciscan authors who influenced Wodeham. Though he considered Chatton's 1321–3 attacks on Ockham ignorant and malicious, Wodeham was influenced by Chatton on a variety of questions – about the subject of scientific or demonstrative knowledge, for example. Auriol strongly influenced Wodeham's views on certainty.

The Norwich Lectures

Wodeham's lectures on theology, loosely based on PETER LOMBARD'S *Sentences*, were his most important works. Delivered first, his *London Lectures* have not survived, but he reused parts of them when he lectured at Norwich. The *Norwich Lectures*, delivered between 1329 and 1332, are cited and published as his second lectures (*Lectura secunda*). Both these works were intended for a Franciscan audience. Among contemporary thinkers, the *Norwich Lectures* consider almost exclusively Franciscan authors. Published in 1990, these *Lectures* are now the most frequently cited of Wodeham's works.

Epistemology

Unlike his teacher, William of Ockham, Wodeham considers skepticism a serious problem. For Ockham, intuitive cognition is reliable by definition. By means of intuitive cognition we

know "that a thing exists when it does." When a thing does not exist, we know by intuitive cognition that it does not exist (*OTh* V, p. 256). A problem arises from the second part of Ockham's definition, his uncontroversial claim that it is logically possible that we should have intuitive cognition of something nonexistent. Our mental states, including our acts of cognition, are accidents, which for medieval philosophers exist independently of their objective contents. So it is at least logically possible that something other than the object of an act of cognition could cause that cognition.

For Ockham, intuition produces knowledge; for Wodeham, it inclines us to belief. Hence, unlike Ockham, Wodeham holds that whether the object of intuition exists or not, it will always incline us to believe that its object exists. Initially, Ockham distinguished between naturally and supernaturally produced intuitive cognition.

Subsequently, Peter Auriol forced his contemporaries to consider the possibility of naturally produced cognition of nonexistents, inferring from a series of illusory cognitions that the objects of cognition are apparent beings, not things themselves. Ockham rejected apparent beings and all other intermediates as objects of cognition. He maintained that the objects of sense perception are things themselves. Sensation itself is never illusory, though the judgments based on sensory perception can be mistaken. Ockham held, for example, that our perception of motion when we are moving past trees may be equivalent to our sensation when trees move past a stationary object (*OTh* 4, pp. 243–50). Because there are situations in which the same sensation can be produced in more than one way, the judgments we base on sensation can be mistaken. When our judgments are wrong, our sensations do not produce intuitive cognition. For Ockham, then, 'cognizing' is a success verb, so intuitive cognition of nonexistents leads to our knowing that its objects do not exist. By contrast, for Wodeham, intuitive cognition is a mental state that always inclines to judgment of existence.

In one sense, there is little disagreement. Both philosophers believed that our sensations do sometimes incline us to judge falsely, and both refer to false beliefs rather than admitting false intuitive of false cognition, as HERVAEUS NATALIS did. But Wodeham was, and Ockham was not, deeply concerned with the question of how and when we can know that our judgments are correct.

This was new, since neither Ockham nor Auriol believed that what was at issue in their debate was skepticism or the problem of certainty. Responding to their dispute, Wodeham was among the first to recognize that skeptical consequences could be drawn from Auriol's lists of sensory illusions. Wodeham defined three degrees of certainty. The greatest degree that compels the intellect is not possible regarding contingent propositions, since the intellect is aware of the possibility of error and deception. The least degree of certainty is compatible with error; I may be in some degree certain of a mistaken proposition, as for example, when I judge that a straight stick half submerged in water is bent.

Despite his preoccupation with the possible natural and supernatural obstructions in the perceptual process and the concessions he made to them, Wodeham was a reliabilist, who believed that cognition is reliably though not infallibly caused by its object. His basic reply to the sensory illusions adduced by Auriol was that reason and experience allow us to recognize illusions and not to be systematically misled by them. Illusions will continue to incline us to make false judgments, but we can correct our judgments by reference to reason and experience (1990, *L. sec.* I: pp. 163–79).

Psychology

Wodeham denied the distinction between the sensitive and intellective souls; a single soul suffices to explain all the cognitive acts we experience. On this merely philosophical issue,

Wodeham departed from the traditional Franciscan view that there is a plurality of substantial forms in man. He opposed both Scotus (formally distinct souls) and Ockham (really distinct souls). Ockham held that sensory and intellective souls must be distinct since contraries could not coexist in the same subject. Wodeham replied that sensory inclination and intellectual appetite regarding the same external object were only virtually, not formally, contraries. According to Wodeham, the same soul apprehends sensible particulars and universals; when these acts are partially caused by external objects, they are sensations; when they abstract from singulars, they are intellections (1990, *L. sec.* I: pp. 9–33).

Wodeham's reductionism also shows itself in his discussion of fruition, the enjoyment humans experience in contemplating God in the next life. Wodeham holds that all appetitive acts are cognitive acts, since we cannot experience an object without apprehending it. But though volition cannot be separated from apprehension, cognition does not necessitate volition. Like Ockham, Wodeham holds that clear knowledge of God without enjoyment is possible at least initially. Conversely, loving God necessarily includes the implied judgment that God is lovable; this leads Wodeham to ask whether acts of volition can be described as true or false. Wodeham answers in the affirmative; amusingly, he holds that rejoicing about being a Franciscan is a correct act as well as an act of enjoyment (1990, *L. sec.* I: pp. 253–85).

Semantics and ontology

Wodeham believed that external language presupposes an internal or mental language. Sentences, both of external and of mental language, are composed of terms. Terms of mental language are concepts, and concepts are acts of cognition by which things are apprehended and which signify naturally those very same things. For example, if she has come into contact, via the senses, with at least one lion, a person will normally have the general concept of "lion." This is a concept by which she apprehends lions, and not things of any other sort, a concept which, accordingly, naturally signifies lions. Terms of external language, by contrast, are significant only by conventional association with concepts; they signify whatever the concept to which they are associated signifies.

Terms, then, signify things. Aside from God, however, there are, according to Wodeham, no "things" other than individual substances (such as lions) and individual accidents inhering in substances (such as whitenesses which, by inhering in substances, make them white). Accordingly, apart from the transcendental terms, such as 'being', which include God among the things they signify, terms of external and of mental language signify individual substances and/or accidents.

A term, however, not only signifies (*significat*), but, if it is used in a sentence, also refers (*supponit*). In this respect two kinds of terms, both of external and of mental language, can be distinguished: those which can refer to all the things they signify and those which can refer only to some of the things they signify (1990, *L. sec*, III: p. 316). The term 'lion', for example, can refer to all its significates, i.e. to all actual or possible lions. By contrast, the term 'white' can refer only to white substances, although it also signifies the whitenesses inhering in them. Reference to whitenesses is of course possible, but by the term 'whiteness', not by the term 'white'. Like the term 'lion', the term 'whiteness' is a term which can refer to all the things it signifies, i.e. to all actual or possible whitenesses.

Sentences, although they do not refer, do signify, both sentences of external and of internal, mental language. But they do not signify "things" in the proper sense. Instead of things, a sentence signifies a state of affairs or, as Wodeham says, a "being the case" or a "not being

the case" (1990, *L. sec*. I: p. 193). Because a state of affairs can be signified only proposi-tionally, it can also be called a "complexly signifiable." States of affairs cannot be referred to by terms properly so-called, that is by terms prior to sentences; they can, nevertheless, be referred to, namely by nominalizations of sentences. 'That a human is an animal', for example, can refer to the state of affairs signified by the sentence 'A human is an animal' (1990, *L. sec*. I: p. 194). Because they can be referred to ("supposited for"), complexly sig-nifiables belong to the ontology (Karger 1995).

Wodeham found he needed to posit states of affairs, and thereby to enlarge a strictly nom-inalist ontology, in order to provide acts of knowledge, and more generally acts of belief, with appropriate objects. Mental sentences, which are mental accidents, cannot fulfill that function, he pointed out. Although we cannot entertain a belief without forming the mental proposition that expresses the content of that belief, the object we then assent to is not the mental proposition itself, but its content, i.e. the state of affairs it expresses (1990, *L. sec.* I: p. 192).

Like his views on certainty, Wodeham developed his views on the significate of sentences in the course of defending Ockham's position. His position can be seen as a compromise between Chatton and Ockham on the question of what is the object of scientific knowledge. Are the objects of our assent external objects in the real world (Chatton's *res*) or proposi-tions (Ockham's *complexa*)? Wodeham rejects both positions.

Though the *complexe significabile* has being, i.e. ontological status, Wodeham prefers not to emphasize that consequence of his views. Instead, he emphasizes that it is neither some-thing in the external world nor a mental object. Since it is neither a substance nor an acci-dent, it does not belong to an Aristotelian category. It is not something, but neither is it nothing. Indeed, the question 'What is it?' is ill-formed. It makes no more sense than the question 'Is a people a man or a non-man?'. When we assent to a *complexe significabile*, we are not assenting to some thing, but rather we affirm that something is the case (1990, *L. sec.* I: pp. 180–208; Nuchelmans 1980, pp. 173–85).

Wodeham's attempt not to focus the discussion on the ontological status of the *complexe significabile* was unsuccessful. Those who subsequently employed the notion attracted criti-cism in their attempt to answer the question: What is its being? This debate somewhat resembles the modern controversy about whether propositions exist. NICHOLAS OF AUTRE-COURT takes a negative stance about the being of the *complexe significabile*; he holds that it has none. What we complexly signify when we say, 'God and creatures are distinguished' is not some thing, but nothing. GREGORY OF RIMINI, by contrast, describes two senses in which the *complexe significabile* is a thing. Here Rimini was following Wodeham's later Oxford dis-cussion where he allows a sense in which the *complexe significabile* is something, that is, an object of knowledge.

JOHN BURIDAN considered it unnecessary to posit anything complexly signifiable. Where Wodeham says that the *complexe significabile* is not something and not nothing, Buridan says that it is everything or nothing. Everything, if complexly signifiables are the adverbial ref-erents of sentences or nominalizations, for everything in the world is a complexly signifi-able, since we can state propositions that refer complexly even to simple objects such as God. Nothing, if they are supposed to be part of the natural order, since *complexe significa-biles* are neither substances nor accidents. More important, we need not posit them, since we can explain everything without them. Buridan's criticisms were repeated by MARSILIUS OF INGHEN and subsequently by PIERRE D'AILLY in his attack on Gregory of Rimini.

As Jack Zupko has pointed out, the debate about the *complexe significabile* did not stop with Buridan. Following Rimini, Hugolino of Orvieto held that the object of science was

the total significate of the conclusion. A *complexe significabile* is a thing in the sense that it is signifiable truly, though it is not an existing essence or entity. For ALBERT OF SAXONY, the object of science is the conclusion as a sign of the complex act of knowing. So we may conclude that Wodeham was at least successful in drawing attention to the problems involved in identifying the object of science either with the external referents of terms or with propositions.

Metaphysics

Though he opposed Ockham's view that the object of scientific knowledge could be a proposition, Wodeham agreed with Ockham that universals are mental acts (1990, *L. sec.* I: p. 21). Moreover, he denied the existence of intellective species, prior or posterior to intellective acts (1990, *L. sec.* III: pp. 4–34). Wodeham argued that universals were subjectively present to the mind as acts. Their contents were single external things themselves, indistinctly and confusedly apprehended (ibid., p. 31), or as he once puts it "infinitely many things immediately and indistinctly conceived in a single act" (ibid., p. 34). Though he considered Chatton's arguments against Ockham's *fictum* theory of intellection unconvincing, he himself denied *ficta*. He refused to posit intermediates in the perceptual process.

Nonetheless, Wodeham does not entirely deny sensible species. He accepts the medieval optical theory and hence posits species in the medium, in the air through which we see things, for example (1990, *L. sec.* III: pp. 106–8). He also believes it necessary to posit internal species in order to explain certain illusions and delusions (1990, *L. sec.* I: pp. 75, 80–1), but he holds that they are the result from dysfunctional, injured senses – our eyes, for example, when we are subjected to very bright light (1990, *L. sec.* II: p. 226). Such species are not prior in the perceptual process, but posterior to it (1990, *L. sec.* III: p. 287).

Wodeham's views on universals were stated in questions entitled, "Whether we can know God," and "Whether the concept by which we know God is a common notion." This is because we cannot know God directly, but only in common notions such as essence or entity (1990, *L. sec.* III: pp. 34–5). Wodeham affirmed that these abstract concepts could be predicated univocally of God and creatures (1990, *L. sec.* II: pp. 63–5).

Turning to proofs for God's existence, Wodeham's analyzes fourteenth-century Franciscan theories of causality. He argues that Ockham was right to reject Scotus's inference: "Since the universe of essentially ordered effects is caused, the universe must be caused." Focusing on the logic of infinity, Wodeham rejects Chatton's defense of Scotus. Chatton mistakenly infers categorematic conclusions from premises that are true only if interpreted syncategorematically (see Adams 1993; 1990, *L. sec.* II: pp. 117–21). Wodeham holds that God's existence is not known to us in this life per se, but can be shown discursively (ibid., pp. 194–5)

The Oxford Lectures

Wodeham's last lectures on Lombard's *Sentences*, presented to an Oxford audience in about 1332, were his most influential work, though they are seldom studied today. They discuss the views of Wodeham's Oxford contemporaries including WILLIAM CRATHORN, Roger Gosford, ROBERT HOLCOTT, and William Skelton. They also considered such secular authors as WALTER BURLEY, RICHARD CAMPSALL, RICHARD FITZRALPH, and RICHARD KILVINGTON.

Unfortunately the *Oxford Lectures* have never been published. In 1512 John Major chose to print Henry Totting von Oyta's abbreviation of the Oxford lectures, rather than the work itself. The Major edition is generally reliable, but a bit difficult to read, and consequently seldom cited today. An admirable exception to this unfortunate neglect of the Oxford lectures is the work of Hester Gelber, who analyzed Wodeham's trinitarian logic on the basis of this work.

Logic

A thoroughgoing terminist logician, Wodeham sometimes settles theological questions by discussing logic. For example, though God's existence is not self-evident to us in this life, when the blessed understand propositions that signify God's existence, their knowledge is per se. What is more, the blessed can demonstrate the articles of faith we believe. This is because when we formulate propositions about the existence of the divine essence, we can know the terms of those propositions only by abstractive cognition; by contrast, the blessed seeing God have intuitive cognition of the terms.

Wodeham and Chatton accept Ockham's claim that demonstrative knowledge is possible only for conclusions that can be doubted and that follow from self-evident premises. But Chatton denies that the blessed can demonstrate the articles of faith, since for them the existence of God is indubitable. Ockham defends himself, saying that meeting the requirement for dubitability requires only that someone be able to doubt a conclusion (*OTh* 2, p. 441). Chatton is unimpressed, the blessed do not entertain our conclusions, but only their own, which are indubitable. Hence, they cannot prove the propositions we believe. Wodeham shows that Chatton is mistaken, since he accepted that the blessed know that our beliefs are correct. But to do that, they must be able to entertain them as formulated in the terms available to us (1990, *L. sec.* II: pp. 9–10: Lenz 1998). Here, as elsewhere, Wodeham not only brilliantly interprets Ockham, but states his position more compellingly. As Lenz puts it, he catches the logical error made by Chatton.

Wodeham relies on theories of predication in dealing with problems of trinitarian theology, which appears to violate the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction. Thus, if 'The Father is not the Spirit' and 'The Father is the deity', then 'The deity is not the Spirit' seems to follow. Dealing with this problem, Wodeham refused to provide special qualifications of logic for this problem; that approach is deservedly derided by non-Christians. Wodeham even rejects the solutions of Ockham and Scotus. Wodeham formulates instead a distinction between identic and inherent (denominative) predication. In denominative predication subject and predicate have the same supposition; in identic predication the predicate supposits more broadly than the subject. Thus 'The Father is the deity', but 'The deity is not the Father'. Father and Spirit are really identical – that is the same as the deity. But, as Gelber points out, Father and Son are also distinct, and here Wodeham offers a new sense of what it means to be distinct (see Gelber 1974).

Wodeham's discussion of the distinction between abstract and concrete predication was based on, but differed from, Ockham's. He aimed to avoid negation in defining concrete predication. Thus for Wodeham the verbal (*quid-nominis*) definition of the term *albus* is 'having whiteness' not 'a body having whiteness'. Not including the bearer in definitions of concrete terms avoids nonsense-sentences such as 'Plato is a body having whiteness body' which would otherwise result from successive substitutions of the definition of 'white' in the sentence 'Plato is white' (see 1990, *L. sec.* II: p. 244).

Paul Spade has pointed out that Wodeham's denial that the bearer is predicated when we speak of concrete objects resembles Anselm's distinction between *per se* and *per aliud* predication. Reference is signification only in a secondary sense. What we think of when we hear a term are not necessarily the objects to which it refers (its *supposita* or *appellata*). Abstract and concrete terms have the same *per se* signification; and in the case of substances, supposition and signification coincide. Thus 'man' and 'humanity' both signify and sup-posit for 'a substance composed of body and soul'. 'Man is a humanity' is false only in the case of Christ who has both a divine and a human nature; his person cannot, therefore, be identified with his humanity.

Ethics

Wodeham agrees with Ockham that the will is the sole locus of imputability. External acts make no contribution to the goodness or badness of an act. Unlike Ockham, Wodeham provides a detailed discussion of a series of apparent counterexamples that suggest that outcomes, and not just intentions, must be considered when evaluating the moral worth of our actions.

Tractatus de indivisibilibus, *Quaestio de divisione et compositione continui*

Between 1322 and 1331, Wodeham wrote two works on the continuum, a brief question fol-lowed by a longer treatise. The *Question*'s nine arguments against indivisibilism reappear in the first of twelve principal arguments against medieval atomists stated in the first question of the *Treatise*. On one major point, Wodeham changed his mind. In the *Question*, he held that all infinities as such were equal, the traditional view. By contrast, the fifth question of the *Treatise* is a sustained argument for the claim that one infinity can be greater than another, a rare and controversial position among medieval philosophers.

Natural philosophy

An anti-indivisibilist, Wodeham repeatedly treated the logic of infinity and infinitesimal change. Wodeham presents twelve arguments against medieval atomism or indivisibilism (1988, *T. ind.* q. 1). Wodeham held that the composition of the continuum from atoms was impossible, since indivisibles cannot touch, as Aristotle established. He holds that continua could be "infinitely divided" only in a syncategorematic sense, in which divisions are pro-gressively actualized. Understood syncategorematically, the continuum can be infinitely divided; the division of the continuum does not halt at minimal parts. The continuum cannot, however, be infinitely divided in the categorematic sense, in which the divided parts are perfectly actualized.

Despite holding that the continuum can be infinitely divided only potentially, Wodeham agrees with Ockham that the infinity of parts in a continuum exists not just potentially but actually. Acceptance of this claim led Wodeham to argue for the possibility of unequal infini-ties (1988, *T. ind.* q. 5).

Wodeham bases further arguments against indivisibilism on an analysis of the compound and divided sense. Only in a divided sense can the continuum be divided; a continuous line,

for example, can be divided into line segments, but once it is divided it is no longer a continuum. Strictly speaking it is not the continuum that is divided, but its parts. Norman Kretzmann described Wodeham's position as anti-Aristotelian indivisibilism, a characterization that was successfully challenged by G. Sinkler (see Kretzmann 1984; 1988, *T. ind*. q. 4).

A conceptualist, like Ockham, Wodeham believes that limits of all kinds – points, lines, surface, temporal instants, and instants of change – have no independent ontological status; 'point' is a non-referring term. On this subject, Wodeham claims not to be interpreting Ockham, but to have stated the position himself first. "Almost all these arguments were yours before Ockham would have written anything about indivisibles," he says (1988, *T. ind*., p. 132). This claim is difficult to interpret, but since Wodeham normally acknowledges his debts carefully, it needs to be taken seriously.

Lost works by Wodeham

Wodeham's biblical commentaries have been lost. Attributed to him are commentaries on the *Canticum canticorum* and the first book of *Ecclesiasticus*. Bale also attributed to Wodeham a set of *Determinationes* directed against Richard of Wetherset, in the secular mendicant controversy.

Conclusion

"Almost infinitely many men attended his lectures," according to Luke Wadding, an ironically inappropriate tribute to a person interested in precise uses of the term 'infinite'. Still, it shows that Wodeham's reputation was considerable. John Major believed that had it not been for Ockham's political writings, Wodeham would be considered a greater philosopher than Ockham.

Wodeham exercised great influence in the history of philosophy for almost two centuries, from the 1330s until after 1512. But since the sixteenth century, little work has been done in exploring his views. The publication of Wodeham's *Norwich Lectures* has helped to change this somewhat. Until a critical edition of his most important work, the *Oxford Lectures*, is prepared, however, we will continue to be largely ignorant of his thought. This deplorable gap not only leaves us ill-equipped to understand Wodeham's own thought, but the works of John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, John Buridan, and the subsequent tradition of medieval philosophy.

Note

Elizabeth Karger contributed the first five paragraphs of the section on semantics.

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