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[p. 26]

Abstract

This chapter deals with the possible role of medieval scholasticism in early Reformed theology and aims at re-evaluating the triangle of medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation thought. First, the chapter briefly reviews the question of medieval thought in Calvin's theology, it discusses then the role of medieval scholasticism in the emergence of Reformed scholasticism, and it finally focuses on three exemplary cases of post-Reformation theologians and their attitude towards medieval thought: Antoine de Chandieu, Lambert Daneau, and Polanus of Polansdorf. In doing so, the chapter both extends and qualifies the 'positive continuity view' prevalent in recent research: on the one hand, on the level of explicit references, it points to the apparent discontinuity in the expressed attitude towards medieval thought between the first few and the later generations of Reformed theologians. On the other, it argues that on the level of implicit allusions and methodological imitations the doctrinal and methodical continuities between Calvin and later 'Calvinists' can be extended to continuities between late medieval and early Reformed theology.

Keywords

Calvin, Calvinism, medieval thought, continuity, scholasticism, Antoine de Chandieu, Lambert Daneau, Polanus of Polansdorf

CHAPTER 2

Calvin, Calvinism, and Medieval Thought

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The distinction between Calvin and Calvinism that absorbed twentieth-century research on the Reformed tradition was based, to an important extent, on the latter's relation to medieval thought. More or less explicitly, those advocating the thesis of a general deviance from Calvin in later sixteenth- century Reformed theology rooted their claims in the Calvinists' keeping or revitalizing of medieval methods, approaches, and doctrines, and of 'the spirit of Medieval Scholasticism' in particular (Armstrong 1969, 130). In one of the most famous pleas for the distinction, Basil Hall's 'Calvin against the Calvinists' (that centred, as so many others did, on the doctrine of predestination), Calvin's 'more dynamic method and vivid style' was demarcated from 'Beza who reverted to the Medieval scholastic device of placing predestination under the doctrines of God and providence' (Hall 1966, 27). Others claimed that in some intellectual milieus, and in Italy in particular, 'the connection with the Middle Ages was never completely abandoned', so that the growing influence of these milieus on the Reformed tradition would have provoked the presumed alienation from Calvin in post-Reformation Calvinism (Weber 1907, 20; Gründler 1965, 9–16).

On a general level, these researchers had a point. The presence of medieval resources and methods in post-Reformation theology is undeniable, and it is undeniable, too, that medieval thought had no equivalent status among the majority of theologians of the first three generations of the Reformation. While it became almost a matter of course within a Reformed treatise from the 1580s onwards to occasionally refer positively to medieval theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, or Durandus of St Pourçain, such references had no precedent in the first half of

the century. Similarly, it would not have been thinkable for Calvin or any other theologian of his generation to defend an explicitly scholastic approach in such positive terms as Antoine de Chandieu († 1591) or Lambert Daneau († 1595) did.

[p. 27] The question remains, however, whether their interpretation of this difference was correct. As is well known, the distinction between Calvin and Calvinism has seen a radical reassessment in the last decades, with the famous shift from a discontinuity view to an emphasis of the positive continuities in the doctrines and approaches of the first and the later generations of Reformed theologians. Now, to cope with the re-emergence of scholasticism in the second half of the sixteenth century, the defenders of the 'positive continuity theory' claim that even the theologians of the Reformation never opposed scholasticism in a fundamental way: Richard Muller argues that Calvin did not have a critique of scholasticism as such in mind, but only attacked a specific kind of scholastic (Muller 1997; 2001, 51). Willem van Asselt goes as far as stating that a general 'anti-Scholasticism of the Reformation and, especially Calvin's theology, is a later invention' (van Asselt 2013, 13). Hence, in order to justify the continuity, these authors resort to a distinction between scholasticism per se, and scholasticism as it was put into practise in medieval times. The fact that Calvin was against a specific scholasticism in medieval theology did not entail that he was against scholasticism as such, and would have been opposed to what later Calvinists did.

The danger of this solution is, however, that it tends to replace the old distinction between Calvin and Calvinism with the even older one between medieval and early modern thought. Even researchers with a serious interest in the medieval background of Reformed theology are taken by it to excuse post-Reformation developments that seem to revive medieval approaches by stressing the differences between the two eras of scholasticism. They suggest, so to say, that it cannot have been as bad with Calvinism since it was significantly worse in medieval times. Regarding the role of metaphysics in medieval and post-Reformed theology, Carl Trueman accentuates that 'the Orthodox use of metaphysical argumentation is distinctly different to that of the Medievals' (Trueman 2004,

236). Regarding the similarities in the relation between philosophy and theology, Byung Soo Han resorts to stating that the post-Reformation approach 'was not merely a reproduction of the Medieval way' (Han 2015, 105f.). While it is more than welcome that the positive continuity view put an end to hostility towards post-Reformation Calvinism, the tendencies to defer the discontinuity read like passing the buck to medieval theology, and this entails at least two problems. First, it does not explain away but rather blurs the fact that there was, on the level of its explicit appraisal, a fundamental change of attitude and hence a discontinuity between the first and the later generations of Reformed theologians. That is to say, there was a change of attitude with regard to the status of medieval thought. Secondly, if the possibility to defend a continuity in this question induces to claim a discontinuity with the medieval era, it clouds the view of possible continuities between medieval thought and the Reformation with regard not only to medieval and post-Reformation theology, but also to medieval traditions and the first generations of reformers.

This chapter aims at re-evaluating this triangle of medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation thought. It affiliates with the positive continuity view, but it tries not to resort to the subliminal devaluation of medieval thought that this view can bring about. Pursuing the two problems mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it tries to do so by [p. 28] answering two questions: first it asks, on the explicit level of references and statements, about the attitude towards medieval thought among Reformation and post-Reformation theologians. Secondly, it tackles, on the implicit level of tacit allusions and conceptual or methodological imitations the question of a hidden, or even disregarded presence of medieval thought among them. To do so, the chapter will briefly review the question of medieval thought in Calvin's theology. It will then discuss the role of medieval scholasticism in the emergence of Reformed scholasticism. Finally, it focuses on three exemplary cases of post-Reformation theologians that influenced the general attitude to medieval thought in the later Reformed tradition: Antoine de Chandieu, Lambert Daneau, and Polanus of Polansdorf.

Calvin and Medieval Thought

Calvin's negative stance on medieval thought seems apparent. From his very first oeuvre, the *Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia*, he assumed the language—prevalent in humanist and early Reformation circles—of mockery about scholastic sophistries (CO 5, 145). The more he advanced in the first edition of his *Institutes* from 1536, the more he expressed his questioning of traditional theology in the harsh tone of a fundamental critique. The tone even sharpened when, in 1539, the cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto, a confirmed humanist, wrote his famous letter to the Genevans. Trying to convince them to return to the Roman church, Sadoleto argued that in following Calvin the Genevans had fallen for the line of a scholastic obscurantist and his sophistries (CO 5, 371). Outraged about the charge that he was a scholastic, Calvin turned the tables and reminded in his answer to Sadoleto that scholasticism was precisely the kind of obscure doctrine that he and his fellow Reformers had finally left behind:

> Do you remember what kind of time it was when our Reformers appeared, and what kind of doctrine candidates for the ministry learned in the schools? You yourself know that it was mere sophistry, and sophistry so twisted, involved, tortuous, and puzzling, that scholastic theology might well be described as a kind of secret magic. (CO 5, 395f.)

From now on, an explicit demarcation from 'scholastic sophistries' became part of Calvin's common rhetoric. While the 1536 *Institutes* only knew of one invective explicitly against scholastic theology (CO 1, 150f.), the second edition that appeared in the same year as his answer to Sadoleto presented some twenty side blows against the *scholastici sophistae*. And since he never had a reason to reassess this attitude, Calvin continued in this vein in his further career, where similar expressions would reappear both in his systematic and exegetical works (LaVallee 1967; van't Spijker 2001, 205f.).

In general, these invectives remained unspecific. It is true that Calvin distinguished, at some point, between a group of 'more sound scholastics' (*saniores scholastici*) and the [p. 29] more recent sophists (*recentiores sophistae*, CO 1, 319/CO 2, 191), but the only scholastic that he named more than once or twice was Peter Lombard as the 'coryphée' or the 'Pythagoras' of medieval theology (e.g. CO 1, 174, CO 2, 584). Otherwise, Calvin barely specified whom exactly among the scholastics he was dealing with. He almost never openly confronted any of them by name (from the second edition of the *Institutes* on, there are two negative references to Thomas Aquinas: CO 1, 318 and 869/CO 2, 189 and 695; and one to a saying of Occam: CO 1, 343/CO 2, 220), and least of all would he use a medieval scholastic to explicitly substantiate one of his claims. Nevertheless, in order to base his distinction between scholasticism per se and medieval scholastic schools, Richard Muller claimed that in Calvin's most polemic references to the 'scholastic sophists' as such, the Reformer only had the French scholastic milieu of the Sorbonne in mind, as he knew it from his studies in Paris, since he consequently reproduced these references in the French translation of his *Institutes* with 'théologiens sorboniques' (Muller 1997, 255–9). One might ask if this expression really was meant by Calvin to specify his targets, or if it was just common humanist means of badmouthing scholastic theology. (See Farge 1985, 3f.) Either way, this more or less specific polemic does not detract from but confirms the general picture: Whether Calvin rebuked scholasticism in general or its Parisian form in particular, his tone was at best neutral, and far more often negative whenever he explicitly referred to medieval scholasticism. On the level of Calvin's explicit statements, therefore, an attitude of aversion prevailed.

On the implicit level, things are more complicated. Modern research has pointed to a whole set of parallels on conceptual, terminological, and methodological levels between Calvin and exponents of medieval scholasticism. Not only was Calvin's mature theology in line with a range of doctrinal tenets that were also promoted by medieval theologians, and in late medieval Scotism in particular, but he also continued to deploy conceptual distinctions and some of the technical vocabulary developed by medieval scholastics. Both in his systematic and exegetical writings, he used to

organize his material and tackle particular problems in a way that resembled medieval approaches, and it has been claimed that even his preaching method was in line with a particular scholastic practice (Parker 1992; Steinmetz 1995; Muller 2001). Since all this happened on an implicit level without Calvin explicating his sources, the question remains as to what these parallels might mean. Are they strong enough to indicate an intellectual dependency, or do they just provide evidence of a shared theological background with common roots in the biblical and Patristic tradition?

The second half of the last century saw a whole series of studies that sought to relate more strongly the apparent Scotist tenets in Calvin's thought with the late medieval tradition. In particular, scholars focused on the theology of the Scottish philosopher John Mair, who may have taught at the Collège de Montaigu in Paris while Calvin was studying there. While in 1950 François Wendel merely mentioned the possibility of a direct influence, Karl Reuter argued, first in 1963 and then in a modified version in 1981, that Calvin was instructed in medieval theology by the Scottish scholastic, pointing to parallels in their doctrine of God, of sin, and of predestination. In the 1980s the thesis was also maintained in a slightly modified version by Alistair McGrath who inscribed Scotus, [p. 30] Mair, and Calvin into a same late medieval *schola Augustiniana* (Wendel 1950; Reuter 1963; 1981; McGrath 1986). These studies, however, did not find much favour, as their critics identified one fundamental problem in particular. As Alexander Ganoczy pointed out, Calvin never studied *theology* at Montaigu, so he could not have followed Mair's theological classes (Ganoczy 1966). In addition, the earliest parallels to Scotist theology presented by the defenders of the thesis came only from the writings of the mature, and not from the early Calvin, who arguably would have been closest to this supposed medieval background. Finally, the critics offered an alternative chronology suggesting that Calvin and Mair may never have met at Montaigu. So, while even the critics agreed that the later Calvin's theology resembled Scotist thought (Oberman 1987, 38; 1994, 124f.; 2003, 139f.; Steinmetz 1995, 50), the idea of some direct medieval influence on the young Calvin was abandoned and other sources emphasized. In particular, reference was made to

his supposed early reading of Augustine (Lange van Ravenswaay 1990; Oberman 1994, 122; Neuser 2009, 37f.).

There is little doubt that Reuter and McGrath overshot the mark with their claims. Nevertheless, one has also to be careful about the possible pitfalls of their critics. On the one hand, there seems to be an apologetic tendency to date the occurrences of medieval parallels as late as possible in Calvin's biography (at least post 1536) and to reject any identification of Calvin's scholastic teachers. For the later the parallels occur, the more it can be argued that Calvin already had outlined his theology independently of any medieval influence. The less we know about his medieval teachers, the easier it is to claim that he learned his theology directly from biblical and Patristic sources. The energy put into demonstrating that Calvin and Mair may never have met, however, is a rhetorical argument that does nothing for the question. For if it was not Mair, it was another scholastic professor at Montaigu who taught the young Calvin. Similarly, the fact that the defenders did not look into the writings of the early Calvin does not imply that there is nothing to find. In this regard, recent research has pointed to interesting parallels between the very first edition of Calvin's *Institutes* and late medieval Scotism (Slotemaker 2011).

Conversely, the common rejection of Reuter and McGrath seems to be based on a misunderstanding of late medieval scholasticism. It is true that Calvin never studied theology, but from the fifteenth century on, late medieval universities with their *bursae* and *collèges* were organized in such a way that the studies of philosophy were explicitly propaedeutic to one of the theological schools (mainly Thomism, Albertism, and Scotism). The philosophical *viae* introduced young students to the metaphysical presuppositions of a specific approach that embraced, if it was in one of the branches of the *via antiqua*, both philosophy and theology, or that separated the two as in the *via moderna* (Hoenen 2003). So, that Calvin never studied theology implies nothing about his theological preparation, since he grew up in a context in which philosophy was presented with fundamental theological implications. If these implications only appeared on the surface at a later

stage of Calvin's career, this does not necessarily indicate a lack of medieval influence, but may correspond exactly to what was intended by his late medieval philosophical training.

[p. 31] In addition, against what has been claimed by Calvin scholars (Ganozcy 1966, 192; Lange van Ravenswaay 1990, 160), even in philosophical classes, teachers were keen to rely heavily on theological sources and on Augustine in particular. As mentioned above, Augustine has been presented by the critics of Reuter and McGrath as the supposed alternative that shaped the young Calvin's thought. However, the early Calvin's relation to the church father is way more problematic than these critics suggest. A recent reconsideration of the citations of Augustine in the works of the young Calvin has produced no evidence that he had actually read the church father as late as 1536. If anything, from a philological point of view, his references even in the first edition of his *Institutes* are in obvious continuity with late medieval uses of Augustine (Zahnd 2017a). Hence, rather than presenting an alternative, they stress the early Calvin's indebtedness to the late medieval background.

The question of Calvin's intellectual relation to medieval scholasticism is, therefore, far from settled. While, on the level of Calvin's explicit statements, his attitude towards medieval theology was neutral at best, but mostly one of reproach, he was in line by way of implicit acceptance with a broad set of medieval thought, both in a doctrinal and a methodological regard. There is even evidence that Calvin was indebted from the very beginning of his theological career to late medieval theology, but this question needs further analysis, particularly as we still do not know what medieval resources Calvin drew from. While there is discontinuity, thus, as regards Calvin's explicit statements, there might be an implicit continuity not only on the level of some late and incidental parallels in doctrine and method, but at the very core of Calvin's theological project, its presuppositions, and its sources. This twofold relation to medieval thought in general applies also to Calvin's more specific stance on scholasticism. The methodological parallels in Calvin's approach possibly have some of their implicit roots in his first training in Montaigu (see already Ganoczy 1966, 192), but even if he might not have been against scholasticism as such, Calvin would never

have praised a scholastic approach in explicit terms. This attitude would change, however, in the generations after Calvin.

The Re-emergence of Scholasticism

Other than Calvin, Reformed theologians since the last quarter of the sixteenth century had no problem with explicitly adopting a scholastic approach to theology. As one of the first, the Genevan theologian Antoine de la Roche Chandieu published in 1580 a work 'on the Written Word of God Theologically and *Scholastically* Treated'. Throughout the following period Reformed theologians continued to publish explicitly 'scholastic' treatises (Sinnema 1986). Beyond such titles, the re-emergence of a paradigm known from medieval academia was even more evident in the actual implementation of a scholastic methodology. For a long time, the term 'scholasticism' has been taken rather problematically as designating a specific doctrine, and a kind of Aristotelianism in particular. In accordance with the recent reassessment of post-Reformation thought, however, it has [p. 32] been shown that 'scholasticism'—when taken in the sense it was used among the scholastics themselves—rather denotes 'a way of doing theology' than a particular set of doctrines (van Asselt 2013, 15). This was the case even if this 'way' followed a methodology that was based on the Aristotelian concept of science and his syllogistic logic. Without predetermining the conclusions that would end up being defended by it, this method consisted in defining the terms of the debate, presenting the *status quaestionis* and a scientific conclusion with clearly identified opposite views (Muller 2001, 54). Theologians shared it with other disciplines, philosophy in particular, but in Reformed orthodoxy just as in medieval times, it was used only in specific contexts like academic classrooms, disputes, and systematic treatises, however not for preaching and catechesis.

Modern research has seen a long tradition of associating this reappropriation of a medieval approach with the emergence of post-Tridentine Catholic polemics (Jesuit in particular) that started to preoccupy Reformed theologians from the late sixteenth century. In a milieu that was concerned

with its ‘codification’ (van Asselt et al. 2011, 107) in order to ensure the teaching and transmission of Protestant doctrine, Reformed theologians were confronted with the Jesuits, who were so highly skilled in scholastic disputational techniques that the Protestants were thought to have had no choice but to learn the same techniques. While it is true that the Reformed scholastics themselves defended their recourse to medieval approaches with this Jesuit urge (see, e.g. Chandieu 1592, 2), there is once more an apologetic moment in these accounts. Since this return to a medieval methodology felt like the most evident betrayal of the principles of the early Reformation, and of *sola scriptura* in particular, it seemed more tolerable if it was presented as a response to an extrinsic constraint. This Jesuit origin narrative thus fits with the old discontinuity theory, even if it is also defended by adherents of the positive continuity view.

One could ask, however, whether the positive continuity view does not open another perspective on the re-emergence of this medieval paradigm. For if there is at least on an implicit level, as we have seen with Calvin, the possibility of a continuity between medieval and Reformed theology, it seems likely that the scholasticism in post-Reformation theology would not just be a late reaction to an extrinsic reason. This seems particularly true on account of the strong philosophical inclination of scholasticism in both its late medieval and early modern expressions. For from the very beginning of the Reformation the *sola scriptura* principle was complemented, at least from a practical point of view, with a strong notion of magisterial teaching. As early as 1521, Melanchthon published the first edition of his *Loci communes* that were thought to prepare the students for the reading of the Bible, and recent research has emphasized the paradoxical status of philosophy in this *Loci* edition. Philosophy was explicitly rejected, but implicitly used to serve a pedagogical goal (Huiban 2019). Similarly, again in the early 1520s, the disputes with the Anabaptists inclined the theologians who would become part of the magisterial Reformation to stress, in an all but spiritualistic sense, the role of the *doctores* in understanding the Bible. Even if these ‘complements’ to the *sola scriptura* principle were not understood in a scholastic sense, the typically late medieval and somewhat pastoral awareness for teaching, methodology, and for the

role of natural reason in doing [p. 33] theology remained present (Oberman 1974; Hoenen 2013). Hence, it only required—still in the 1520s—a first occasion for a scholastic terminology to reappear, as the Lord's Supper controversy was supposed to make clear. Both Luther and Zwingli resorted to scholastic terminology, distinctions, and arguments (White 1994). Luther and Zwingli were both aware of this bias in their disputes and accused one another of engaging in philosophy rather than theology. Yet, regardless of how they tried to escape, the pattern was laid bare already decades before post-Tridentine polemics, and it would constantly reappear afterwards. For example, the need to tackle both the Anabaptists' and the early Socinians' literalist approaches to the Bible reinforced the use of philosophy in Reformed theology (Kusukawa 1995; Taplin 2003), and in Geneva the debate over the obscurity of the Bible as initiated by Erasmian humanists (and Castellio in particular) motivated Calvin and Beza to resort to logic as an appropriate means in theology (Zahnd 2017b).

It is therefore not surprising that philosophy never disappeared from the curricula of Protestant universities and academies, and that it remained, tellingly, as a propaedeutic science. Despite the fact that for a few decades after the Reformation this philosophy was not taught within an explicitly scholastic framework, an openness to methodologically well-trained teachers and to the use of logic to defend theological positions remained, from its beginnings, a feature intrinsic at least to the magisterial branch of the Reformation. It seems that the combination of these methodological and logical needs almost unavoidably ended up in the re-adoption of scholasticism. Even if other factors may have played an important role—besides the 'Jesuit urge', one could also mention a kind of an institutional inertia given that much of Reformed theological education took place at universities with a medieval past (see, e.g. for Scottish universities Gellera 2019)—it is clear that there was an intrinsic motivation to use this very approach that linked late medieval, Reformation and post-Reformation theology.

A similar case can be made for the re-emergence of positive references to medieval scholastic theologians in post-Reformation theological treatises. Increasingly from the late sixteenth century

Reformed theologians did not hesitate to explicitly and positively cite a whole number of medieval theologians. Given that there are almost no modern editions of texts from that period, and that these texts are mostly unavailable in a digitally searchable form, it is difficult to quantify the presence of these citations. Nevertheless, the fact that they mostly appear without any explicit justification suggests that Reformed theologians were by then familiar with their use. Current research remains undecided about the heuristic value of these citations, often considering it as the mere expression of an eclectic use of resources. In addition, it has again been said that this reappropriation was due above all to polemical reasons. 'In claiming overtly the Catholic past through the incorporation of a larger tradition of the church' Reformed theologians could argue for the superiority of Protestantism (Muller 2001, 62). So, attributing this reappropriation of medieval thoughts to external reasons, the citations of medieval scholastics may be regarded as decorative and somewhat eclectic additions without an intrinsic relation to the Reformed theology defended.

Once more, however, there seems to be a misunderstanding with regard to the late medieval intellectual landscape. For example, there has been a recent debate between [p. 34] Richard Muller and Antonie Vos on the role of Scotism in post-Reformed theology (Vos 2011; Muller 2012). This debate, however, focuses on the Scotist notion of 'univocity of being' as if the search for a *Zentraldogma* that has finally been abandoned with regard to Reformed theology would still work for late medieval intellectual traditions. Just as with the diversity of Reformed theology, it needs to be stressed that many of the '-isms' applied to late medieval thought can refer to quite different realities depending, for example, on whether they are used in a philosophical or theological context. It has been observed with regard to Scotism, in particular, how complex and manifold this intellectual tradition was as it lacked a clear institutional setting and could thus influence most different schools of thought (Hoenen 1998). Just as medieval scholastics were not 'Lombardians' simply because they used Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and just as early modern Catholic theologians were not all Thomists simply because they commented on Thomas' *Summa*, modern research has also pointed to Reformed theologians that cited Thomas Aquinas to defend a doctrine that was

Scotist in its essence and vice versa (van Asselt and Dekker 2001, 36; Bac and Pleizier 2010). It is not wrong, of course, to highlight the polemical and, therefore, eclectic value of these citations, but this should not hold off from raising the question whether they do not indicate, as well, a deeper connection between medieval and Reformed thought. The next section presents three theologians on the cusp of an explicitly positive use of medieval theology. They will show that their medieval resources were not arbitrarily chosen for simply polemical purposes.

Three Examples: Antoine de Chandieu, Lambert Daneau, and Polanus of Polansdorf

One of the most interesting figures in the revival of an explicit and positively connoted use of medieval thought is Antoine de Chandieu. While it is true that other Reformed theologians before Chandieu (and the other two discussed here) already started to implicitly strengthen a scholastic paradigm in their work—such as Theodore Beza, Peter Martyr Vermigli, or Franciscus Junius—it is with Chandieu that the role of medieval thought was explicitly reassessed. Born in 1534 in a noble family of Burgundy, Chandieu adopted the Reform in the 1550s after having met Calvin in Geneva. Quitting his initial career as a lawyer he quickly became one of the leading figures of French Protestantism (van Raalte 2018). During the religious wars, he was exiled several times to Lausanne and Geneva. Given the pressure the civil wars put on the Protestant church in his homeland, Chandieu invested himself more and more in finding and consolidating solid structures to protect French Protestantism. This is where he also begun to reflect on the appropriate methods of teaching theology and finally came up with the open propagation of a scholastic approach as he explained most clearly in the aforementioned treatise 'on the Written Word of God' from 1580.

[p. 35] Several points in this treatise are worth noting. First, it quickly becomes apparent that Chandieu himself considered his propagation of a scholastic approach as a methodical turnaround that was in objectionable proximity to medieval scholasticism. In order to explain himself, he felt

the need to open with a long introductory letter to his readers and a detailed preface that comprised almost a fourth of the whole treatise. At one point in the preface, he even imposed on himself to explain whether his recommendation of this particular method included 'the writings of the scholastic doctors, too, and those in particular who once flowed out of the sources of the Lombard' (Chandieu 1592, 6). Hence, and this is the second point to note, in face of what looked like an obvious break with previous Reformed approaches Chandieu adopted an attitude of defence and developed a whole series of strategies to excuse his choice—some of which still can be found in modern research. Besides resorting to the Jesuit urge, Chandieu differentiated between several kinds of scholasticism. On the one hand, he distinguished between medieval scholasticism and that of contemporary Jesuits, with a clear preference for the former. He claims in one place that he holds 'one Scotus in higher esteem than all these new monks together' (Chandieu 1592, 355a). On the other, he distinguished between any kind of 'papal scholasticism' and scholasticism as such. For this is what opened the possibility of adopting a scholastic approach without necessarily continuing a Catholic tradition. If there was a kind of pure scholasticism different from what the medievals had used and the Jesuits still practised, there was no problem in using this approach, for there was no continuity.

Chandieu himself tried therefore to defend his approach by deferring an alleged discontinuity. This was mainly a rhetorical move, however. When presenting what he considered to be the pure form of scholasticism—he called it 'the truly analytical method'—he distinguished it from its medieval version with one argument in particular:

> Given that the scholastic doctors did not follow this true and analytical approach [. . .], but almost only played around with probabilities and with futile and bellicose arguments, it seems to me that they did not introduce the veritable use, but rather an abuse of philosophy into the church. (Chandieu 1592, 6f.)

This abuse became apparent in one point: other than what Chandieu thought to be due, the medievals had always argued, in their *quaestiones*, both for the pros and the cons of a theological

problem, introducing thus what he called a ‘topical’ approach that suggested both sides to be possibly true. Medieval, and even more so, Jesuit scholasticism was thus founded, for Chandieu, only on probable and not on true arguments, so that he accused them of engaging too much in rhetoric! In light of the common humanist critique of scholasticism and of its lack of interest in rhetoric, this is a surprising charge, but it is telling for Chandieu’s situation. Under the pressure of the religious controversies, rhetorical arguments did not provide stable ground on which to consolidate his church (Zahnd 2017b). To accuse traditional scholasticism of being ‘topical’ thus served a double goal: not only did it clear scholasticism as such for an open revival in Reformed [p. 36] milieus, but it also incriminated its humanist counterpart without Chandieu having to name it in that manner: the ‘bad guy’ remained medieval scholasticism.

Hence, on an explicit level, Chandieu continued the critical stance against medieval scholasticism. In light of his cautious and defensive explanations it was apparent, however, that he knew that he was choosing a path that others had tried to obviate, precisely because of its proximity with medieval thought. Yet, interestingly, and this is the third point to note about Chandieu, this chosen proximity started to affect his own use of theological resources. Not only scholasticism as an approach, but more and more scholastic theologians found their way into his writings. The posthumous *Opera theologica* edition—Chandieu had died in 1591 in Geneva—indexes sixteen medieval resources (besides thirty-six patristic ones) from which he drew, with Gratian and Thomas Aquinas the two most cited. Many of these citations served as evidence for the transgressions of medieval theology, but Chandieu also found a positive approach, mostly to argue with their backing against current Catholic doctrine. They were also used at times to corroborate a Reformed tenet. It was neither Gratian nor Thomas, however, who appears at the most crucial theological points, but Scotus and, to a lesser extent, Pierre d’Ailly. Chandieu cites them to confirm that all doctrine necessary for humanity is contained in scripture, that there is no satisfaction for our sins other than in virtue of Christ’s passion, and to question the doctrine of transubstantiation and the special state of bishops (Chandieu 1592, 35b, 136a, 435b, 781a). Hence, as a consequence of his methodological

openness towards scholasticism, Chandieu also found a cautiously positive approach to medieval scholastics.

This turn towards an explicitly positive use of medieval theology is even more evident with Lambert Daneau. Born in about 1530 in north-central France, Daneau—like Chandieu—first studied law, but adopted the Reformed faith in 1560 and switched to a career as a theologian (Fatio 1976). After the St Bartholomew's Day massacre he fled to Geneva, where he taught at the academy and published (only a few months after Chandieu's defence of scholastic methodology) a unique work in the Protestant tradition, namely a commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (Daneau 1580). Reverting to what he considered the backbone of medieval theology, Daneau pursued in this work a much more polemical goal than Chandieu. In a scrupulous analysis of every distinction of the first book of the *Sentences*, he intended to show the depravity of this core of the medieval theological tradition and thus of medieval theology itself. Aware of Chandieu's treatise, the only positive thing he accorded medieval theologians was their intention to use a strict methodology. Building on Chandieu's distinction between 'papal scholasticism' and 'true scholasticism', Daneau invested long prolegomena—providing one of the first histories of medieval scholasticism—and then used the commentary itself to prove their failure in the application of this method.

In order to corroborate this claim, Daneau also adduced some medieval commentators of the *Sentences* whose quarrels in interpreting Lombard were meant to evidence the corrupted state of medieval thought. The more he advanced, however, the more he realized that he could use these theologians to pursue his proper objectives, for neither [p. 37] did they all slavishly follow Lombard, nor was what they wrote just curious absurdity. While, at the beginning of his commentary, he mainly mocked the medieval 'sophists', he ended up hailing every now and then what Thomas Aquinas 'most clearly' and Ockham 'most truly' said, be it to criticize Lombard or to promote one of Daneau's own theological concepts (e.g. Daneau 1580, 78 vs. 624 and 680f.; see Zahnd 2016). Even if Daneau never went as far as revoking his polemical stance against medieval thought the door was now open for him to positively rely on medieval resources. His commentary

reads as if those scholastics with whom he was acquainted were an exception from what he presented as scholasticism. In his later career (leaving Geneva in 1581, Daneau taught in Leyden, Orthez, and Castres, where he died in 1595), he regularly cited medieval theologians, and Thomas Aquinas in particular, to substantiate and corroborate his own claims. At some places he even used the backing of Thomas to defend a tenet that would not become a typical part of Reformed doctrine, such as a clear stance for intellectualism or the idea of the *vestigia trinitatis* in creation (Strohm 1996, 521).

The third and final Reformed theologian presented here who illustrates the transition towards an open appreciation of medieval thought is Amandus Polanus. Born a generation later in 1561 in Lutheran Silesia, Polanus chose to study theology in Tübingen, but quickly had to leave this Lutheran university for defending Reformed positions, and Lambert Daneau in particular. He continued his studies in Basel, Geneva, and Heidelberg, and after working several years as a tutor, he became professor in Basel, where he died in 1610 (Han 2015). Polanus published his first theological work in 1590, and with regard to the medieval tradition he immediately proved that he was aware of Chandieu's distinction between 'papal' and 'true' scholasticism. While he numbered 'the scholastics' together with canon lawyers and monks among 'the impure spirits from the devil's mouth', he claimed that the duty of teachers consisted in a 'scholastic and exploratory exegesis of God's word' (Polanus 1590, 146 and 155). Hence, on the terminological level, a fundamental aversion to medieval thought was still evident in Polanus' first work. But the more he advanced, the more he also adopted Daneau's strategy of using medieval theology against papal doctrine, and he ended up advancing a decisive step further than Daneau. Realizing that important tenets of Reformed doctrine were in line with at least some of the currents of medieval thought, Polanus used them more and more positively in his writings. He finally published, in 1607, a *Symphonia catholica*, a symphony of 'catholic' theologians from ancient to medieval and Reformed times (Polanus 1607). Evidencing the huge doctrinal continuity over the eras, Polanus invoked, among others, Lombard, Thomas, Scotus, the medieval biblical commentators, and Jean Gerson not simply

to demonstrate some accidental agreements, but to disclose intrinsic doctrinal familiarities. Hence, in his last work, a huge synopsis of Reformed theology, some of these medieval authors, and Scotus in particular, could even figure as theological models for what Polanus was intended to present (Polanus 1609; see Muller 2003, 225). From an initial aversion and polemical use, Polanus had turned to positively recognize the common roots and doctrinal continuities between medieval and Reformed theology.

[p. 38] *Conclusion*

As the examples of Chandieu, Daneau, and Polanus have shown, there was a clear change of mentality regarding medieval thought at the end of the sixteenth century. These Reformed theologians started to adopt an explicitly scholastic approach and used the works of medieval theologians in positive terms that would not have been acceptable among the first three generations of reformers. This is not to say that medieval concepts and approaches were absent in earlier times, but if they were adopted by Reformation theologians it happened on an implicit level. As the example of Chandieu and Polanus have shown, however, it was this implicit presence that fostered an explicit reappropriation of medieval thought, so that there is both continuity and discontinuity with regard to medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation theology. The open appraisal of medieval thought in post-Reformation times was new, but this opening built on doctrinal and methodological conformities that seem to have been continuously present even in early Reformation thought.

In view of these 'intrinsic' continuities, the most interesting question is to what extent medieval theology positively influenced and shaped the Reformed tradition. Notwithstanding the general reassessment of post-Reformation thought in the last decades, we are not yet well situated to answer this question. This is due to several reasons apart from the obvious one that we still lack the necessary studies that present the positive continuity view. In particular, there are two rather

historiographical factors with which future research will have to deal. First, there still seems to be a disinclination in modern research to actually find intellectual dependencies between Reformed and medieval thought, as if this was a threat not only to the purity of Reformed doctrine, but to the modernity of Calvin and Calvinism (as opposed to Luther's rootedness in medieval traditions). The apologetic tones in the biography of the young Calvin and the search for extrinsic reasons to explain the emergence of Reformed scholasticism both tend towards a kind of 'innocenting' of the Reformed tradition. One could add the notion of 'eclecticism' that is often put forward when it comes to explaining the use of medieval resources by post-Reformation theologians. By definition, an eclectic thinker cannot depend on a particular intellectual tradition and seems thus to be preserved from any specific influence and traditionalism. This tendency, however, is subliminally confessional (as if medieval thought was something to avoid) and thus it rather impedes than promotes historical research. This is not to say that there were no extrinsic factors fostering the revival of scholasticism and that there were no eclectic post-Reformation theologians at all, but researchers have to be particularly prudent in applying this kind of terminology, for it tends to serve an implicit historiographical agenda that is as old as the Reformed tradition itself.

Second, as the first two sections of this chapter have shown, there are still many misunderstandings about late medieval scholasticism, the functioning of its intellectual traditions, and its institutional setting. One could mention once more the notion of [p. 39] 'eclecticism', for late medieval theologians (just as early modern catholic scholastics) were no less eclectic in their use of medieval sources than Reformed scholastics, but nevertheless inscribed into specific intellectual traditions. A reassessment of the relationship between medieval and Reformed thought requires, in addition to an obvious erudition in early modern theology, a thorough knowledge of late medieval scholasticism. Given the strong philosophical inclination of scholasticism in both its late medieval and early modern expressions, familiarity is also needed with both its theological and philosophical approaches. This is not an easy task given the modern universities' curricula, where the year 1500 still represents a strong institutional and disciplinary gap. However, to understand the

continuities (and also to accentuate the real discontinuities), a truly interdisciplinary and inter-periodically approach is essential.

There is a final point to be made. One of the medieval names that reappeared throughout this chapter among the rather positively received medieval thinkers was the Franciscan John Duns Scotus. Yet, since Denifle's *Luther und Luthertum* (1904) there has been an apologetic tradition in Catholic research to inscribe the emergence of Reformed theology into precisely some kind of Franciscan tradition, as opposed to truly Catholic Thomism, one of the most recent contributions to this scheme being Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation* (2012). These are historical shortcuts, of course, that compare selected ideas and doctrines over the centuries without regard to their context in order to draw conclusions about the influence or continuity of any '-ism', be it nominalism or voluntarism. But the reaction to such historiographical shortcuts cannot be simply to deny the late medieval roots of the Reformation, as researchers throughout the twentieth century and still in the last two decades have tended to do. On the contrary, the point has been long made (Oberman 1994, 123f.; Trueman 2004, 227) that intellectual history builds on a careful contextualization, clearly distinguishing between explicit and implicit levels of reception, and considering the availability (and knowledge) of sources in different geographical areas. It is only with a meticulous analysis of the texts, their doctrinal, social, and geographical contexts, and with an analysis based on an appropriate and unprejudiced understanding of the late medieval background that the role of medieval thought in the shaping of the Reformed tradition may be properly assessed.

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