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Zahnd, Ueli

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*Daniel Heider
Claus A. Andersen
(eds.)*

COGNITIVE ISSUES IN THE LONG SCOTIST TRADITION

SCHWABE VERLAG

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The Epistemological Limits of Religious Images

On the Scotist Sources of a Reformed Theological Tenet

Ueli Zahnd

Introduction

The question of religious images, as it was debated in Western theology from the 14th to 17th century, transformed the religious landscape of important parts of Europe. The abolition of images by the Lollards in England, the rejection of representations of the divine in Hussite communities, and the vast iconoclasm in Reformed territories provoked a reorganization of religious rites and customs that put an end to essential components of medieval piety.¹ In addition to this practical dimension, however, the question was also of fundamental epistemological concern. This paper argues that the Scotist heritage played a more important role in this epistemological debate than is usually acknowledged.² It is true that Scotus himself never addressed the veneration of images in any of his works,³ but with his metaphysics of the infinite, and his insistence on the radical difference between extracategorical being on the one hand, and finite, categorical being on the other, the status of religious images and of their capacity to direct a human mind to a true cognition of the divine was thoroughly questioned. At least, this is a type of argumentation that was common in the Reformation debate about images. When, in 1525, the Swiss Reformer Huldrych Zwingli defended in Zurich the abolition of religious images, he did not simply invoke bib-

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1 See the articles collected in Scribner (ed.): *Bilder und Bildersturm*, as well as Marchal, “Bildersturm im Mittelalter” and Jones, “Lollards and Images.”

2 Except in over-generalizing ways (as in Houtepen, “The Dialectics of the Icon,” 58), Scotus does not appear in studies on the theology of images; see, e.g., Wirth, “Die Bestreitung des Bildes”, *id.*, “Theorien zum Bilderkult,” Marchal, “Das vieldeutige Heiligenbild,” and Iserloh, “Bildfeindlichkeit.”

3 At least not in the expected place in one of his commentaries on Book III, dist. 9, of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, nor in his quodlibetal questions, see also Wirth, “La critique scolastique,” 106. The discussion that comes closest to a doctrine of religious images is the one on angelic cognition in Duns Scotus, *Ord.* II, dist. 3, p. 2, q. 2, where he denies that the image of God in angels can be a source of their cognizing God, see LaZella, “Remainders and Reminders of the Divine.”

lical authority with, in particular, the prohibition of images according to the Decalogue, but he argued that images “mislead the consciences” of believers: images, as created things, were not able to provide true knowledge about God.⁴ Similarly, John Calvin spoke of religious images as “mendacious signs,” and he said, at some place, that there is “nothing less fitting than to wish to reduce God, who is immeasurable and incomprehensible, to the five-foot measure” of a statue.⁵ As a consequence, in the Reformed, Calvinist tradition, religious images were removed from the churches, which is all the more noteworthy since Martin Luther and the Lutheran tradition were by no means as opposed to images as these Reformed theologians. The Lutherans rejected, of course, the medieval *veneration* of images, but they did not *ban* images from their churches, considering them neutral as regards personal devotion, and keeping crosses and altar pieces as part of their religious culture.⁶

Within the Protestant camp, there were thus two opposed stances on the question of images. In what follows, I would like to explore the hypothesis that the arguments brought forward by Early Modern *Reformed* Theologians in order to defend their rejection of religious images was rooted in an epistemological framework which was essentially Scotist. This does not seem completely baseless, for two reasons. First, a few years ago, I came across a treatise written by the famous late 15th-century Scotist Stephan Brulefer, who had produced a collection of ten propositions on the depictability of the Trinity.⁷ Brulefer, building on the incommensurability of categorical and extra-categorical being, was rather clear about what he thought of such images meant to depict the divine persons that prevailed in the material culture of the late 15th century. In the first proposition, he stated with regard to images of God the Father:

4 Zwingli, “Eine Antwort, Valentin Compar gegeben,” 149: “Sy sind warlich, warlich nütz anders weder ein verfuernus der conscientzen und vogel kutzen des bapstuoms. Das hatt mit dem mißbruch der meß, mit der bycht, fegfür und götzendienst me guots zemengelegt, denn die gantz welt mit barem gelt erkouffen möchte uff ein mal. Daran wäre aber der minste schad, wenn nit die conscientzen so verderblich damit verfuert wärint.” Cf. *ibid.*, 120: “mag ouch ieman an eim stummenden bild one underricht des wortes den waren got und herren Jesum Christum lernen erkennen?”

5 Calvin, *Institutio Christianae religionis*, I, chapt. 11, n. 4, 77: “nihil minus consentaneum, quam velle Deum, qui immensus est ac incomprehensibilis, redigere ad quinque pedum mensuram”; see *ibid.*, n. 5, 78: “Hinc generalis colligenda est doctrina, futile esse, adeo que mendax, quidquid de Deo ex imaginibus homines didicerint.”

6 See Lentens, “Zwischen Adiaphora und Artefakt,” and Eusterschulte, “Der reformulierte Bilderstreit.”

7 On Brulefer, who is best known for his tract on the formal distinction that was reprinted throughout the 16th century, see Zahnd, “Easy-Going Scholars,” 299–311; on his *Positio decem propositionum* see also Zahnd, “Bildkritik,” 222–224 (with a German translation of the ten propositions).

There is no proportion or similarity of the uncreated paternity with created paternity, or of God the Father with a human father. [...] [Thus,] an image that depicts the Father in the shape of an old bearded man wrongly and falsely represents what is imagined, and it totally leads to heresy. [...] For it is downright heretical to assume that the Father *is* such as represented by it, which is however what simple and unlearned people in particular are led to firmly believe by such an illustration [my emphasis].⁸

Later on, in the ninth proposition, Brulefer added regarding the Trinity:

Every entity which is entirely insensible, incomprehensible and unimaginable is entirely undepictable and unsculpturable. Yet, the divine entity is entirely insensible, incorporeal and uncircumscribable, incomprehensible and unimaginable. Therefore, it can in no way be depicted or sculptured, for what is depicted or sculptured is imagined in some way by the artist and circumscribed by him.⁹

Brulefer identified, so to say, two different cognitive issues in the question of religious images: one regarding the mind of the artist who preconceived an unconceivable entity, and the other regarding the mind of the simple folk who was misled by images to a wrong conception of the divine.¹⁰ Both issues were also present in the Reformed debate, and this brings us to the second reason why it is not unfounded to assume a somewhat Scotist background to the Reformed rejection of images. Brulefer, in fact, was avidly read by none other than Huldrych Zwingli himself as we know from Zwingli's personal library that still exists in Zurich. Besides some volumes by Scotus and other Scotists (Francis of Meyronnes, John of Cologne, Nicholas de Orbellis), Zwingli owned two volumes of Brulefer that are full of marginal notes and underlinings from Zwingli's hand.¹¹

⁸ Brulefer, *Positio decem propositionum an personae in divinis sint ut usus habet depingendae*, Prop. 1, 19r–v: “Nulla est habitudo seu similitudo Paternitatis increatae ad paternitatem creatam, seu Patris in divinis ad patrem hominem. [...] huiusmodi imago aut sculptura qua depingitur Pater in divinis aut figuratur sub effigie hominis antiqui barbati est false et erronee representativa sui imaginati, et ad haeresim penitus ductiva. [...] Nam simpliciter haereticum est asserere Patrem in divinis esse talem qualis per eam repraesentatur. Ad quod tamen credendum firmiter inducuntur potissime simplices et rudes per talem ymaginationem.”

⁹ Brulefer, *Positio decem propositionum*, Prop. 9, 23r–v: “Omnis entitas penitus insensibilis, incomprehensibilis et unimaginabilis est penitus indepingibilis et infigurabilis. Sed entitas divina est entitas penitus insensibilis, incorporea et incircumscripibilis, incomprehensibilis et unimaginabilis. Igitur nullo modo est depingibilis aut figurabilis [...] quia quod depingitur seu figuratur aliquo modo imaginatur a pictore et ab eodem quodammodo circumscribitur.”

¹⁰ Since the fundamental problem lies ultimately at the level of mental representations, systematic connections to other doctrinal discussions emerge, such as the question of mental representations in the beatific vision. However, it would lead too far to discuss that here as well; see Cross, “Beatific Union with God.”

¹¹ See already Schindler, “Zwinglis Randbemerkungen”, Sallmann, *Zwischen Gott und Mensch*, 184–97, and in particular Bolliger, *Infiniti Contemplatio*. For the present purpose, a passage in Brulefer, *Reportata*, I, dist. 2, q. 1, 23v, is particularly interesting, where Zwingli

Yet, even if there is thus a historical link between Brulefer and one of the protagonists of the Reformed tradition, underscoring their shared epistemological critique of images, the question remains as to the extent to which Brulefer himself is inscribed, on this issue, in Late Medieval Scotism. Therefore, in what follows, I would like to trace back what happened in Late Medieval Scotism between Scotus and Brulefer as regards the question of images, and to see to what extent Brulefer, and after him the Reformed tradition, can be regarded as representatives of a Scotist epistemological framework. I intend to do this mainly by looking at several commentaries on the *Sentences*, Book III, distinction 9, for this was the place where the question of the adoration of images was usually discussed. The thesis I will defend is that, in this medieval period, the cognitive dimension of Scotus's metaphysics as regards the question of images was passed over for a long time and only came to notice in reaction to the Hussite revolution.¹² Once it was identified, though, it became part of an intellectual current that eventually led to the Reformed view on images.

1. From Bonaventure to Scotus

In late medieval theology, the common place to discuss religious images and their veneration is in Book III, distinction 9, of the commentaries on Lombard's *Sentences*. In this part, the Lombard deals with the incarnation and its consequences, and discussed whether Christ in his human nature and as a human being should be adored with *latria* – *latria*, according to scholastic terminology, being the kind of veneration reserved for God alone and thus distinguished from *dulia*, a weaker form of adoration.¹³ Typically, scholastics of the 13th century would affirm, however, that *latria* is the appropriate veneration owed to the *humanity* of Christ as well, for, as Bonaventure puts it:

Although when taken for itself Christ's human nature would have had to be adored with *dulia*, given that his body is never separated from his divine nature, it always has to be considered as conjoined to it and thus it always has to be worshiped with *latria*.¹⁴

underlined the following text: “Unde errant hi qui depingunt trinitatem (quod tamen viget multum in alemania)” (see Bolliger, *Infiniti Contemplatio*, 652). On Zwingli's personal library, see now the catalogue by Leu/Weidmann, *Zwingli's Private Library* (in particular, entries n° 63, 111, 138 f., 171 f. and A73).

¹² On this “mechanism” of doctrinal renewal by answering heterodox challenges to the question of images, see Balzamo, *Les êtres artificiels*, 89.

¹³ See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II^a–II^{ae}, q. 103, art. 3, 525b.

¹⁴ Bonaventura, *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 1, 200b–1a: “Humana natura Christi, quatenus semper est Verbo unita, semper adoranda est latria. [...] Concedendum est ergo, quod non solum Christus homo adorandus est latria, sed etiam humanitas eius, in quantum est Verbo unita, quamvis, prout per se consideratur nunquam ei debeatur

In the same manner, Bonaventure argues in regard to other created entities with an intrinsic link to Christ, that is, the cross as an instrument of the redemption of mankind, but also other crosses as signs of this redemption, and, accordingly, also in regard to images of Christ:

Since images of Christ have been introduced to represent him who has been crucified for us, so that they do not stand for themselves, but for him, therefore every reverence that is given to them is presented to Christ and thus the veneration of *latria* has to be shown to images of Christ.¹⁵

Typical for this 13th-century approach – Thomas Aquinas argued in similar terms¹⁶ – is the fact that there seems to be only a gradual difference between the divine and the created sphere. For example, Bonaventure illustrated the one adoration that is due to both natures in the one person of Christ, with the one reverence that someone presents to a human being without distinguishing between her head and her feet;¹⁷ and when he came to argue for the adoration of images of Christ, he countered the objection that material images might be an improper means to represent Christ by stating that “a thing of smaller value can designate a noble thing.”¹⁸ Apparently, just as the head and feet of a person are only gradually distinct, and things of smaller or greater nobility still share a common measure in the category of quantity, the question of the adoration of Christ and his images seems to have remained inscribed for Bonaventure in the gradual measurement of a more and a less.

With Scotus’s understanding of extra-categorical being, however, this seems to have been no longer possible. It is true, as already said, that Scotus does not explain himself on the status of religious images, but his treatment of Book III, dist. 9, of the *Sentences* is nevertheless significant. For, in contrast to Bonaven-

nisi dulia. Et quoniam caro Christi nunquam est separata a Verbo, ideo semper consideranda est ut coniuncta et semper adoranda est latria.”

15 Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 2, 203b–4a: “Quoniam igitur imago Christi introducta est ad repraesentandum eum qui pro nobis crucifixus est, nec offert se nobis pro se, sed pro illo, ideo omnis reverentia, quae ei offertur, exhibetur Christo. Et propterea imagini Christi debet cultus latriae exhiberi.”

16 See Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, q. 25, art. 3, 171b. For a similar observation in regard to the specific case of divine and human cognition, see Giorgio Pini’s contribution to this present volume.

17 Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 1, 201a: “Quia est una persona in Christo, cui debetur reverentia summa, una adoratione adoranda est, scilicet latria, quantum ad utramque naturam, scilicet Deitatem et humanitatem, sicut eadem adoratione adoratur in uno homine caput et pes.”

18 Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 2, 204a: “Res parvi valoris rem nobilem significare potest. Cum ergo adoratur imago, non adoratur ratione nobilitatis, quam habet in se, sed ratione nobilitatis significatae in se.”

ture or Aquinas, Scotus maintains that Christ's human nature as belonging to the realm of created things should not be adored with *latria*, but with some excellent kind of *dulia*, namely *hyperdulia*.¹⁹ Asking whether *latria* was owed to Christ only according to his divine nature – *utrum Christo debeatur latria solum secundum naturam divinam* –, Scotus develops his position by means of a distinction of what could be meant by 'only' (*solum* or *solummodo*). He already introduced this distinction in Book I, dist. 21 of the *Ordinatio* where he had asked if it is true that *only* the Father is God.²⁰ The distinction he used is the one between the categorematic and the syncategorematic meaning of 'solum,' that is, the meaning the word has when grammatically standing alone (S1), or when standing in conjunction with another term (S2). In Book I, Scotus had explained that the autonomous, categorematic meaning of 'solum' (S1) is 'not with something else' (*non cum alio*),²¹ and with reference to this meaning, he could now say in Book III:

Taken the first way [that is, the categorematic one], I concede [what is asked], for there is a sufficient reason of the highest adorable in Christ when he is considered according to his sole divine nature.²²

In other words, taken this way, the *quaesitum* was to concede since it was not necessary to combine Christ's divine nature with something else in order to have to adore it with *latria*. More interesting, and more to the point, however, is the syncategorematic meaning (S2) of 'solum,' that is, whether Christ's divine nature *alone* is to be adored with *latria*. Once more, Scotus introduced a distinction:

The term 'solummodo' can exclude something, either from what is the target [*termino*] of adoration [S2a], or from what is the cause [*ratione*] of adoration [S2b]. Taken the first way, I say that Christ is not to be adored exclusively according to his divine nature,

¹⁹ Usually, *hyperdulia* was reserved for Mary, see Bonaventure, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 3, 206a, and Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, q. 25, art. 5, 173b.

²⁰ Duns Scotus, *Ord.* I, dist. 21, q. un., n. 1 (ed. Vat. V), 323: "Utrum haec sit vera 'solus Pater est Deus'."

²¹ Duns Scotus, *Ord.* I, dist. 21, q. un., n. 2 (ed. Vat. V), 325: "[...] 'solus' potest teneri categorematicae vel syncategorematicae. 'Solus' enim significat idem quod 'non cum alio,' sicut patet per Philosophum I *Elenchorum*."

²² Duns Scotus, *Ord.* III, dist. 9, q. un., n. 21 (ed. Vat. IX), 325–26: "De tertio articulo, cum quaeritur an debeatur Christo latria solummodo secundum naturam divinam, – dico quod ly 'solummodo' potest accipi dupliciter, scilicet categorematicae vel syncategorematicae: Primo modo, concedo quod sic, quia Christo – considerato secundum solam naturam divinam – sufficiens est in eo ratio summi adorabilis."

for the human nature should not be excluded as if the whole person could not be adored when including it.²³

In this first way of the syncategorematic understanding (S2a) Scotus concedes thus that Christ's human nature could also be adored with *latria*, but he immediately made it clear that this is not a huge concession: for, as he says, it is not adored in a 'copulative,' but only in an 'associative' way.²⁴ He explains the meaning of this with the example of a king wearing a purple robe:

Even if the king must be honored because of himself and in himself, he nevertheless must also be adored with the robe he wears, however without that robe being the cause of honor. In the same way, the flesh of Christ should not be adored in the Word as if it was the motive of the adoration in the Word.²⁵

Peter Lombard had already cited this example of the king's robe, but he had done so to show that only when the robe was found lying around it would not have to be revered, while it must be revered *with* the king when worn by him.²⁶ Scotus, however, uses this example to stress that, even when worn by the king, the robe is not the proper object of reverence. Accordingly, understanding 'solum' in the second syncategorematic way (S2b), that is, restricting the *cause* of adoration, Scotus concludes:

It can be said that [Christ] is *only* to be adored according to the divine nature, excluding the other [human] nature as a cause of adoration, since no other [than the divine nature] is the cause [...] of adoration.²⁷

23 *Ibid.*, n. 22, 326: "Si autem teneatur syncategorematicè, tunc notat exclusionem ab uno extremo respectu alterius extremi. Hoc modo distinguo, quia aut potest aliud excludi ut a termino adorationis vel ut a ratione adorandi. Primo modo, dico quod non solummodo secundum naturam divinam est Christus sic adorandus, quia a termino adorationis non debet excludi natura humana, quasi ipsam includendo non possit totum adorari."

24 *Ibid.*, n. 23, 326–27: "'Cum' accipitur associative, non autem copulative, ut sit sensus: 'adoramus Verbum cum carne, id est habens carnem sibi unitam,' non autem 'cum carne, hoc est et carnem adoramus' ita quod sit propositio copulativa."

25 *Ibid.*, n. 24, 327: "Exemplum ad hoc est de rege et purpura, quia etsi rex propter se et in se sit adorandus, tamen ipse cum purpura adjuncta: ut purpura sibi adjuncta non est causa adorationis, ita caro non est ita adorabilis in Verbo, ut sit ratio adorationis in Verbo."

26 Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, III, dist. 9, c. 5, 71: "Si quis purpuram vel diadem regale iacens inveniat, numquid ea conabitur adorare? Cum vero ea rex fuerit indutus, periculum mortis incurrit si ea cum rege adorare quis contempserit." Lombard wrongly attributed the example to Augustine.

27 Duns Scotus, *Ord.* III, dist. 9, q. un., n. 25 (ed. Vat. IX), 327–28: "Secundo modo, scilicet prout ly 'solummodo' excludit aliquid ut rationem adorandi, potest dici quod solummodo secundum naturam divinam est adorandus, excludendo aliam naturam ut est ratio adorandi, quia nulla alia est ratio summi dominii, et ideo nec adorationis debitae summo Domino."

Except for the rather weak case of syncategorematical adoration in the first sense (S2a), Scotus votes, thus in opposition to the scholastic tradition before him, against an adoration of Christ's human nature with *latria*, stressing the gap between the realm of created, finite things and of the divine.²⁸ The examples he puts forward – even if they are already present in the discussion before him – also underscored this gap, for there is a more essential distinction between a king and his robe than between the head and the feet of a human body, and at another place, Scotus also advanced the example of the conjunction of soul and body in one person, which again are two ontologically well distinct entities.²⁹ In doing so, Scotus accentuates his reservation to commit a categorical error by treating things belonging to the realm of finite being as if they were divine. But as already said, this is all he does in *Ord.* III, dist. 9; he does not develop this reservation any further as regards the adoration of the cross or of images of Christ.

2. 14th-Century Developments

It is interesting to note that, in the immediate context of Scotus, most scholastics do not seem to have been eager to continue the direction taken by Scotus on this issue of the theology of the incarnation. The only Franciscan I found in his aftermath who applied Scotus's position and even held that, in any regard, Christ's human nature is to be adored with *hyperdulia*, is Peter Auriol. Tackling the problem from the perspective of what is revered – either a divine or created object –, he denies that these objects only differ gradually as if it were merely a matter of a stronger or weaker degree:

Rather, I say that they are of a completely different kind, because however much one would add to the dependency on a created thing, it would never reach the one which is on God. Therefore, the act that follows necessarily in the will from the former, is of a different kind than the one that follows from the latter.³⁰

²⁸ Given the importance the concept of univocity has in Scotus's thought, this stressing of the gap between the worldly and the divine sphere might not seem very typical for him. Even when he presented, however, his notion of univocity, Scotus was clear about the incapacity of created things to evoke a proper and simple concept of something uncreated – a proper and simple concept that alone could be, in the present case, the target of adoration. Cf. Duns Scotus, *Ord.* I, dist. 3, p. 2, q. 2, n. 35 (ed. Vat. III), 24: “obiectum creatum non essentialiter continet increatum secundum aliquid omnino sibi proprium et non commune; ergo non facit conceptum simplicem et proprium enti increato.” See also LaZella, “Remainders and Reminders of the Divine,” 530–31.

²⁹ Duns Scotus, *Ord.* III, dist. 9, q. un., n. 24 (ed. Vat. IX), 327.

³⁰ Petrus Aureoli, *Commentaria in tertium librum Sententiarum*, dist. 9, q. un., art. 1, 400bB: “Dices, quod sunt distincta solum secundum magis, et minus, ut maior albedo, et mi-

Emphasizing thus the unbridgeable difference between the creator and creation, Auriol goes on and argues by distinguishing formally between the appropriate adoration for them:

A formal distinction of an object into diverse species claims for a distinction of the [respective] acts [of the will] into diverse species. But the dependency on God and on a creature, which is the formal object of adoration, is of different species, therefore [the same is true] for the acts [of the will] corresponding to them. Yet, the adoration due with regard to God is called *latria*.³¹

The unspoken corollary of this is that, as a consequence, any reverence shown to something that formally is not God cannot be *latria*.³²

However, many other Franciscans writing in the wake of Scotus either did not tackle distinction 9 of Book III at all, such as William of Alnwick, Francis of Marchia or Francis of Meyronnes,³³ or they dealt with a different topic at this place, such as Hugh of Newcastle.³⁴ Among the remaining few that took up the problem it is interesting to note that they mostly tried to read Scotus as traditionally as possible: John of Bassolis only reports Scotus's two ways of understanding the syncategorematic term 'solum' (S2a and S2b), thus omitting half of what would have been in support of *hyperdulia*.³⁵ And while he agrees that, according to (S2b) in Scotus, Christ's human nature should only be adored with

nor. Dico, quod non, imo dico, quod sunt omnino alterius rationis, quia quantumcumque addens ad dependentiam creaturae, numquam attingeret ad illam, quae est ad Deum, et ideo actus, qui necessario sequitur in voluntate ex illa, est alterius rationis ab eo actu, qui sequitur ex illa."

³¹ *Ibid.*, 400bC: "Distinctio formalis obiecti in diversas species arguit distinctionem actuum in diversas species: sed dependentia ad Deum et creaturam, quae est formale obiectum adorationis, sunt diversae species: ergo actus adorationis eis correspondentes. Illa autem adoratio quae est respectu Dei, vocatur *latria*."

³² Cf. Petrus Aureoli, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, q. un., art. 3, 401bA: "*Latria* debetur Trinitati, et unica, quia unica est dependentia omnis creaturae ad totam Trinitatem, et unum formal obiectum est ibi. [...] *Hiperdulia* vero debetur humanitati Christi, quia omnis creatura dependet ab eo nobiliori modo [...]. *Dulia* vero secundum diversas species diversis attribuitur."

³³ At least in those versions I could check. See William of Alnwick, *Quaestiones in Sententias* (Assisi, Fondo Antico presso la Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, Ms. 172), 78r; Francis of Marchia, *Super tertium Sententiarum* (Paris, BNF Lat 15805), 99va; Franciscus de Mayronis, *Scriptum luculentissimum in tertium Sententiarum*, dist. 9, 10va.

³⁴ Hugo de Novocastri, *Lectura in librum III Sententiarum* (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 1423), 254vb: "Circa distinctionem nonam quaeritur utrum *latria* sit virtus."

³⁵ John of Bassolis, *In tertium Sententiarum Opus*, dist. 9, q. un., 43va–b: "Sed hoc potest intelligi uno modo sic quod illa dictio exclusiva 'soli' excludat omne aliud a deo ab ipso termino adorationis. [...] Alio modo potest intelligi sic quod ly 'soli' excludat omne aliud a deo tanquam rationem adorationis."

hyperdulia, he presents the first interpretation of the syncategorematic term (S2a) so broadly that it allows him to conclude:

Not only the humanity or the flesh of Christ can be adored with *latria* when taken this way, but also images of Christ, crosses and the cross of Christ itself, inasmuch as they represent Christ.³⁶

Antonius Andreae even exclusively builds on (S2a), concluding in line with Bonaventure that Christ's humanity should not be excluded from adoration with *latria*.³⁷ Peter of Aquila replaces Scotus's different interpretations of 'solum' with a threefold acceptance of the notion of adoration that he finds in William of Ware:³⁸ one *per accidens* (A1) and another *per se* (A2), the latter being further divided into *per se et propter se* (A2a), and *per se sed non propter se* (A2b).³⁹ But while he admits that *per se et propter se* adoration (A2a) is only due to God and the Trinity, he can conclude that, when taken as *per se sed non propter se* adoration (A2b), Christ's humanity is to be adored with *latria*.⁴⁰

36 *Ibid.*: "Et dico etiam quod non solum humanitas vel caro Christi modo praedicto potest adorari latria, sed etiam imagines Christi et cruces et crux Christi in quantum repraesentant Christum. Et tunc non est distincta adoratio Christi et praedictorum, sed eadem principaliter Christi et consequenter aliorum vel secundario."

37 Antonius Andreae, *In quatuor Sententiarum libros opus longe absolutissimum*, III, dist. 9, q. un., 97ra: "Ad propositum de Christo dico, quod sola divinitas, quae est in Christo, est sufficiens terminus, cui exhibeatur honor latriae, non tamen sola humanitas. Item divinitas in Christo est ratio, quare detur sibi honor latriae, et non humanitas. Secundo dico, quod humanitas non est excludenda a Christo, quando ei exhibetur honor talis, immo toti Christo, pro ut includit divinitatem et humanitatem, talis honor est exhibendus, licet ratio huius non sit humanitas, sed divinitas."

38 The distinction is treated both in the shorter and in the longer version of William's *Sentences* commentary (respectively called *Dicta* and *Commentaria*): William of Ware, *Dicta super quatuor libros Sententiarum* (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 1438), 139vb–40ra: "Sed advertendum est quod aliquid potest adorari dupliciter: vel per se, vel per accidens. Per se dupliciter: vel per se et propter se, vel per se et propter aliud"; and *id.*, *Commentaria in libros quatuor Sententiarum* (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 1424), 121va: "Distinguendo est in principio de adoratione, quia est adoratio per se et adoratio per acciens. Iterum adoratio per se distinguitur, quia est adoratio per se et propter se, et est adoratio per se et non propter se sed propter aliud." A similar distinction can also be found in Henry of Ghent, *Quaestiones quodlibeticæ*, X, q. 6, 413v; cf. Wirth, "La critique scolastique," 102–4.

39 Peter of Aquila, *In Sententiarum libros*, III, dist. 9, q. un. (unpaginated, 3ra of quire o): "Dico quod adoratio est duplex, scilicet adoratio per se et adoratio per accidens. Item adoratio per se distinguitur, quia est adaoatio per se et propter se, et est adoratio per se et non propter se sed propter aliud, puta quando adoratum est alteri unitum."

40 *Ibid.*: "Ista distinctione praemissa dico ad quaestionem quod adoratio per se et propter se quae dicitur latria competit soli Deo et Trinitati, quia solus Deus est ultimus finis per se et propter se adorandus. Si autem loquamur de adoratione per se et non propter se sed propter aliud, tunc ista competit naturae humanae in Christo quae est unita Deo."

All these Franciscan authors, therefore, sought to re-establish *latria* more firmly as the appropriate form of worship of Christ's humanity. As a consequence, in the second half of the fourteenth century, the Scotist Francis of Perugia argues again for an exclusive adoration of Christ's humanity with *latria*; and he does so by giving Christ's humanity a particular place on the scale of created and uncreated beings:

A rational creature unified with the divine word exceeds in its being-unified the perfection of any other created being. Therefore, this creature that is unified with the Word in this way must be adored with *latria*. The antecedent is obvious, for [this creature] is above all of that which is formally not God. The consequence is proven. For, if it was according to degree [that this creature exceeds the other creatures] then every creature would have to be adored. Therefore, if this unified nature exceeds the perfection of any created being, then it has to be honored above any grade of honor of any created being. But if the other creatures are not honored with the adoration of *latria*, then this honor is due to this nature.⁴¹

From a systematical point of view, this solution seems problematic in two regards. First, the proof of the consequence brought forward by Francis of Perugia seems to be a *petitio principii*: if the excellence of this nature is gradual with regard to other creatures, then other creatures would only have to be adored with *latria*, if it were already settled that this excellent nature is so to be adored. But that is exactly what the argument is meant to prove. Second, Francis passed over the fact that the scholastic tradition, and Scotus in particular, *does* know of a kind of reverence reserved for created beings that excelled every other created being, namely *hyperdulia*, a concept that Francis even introduces a few lines later in his commentary as "the honor that is due to the most excellent creature," without revising however his former account.⁴² But be that as it may, from a historical point of view it is interesting to note that these inconsistencies fit into a general tendency among Franciscan authors, that is, to implicitly oppose Scotus's solution of the question and to return to the traditional, prevailing opinion that Christ's humanity and other created entities linked to it should be adored

41 Francis Totti of Perugia, *In Sententias*, III, dist. 9, q. un. (Munich, BSB, Ms. clm 8718), 145rb–va: "Creatura rationabilis unita Verbo in esse unionis excedit perfectionem cuiuscumque enti creati. Ergo ista creatura sic Verbo unita est adoranda cultu latriae. Antecedens patet quia est super omne illud quod non est Deus formaliter. Consequentia probatur. Nam si secundum gradum, ergo quaelibet creatura est adoranda. Ergo si ista natura unita excedit perfectionem cuiuscumque entis creati, ergo debet honorari secundum [read: super] omnem gradum honoris cuiuscumque creaturae. Ergo si aliae creature non honorant latriae adoratione, ergo istae naturae debetur iste honor."

42 *Ibid.*, 145va: "Humanitas Christi non unita Verbo esset adoratione yperduliae adoranda, quia yperdulia est honor excellentissimus debitus creaturae."

with *latria*. Unsurprisingly, Francis of Perugia also explains that the appropriate reverence for images of Christ is *latria*.⁴³

In other milieus than the Franciscan ones, however, Scotus's approach was more openly received. This is already evident with the Dominican Durandus of Saint Pourçain in the early 14th century who studied in Paris in 1303 and possibly attended Scotus's lecture.⁴⁴ His treatment of *Sentences* III, dist. 9, reflects several elements of the Franciscan master's account. First, while it is true that Durandus too does not explicitly rely on Scotus's different interpretations of the term 'solum,' he introduces a differentiation similar to the later one of Peter of Aquila, a differentiation that reflects more closely, however, Scotus's conception:

One must know that the honor of *latria* or of any other reverence can be shown to somebody in a twofold way, that is *per se* and *per accidens*. It is shown *per se* to the one in whom the cause of such an honor is, and it is shown *per accidens* to the one in whom there is no cause of such an honor but who has a certain *habitus* to the one in whom the cause is.

For Durandus, there is a twofold understanding of showing reverence to somebody, one *per se* (Db) and one *per accidens* (Da), and while *per se* reverence (Db) fits closely with (S2b), that is, a reverence where the cause of the adorability is in the adored object itself, *per accidens* reverence (Da) is – just as in (S2a) – only accidentally presented to an object with, as Durandus said, a certain *habitus* with the real cause of adoration (recall the purple robe of the king).⁴⁵ Accordingly, just as Scotus, Durandus reserves *per se* adoration – that is, *latria*⁴⁶ – for God alone, while Christ's humanity is only incidentally to be adored that way:

I say *per accidens*, for neither is his humanity properly that which is adored [...], nor is it the cause or reason of such an adoration. It is, though, the cause of some other adoration, namely *hyperdulia*, which is due to Christ because of his human nature.⁴⁷

⁴³ See *ibid.*, 145vb, at the end of the question.

⁴⁴ For Durandus's biography, see the literature collected by Jeschke, *Deus ut tentus vel visus*, 376. For Scotus's acquaintance (at the time of his quodlibetal disputation at Paris in 1306 or 1307) with a position held by Durandus, see Cross, *Scotus's Theory of Cognition*, 111.

⁴⁵ Durandus of St. Pourçain, *Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentariorum libri III*, III, dist. 9, q. 2, 229vb: "Sciendum quod honor latriae vel cuiuscunque alterius reverentiae potest exhiberi alicui dupliciter, scilicet per se et per accidens. Per se exhibetur illi in quo est causa talis honoris, per accidens autem exhibitur in quo non est causa talis honoris, sed habet aliquam habitudinem ad illud in quo est causa."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: "Honor latriae debetur per soli deo ratione divinitatis."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: "Adoratur humanitas Christi per accidens adoratione latriae, quia quando suppositum per se honoratur, honoratur per accidens quicquid est in supposito. Sed Filius Dei adoratur adoratione latriae per se, ergo humanitas Christi per accidens honoratur eadem ratione. Dico autem per accidens, quia nec ipsa humanitas est proprie illud quod adoratur cum non sit

Yet, Durandus not only acts on Scotus's account in a sometimes different wording, but he also applies it to the problem of images, being probably the first to do so and to take, from this perspective, a rather critical stance on religious images.⁴⁸ First of all, Durandus notes that images, crosses, and other objects when taken for themselves are not worthy of *any* kind of reverence, since they are inanimate beings.⁴⁹ The idea behind this argument can already be found in Thomas Aquinas who held that, in order to receive honors, a thing needs to possess reason.⁵⁰ But Durandus also rejected the idea – defended by Thomas, and also by Bonaventure and others – that the honor shown to an image is actually shown to the thing *represented by* the image:

To whatever degree it may be one and the same movement of the soul with which it is carried to the image as image and to the thing [represented], the soul never says that the image as image is identical with the exemplar [that is, the represented thing], nor that the sign as a sign is identical with the thing signified, for there is always a distinction between them both in the thing and in the conception of the soul. [...] Therefore, what is given to the exemplar or the thing signified is never to be attributed to the image or the sign, no matter how much it is considered with regard to the image or the sign. Because of this, speaking properly, the reverence of the exemplar or the signified thing is never due to the sign or the image.⁵¹

Durandus thus opposes, in the perspective of Scotus's account, the prevalent doctrine of the veneration of images. It is true that, faced with the huge majority of defenders of an actual worship of images, Durandus is ready to concede that,

suppositum subsistens, nec est causa seu ratio talis adorationis, quamvis sit causa cuiusdam alterius adorationis, scilicet hyperdulia quae debetur Christo ratione humanae naturae.”

⁴⁸ For similarities with Henry of Ghent's account, see Wirth, “Theorien zum Bilderkult,” 34, and *id.*, “La critique scolastique,” 104–6..

⁴⁹ Durandus of St. Pourçain, *Commentariorum libri*, III, dist. 9, q. 2, 229vb: “Hoc generaliter tenendum est, quod si considerentur secundum se, sic aut eis non debetur aliquis honor, puta cruci vel imagini et caeteribus rebus inanimatis, aut si debetur (sicut beatae virgini) nunquam tamen debetur eis honor patriae, cuius ratio est, quia honor patriae debetur solum excellentiae divinae, sed talia secundum se considerata aut nullam excellentiam habent ut inanimata, aut si habent, illa tamen est infra excellentiam divinam.”

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, q. 25, art. 4, 172b.

⁵¹ Durandus of St. Pourçain, *Commentariorum libri*, III, dist. 9, q. 2, 230ra: “Sed istud non videtur proprie dictum, quia quantumcumque sit unus et idem motus animae quo fertur in imaginem ut imago est, et in rem, numquam tamen anima dicit imaginem in quantum est imago esse idem cum exemplari, neque signum in quantum signum esse idem cum signato, sed semper inter ista est distinctio in re et in conceptione animae. Habitudo enim eorum ad invicem est relativa, relativi autem esse est ad aliud esse. Et ideo quod attribuitur exemplari vel signato nunquam est attribuendum imagini vel signo, quantumcumque consideretur sub ratione imaginis vel signi. Propter quod proprie loquendo nunquam reverentia exemplaris vel signati debetur signo vel imagini.”

in order to save the common opinion, one could say, when giving honors in front of an image, that even if we do not adore the image or the represented thing *in* the image, we honor the represented thing according to its concept *in our mind*, i. e., as it is made present to us *by* the image.⁵² Even this concession, however, did not re-open the door for adoring images with *latria*. For one thing was sure for Durandus:

An image [of Christ] either represents the Christ as a human being, or it is made to represent the Father or the Holy Spirit as regards the divinity, just as some images are painted such that one represents God the Father, another the crucified Son, and a third the Holy Spirit proceeding like a dove from the Father to the Christ. To images of the first type, the same honor is due as to Christ according to the understanding presented above.⁵³ But it is foolish to create images of the second type and to adore them, which is why John Damascene says that it is of the highest foolishness and an impiety to shape images of what is divine.⁵⁴

Durandus does not argue any further why one should not depict anything divine. But in these few words, it is worth noting that he does not say that depicting the divinity is erroneous or idolatrous – which would have been the appropriate terminology, if he were concerned with the biblical prohibition of images. Rather, the semantics of ‘foolishness’ seems to build on the metaphysical grounds that we already had in Scotus: it would be a contradiction to represent an infinite, extracategorical being by means of a finite, categorical thing.

With this critical stance, Durandus not only opposes the prevailing opinion before him, but – as we have seen with the Franciscan tradition – also chooses a different direction than most of those who came after him. Nevertheless, this way of approaching the problem of Christ’s humanity and of images would pop up every now and then throughout the 14th century. This was most prominently the case in another Dominican friar, Robert Holcot, who, in his commentary on

52 *Ibid.*: “Concedi potest quod signa et imagines adoeantur eadem adoratione cum rebus signatis, et imaginatis, quia res ut cognitae per signa, et imagines simili modo adorantur ac si essent praesentes secundum se.”

53 That is, the honor due to these images can only be the one reserved for Christ’s human nature, namely: *hyperdulia*.

54 Durandus of St. Pourçain, *Commentariorum libri*, III, dist. 9, q. 2, 230rb: “Imago aut repraesentat Christum secundum quod homo est, aut est facta ad repraesentandum Patrem vel Spiritum Sanctum quoad deitatem, sicut pinguntur quaedam imagines quarum una repraesentat Deum Patrem, et alia Filium crucifixum, et tertia Spiritum Sanctum quasi columbam procedentem a Patre in Christum. Primo modo debetur idem honor imagini, qui et Christo, secundum intellectum tamen prius positum. Secundo autem modo fatuum est imagines facere vel eas venerari, unde Damascenus dicit [...] quod insipientiae summae est et impietas figurare quod est divinum.”

Wisdom, also rejects the adoration of images.⁵⁵ In the second half of the 14th century, the secular cleric Albertus Engelschalk even uses Scotus as the authority *in oppositum* in Book III, dist. 9, of his *Sentences* commentary.⁵⁶ Another secular master, Conrad of Soltau, who, just as Engelschalk, was active, in the late 14th century, among other places at the university of Prague, further narrows Durandus' approach, restricting images not only to those of Christ as a human being in general, but for fear of excess he limits them to being images of only those scenes that were biblically attested.⁵⁷ Since John Wyclif, on the other hand, had transmitted Robert Holcot's accounts,⁵⁸ we have, at the turn of the 15th century, a set of systematical elements in Prague that allowed Jan Hus not only to defend, in Book III, dist. 9, of his commentary on the *Sentences* that Christ's human nature should be honored only with *hyperdulia*, but also to reject all and any adoration of images.⁵⁹ As a consequence, the critique of religious images became an essential part of the Hussite revolution with several tracts being written against the veneration of images as it prevailed in other parts of Europe. Even without going into the details of the arguments brought forward in Hussite circles,⁶⁰ we may note that, from a perspective of the transmission of ideas, the Hussite critique did not simply emerge from a renewed biblicism and was not only due to Wyclif and his ecclesiological ideas, but seems to have had at least parts of its theological roots in a mode of thinking that was owed to Scotus. Hence, for the present purpose, it seems more interesting to see what happened within the traditional Scotist milieu of Western Europe in reaction to these Hussite challenges.

55 Robert Holcot, *In librum Sapientiae regis Salomonis praelectiones CCXIII*, lect. CLVIII, 525: "Nulla adoratio debetur imagini, nec licet aliquam imaginem adorare." See Aston, "Lollards and the Cross", 104f., Wirth, "La critique scolastique." For another English theologian active in the mid-fourteenth century, Richard FitzRalph, see Balzamo, *Les êtres artificiels*, 98.

56 Albertus Engelschalk, *Quaestiones super I–III libros Sententiarum*, III, dist. 9, q. un. (Prague, NKCR, Ms. IV.B.14), 80ra.

57 Conrad of Soltau, *Quaestiones super quatuor libros Sententiarum*, III, dist. 8 ad 10, q. un. (Munich, BSB, Ms. clm 14259), 113rb: "Et ideo credo quod non deberetur fieri imagines maxime Christi nisi de quibus haberetur testimonium ex scripturis quia bene debet nobis sufficere veritas scripturae pro devotione et non oportet nos confingere novas imagines, sicut hodie quidam faciunt imagines Christi passi iacentem in sinu beatae virginis – et ubi habetur hoc in scriptura?"

58 Wyclif himself, however, had a rather traditional stance on images, see Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform*, 9–11, and now Balzamo, *Les êtres artificiels*, 101.

59 Jan Hus, *Super IV. Sententiarum*, III, dist. 9, 414–23.

60 See Bartlová, "Hussite Iconoclasm," Dobicki, "Ein Beitrag zur Bildertheologie," and Balzamo, *Les êtres artificiels*, 101–3.

3. 15th-Century Scotism

In 15th-century Scotism, the Hussite critique of religious images has an unexpected effect. Even if – from the perspective of those who understood themselves as the defenders of Catholic orthodoxy – the Hussite position on images simply belonged to a larger set of heterodox and heretical theological tenets, in confrontation with the Hussite position representatives of Scotism became more aware of the specificity of Scotus's approach. This is already apparent in a small tract on images drawn from a commentary on the *Sentences* that was most probably produced at the university of Vienna and was slightly revised to circulate at the council of Basel in 1432.⁶¹ Although its author is unknown, the sources he uses in this treatise make it clear that he was very well acquainted with the Franciscan tradition.⁶² Set up in the usual context of material from Book III, dist. 9, the treatise was written, of course, to defend the traditional *veneration* of images, but it did so by adopting the distinction between *per se et propter se* (A2a), and *per se sed non propter se* adoration (A2b) that Peter of Aquila had taken over from William of Ware (as seen above). In contrast to Peter of Aquila, however, who had used the distinction to re-open a door for *latria*, in this treatise it was used to re-open a door for *hyperdulia*. For, *per se sed non propter se* adoration of Christ's humanity (A2b) could only be called *latria*, the treatise affirmed, if the adoration was given on account of the divine person that Christ's human nature was united with. On account of itself – even when united with the divine nature – the adoration due to Christ's humanity was *hyperdulia*.⁶³ In the context of the Hussite debate, but also compared to late 14th-century Franciscan positions, this was already a strong limitation.

61 The treatise is sometimes attributed to Nicolas of Dinkelsbühl. Since it obviously stems from a *Sentences* lecture which is not the one of Dinkelsbühl, and since the doctrines defended there are different from the ones defended by Dinkelsbühl in his own *Sentences* lecture, this attribution is more than dubious, see Dinkelsbühl, *Lectura super Sententias* (Vienna, Schotten, Ms. 269), 188r–200v. For manuscripts of the treatise, see Madre, *Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl*, 266f. The following relies on the version found in Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 4131, 72r–81r.

62 And with the older Franciscan tradition in particular, since he refers, among others, to Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, and William of Ware. Besides, while opposing Thomas Aquinas, he also cites assertively long passages of Holcot and of Durandus. Finally, he also refers to a certain “Franciscus” with a position very close to the one of Scotus (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 4131, 73r), but I was not able to identify whom he meant (as mentioned above, neither Francis of Marchia nor Francis of Meyronnes seems to have treated the topic, and Francis Totti of Perugia defended a different position).

63 Anonymous, *De imaginibus lectura scolastica* (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 4131), 73r: “Alio modo potest considerari ratione sui ut tamen unita est. Sic non est adoranda latria quia est infra Deum nec simplici dulia quia est super omnem creaturam, sed hyperdulia quae est summa dulia.”

But this is not all. When it comes to discussing the question of images, the treatise advocates a corresponding restriction regarding images of Christ, introducing also *per accidens* adoration (A1), and stating as one of several conclusions at the end of the treatise:

Just as Christ's humanity inasmuch as it is united with the divine nature must be adored *per accidens* with the veneration of *latria*, this kind of adoration, relatively to God, must also be incidentally shown to his image by the faithful.⁶⁴

The several restrictions in this passage are important, and as if this was not enough, the treatise proposes also a set of corollaries to its conclusions, one of them stating that "to paint images of God the Father or of the Holy Spirit is not only foolish, but it must be rejected as something close to an error."⁶⁵ A few lines later it adds: "No sensible veneration may be shown to a fictitious image of God the Father or of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁶ Hence, in *reaction* to the Hussite controversy,⁶⁷ the unknown author of this treatise is led to defend a moderately critical position of *per accidens* adoration that reflects more clearly than any fellow scholastic in the century before him a set of doctrinal tenets that had been developed in the immediate wake of Scotus.

Subsequently, other Scotists of the 15th century returned to Scotus's account.⁶⁸ William of Vorillon, a Franciscan master who proudly announced that throughout his *Sentences* commentary he only deviated in three points from Scotus, concludes regarding Book III, dist. 9, in a somewhat convoluted manner: "To the Deity is owed reverence in such a way that the same reverence must be paid to the humanity united with it"⁶⁹ – which was nothing else than (S2a). Later on, Vorillon accordingly confirmed that Christ's humanity, taken in itself,

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 80v: "Sicut Christi humanitas in quantum natura Verbi latriae cultu per accidens est adoranda, ita et eius imagini accidentaliter relative ad Deum huiusmodi adoratio a fidelibus est exhibenda."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: "Depingere Dei Patris aut Spiritus Sancti imaginem non solum est fatuum, sed etiam tamquam errori propinquum abiciendum."

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *De imaginibus lectura scolastica* (Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 4131), 80v: "Fictae imagini Dei patris aut Spiritu Sancto non est aliquis sensibilis cultus exhibendus."

⁶⁷ That the controversy has led to a sharpening of theological positions is commonly known. See, e.g., with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, Shank, *Unless you Believe*, 186–95, and more generally for the intellectual climate of the 15th century Hoenen, "Philosophisches Wissen und seine Gefahr."

⁶⁸ On the general climate of returning to Scotus among 15th century Franciscans see Zahnd, "Easy-Going Scholars."

⁶⁹ William of Vorillon, *Quatuor librorum Sententiarum compendium*, III, dist. 9, 265vb: "Deitati sic debetur latria, ut humanitati unite idem sit cultus tribuendus."

should be adored with *hyperdulia*.⁷⁰ Nicholas de Orbellis, another famous Franciscan commentator on the *Sentences* in the 15th century, even returned to Scotus's initial distinction between a categorematic (S1) and a syncategorematic (S2) use of the word 'solum.' He defends the corresponding assumptions regarding the adoration of Christ's humanity due to these various uses of 'solum.'⁷¹

There was thus a clear tendency to stick more closely with Scotus's initial account. As regards images, however, while Vorillon stated that it would be idolatrous to believe that something divine is *in* an image,⁷² he as well as Orbellis benefited, as it were, from Scotus's leaving a blank with regard to images. They felt free to resort to other positions: while Vorillon accepts Durandus's solution that, inasmuch as an image leads back to the Christ – that is, on an internal, mental level – *latria* is due,⁷³ Orbellis defends the traditional view in the shape of Bonaventure's account, using Bonaventure even to counter the epistemological argument that images of the divine could be a cause of error:

If you object that images give reason to err, I say that the Holy Scripture was and still is to this day a cause of error, and so are the creatures, too. Yet, because of that, the Holy Scripture should not be deleted, and the creatures should not be destroyed.⁷⁴

And now we have arrived in the very late 15th century, the time of Stephan Brulefer. Besides the already mentioned treatise on images, Brulefer also produced a huge *Sentences* commentary. Yet, his approach was not to comment upon the *Sentences* as such, but rather upon the *Sentences* commentary of

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: “Notandum tamen quod humanitas Christi potest considerari vel ut unita est divinitati, et hoc modo adoranda est latria, sicut divinitas. Eodem quippe honore rext honoratur et purpura eius. Si vero consideretur absolute, vel ut esset a Verbo dimissa, tunc non debetur sibi latria cum non sit summum bonum; sed nobilior species duliae scilicet yperdulia.”

⁷¹ Nicholas de Orbellis, *Compendium super Sententias*, III, dist. 9, q. 1 (unpaginated, 1rb–va of quire t, here in particular t1va): “Sicut latria est cultus soli Deo debitus, sic dulia est cultus debitus creaturae rationali, et dividitur in duliam maiorem et minorem. Dulia maior dicitur hyperdulia quae est reverentia debita excellentissimae creaturae cuiusmodi est humanitas Christi.”

⁷² William of Vorillon, *Quatuor librorum Sententiarum compendium*, III, dist. 9, 266ra: “Sed quid de imagine Christi, quali honore veneranda est? Dicendum quod si capiatur absolute illa pictura nullo honore, quia esset idolatria credendo numen in pictura esse.”

⁷³ *Ibid.*: “Si autem in quantum reducit in Christum, sic debetur cultus latriae, quia totus honor venit ad Christum.”

⁷⁴ Nicholas de Orbellis, *Compendium super Sententias*, III, dist. 9, q. 2 (unpaginated, 2rb–va of quire t): “Si obiicias quod sunt occasio errorum, dico: litterae sacrae fuerunt et sunt usque ad hodiernum diem occasio errorum et etiam illae creaturae. Non tamen propter hoc sunt litterae delendae et creaturae destruendae, quia hoc divini iudicii est ut bonis sint in bonum, malis autem in malum convertantur.” See Bonaventura, *Commentaria*, III, dist. 9, art. 1, q. 2, 204b.

Bonaventure, who had been canonized in 1482.⁷⁵ Curiously, though, he used this commentary to present positions that, in many regards, deviated from the *doctor seraphicus* and in fact were much closer to Scotus. As regards the problem of adoring Christ's humanity, Brulefer even gives the discussion a cunning twist by presenting the problem as if there had been, historically speaking, only two positions on the question: one which in every regard rejects any adoration of Christ's humanity with *latria*, and another which rather confirms the possibility of such adoration, though only in that special case when Christ's human nature is considered as united with the divine nature.⁷⁶ His presentation of course, is historically inaccurate, since the second opinion obviously is the one defended by Scotus, while the first, more radical one, closely resembles the position of Peter Auriol.⁷⁷ By this maneuver, however, Brulefer manages to present the Subtle Doctor as the more moderate thinker on the present issue. This appearance of moderation seems to have been necessary, since, as we know, Brulefer was even more radical regarding the problem of images. Already when presenting the first of the two 'historical' positions on the adoration of Christ's humanity, Brulefer voiced his concern for a clear-cut distinction between the divine and the realm of creation:

The flesh of Christ, whether taken in itself or as united with the divine Word should not be adored with *latria*, for, in whatsoever way it is considered, it always remains within the limits of nature [i.e. creation], since neither the human nature, nor this union is God, but a mere creature.⁷⁸

This same concern for a fundamental distinction between the created and the divine order is even more apparent at places where Brulefer discusses the question of images. In his *Sentences* commentary (based, let me emphasize again, on Bonaventure who was the longtime model of a *defense* of the veneration of im-

⁷⁵ See Zahnd, "Easy-Going Scholars," 302.

⁷⁶ Brulefer, *Reportata in quatuor libros Sententiarum S. Bonaventurae*, III, dist. 9, q. 1, 295ra–b.

⁷⁷ Auriol is not mentioned in the passage, and generally speaking, Book III of his *Sentences* commentary seems to have been hardly known in the 15th century. However, the wording Brulefer chooses (as cited in the next footnote) is telling when compared with Petrus Aureoli, *Commentaria in tertium librum Sententiarum*, dist. 9, q. un., art. 3, 402b: "Si quaestio fiat de adoratione per se, planum est quod per hiperduliam debet adorari [...] sed secundo modo, non, quia quantumcumque sit unita, non habet quod sit formale obiectum adorationis, quod semper manet intra limites creaturae." In addition, besides Auriol, I have not found any other author defending this precise position.

⁷⁸ Brulefer, *Reportata clarissima*, III, dist. 9, q. 1, 295ra: "Caro Christi neque secundum se neque ut unita verbo divino est adoranda adoratione latriae, quia sive consideretur sic sive sic semper est infra limites naturae, quia nec natura humana, nec illa unio est Deus, sed pura creatura."

ages), Brulefer even enters the main discussion of Book III, dist. 9, by immediately addressing the question of images:

First proposition: no creature taken for itself and considered absolutely is to be blessed or adored with *latria*. Corollary: no image of whichever saint, or even of Christ himself should be adored with *latria*. And this corollary about images is proven against the ancient doctors who say that the cross, inasmuch as it is a sign of Christ crucified must be adored with the same adoration with which Christ is adored in himself, so that there is only one and the same movement toward the image and the one imagined. Against this is argued as follows: the *habitudo* that a sign has to the signified is a true creature, because it is nothing else than a relation – be it a real one or one in the mind –, a relation which is in the cross itself. It follows that it is a creature, and thus it should not be adored with *latria*.⁷⁹

The main reason not to adore any image whatsoever is thus, for Brulefer, that one cannot, by means of an image, pass over the limits of the created order, for even the image's being a sign, its standing for something else, belongs as such within the realm of creation. If, however, an image is intended to signify something truly beyond these limits, that is, the divine itself, it is even worse according to Brulefer:

Second corollary: sacred images made to represent Godfather or the Holy Spirit, as regards the deity, should not be honored with any reverence or be adored with *latria*. Rather, they must be destroyed. For, whatsoever is impious must be destroyed in the Church; but these images made to represent the Father or the Holy Spirit as regards the Deity are of maximal impiety. Therefore, they must be completely destroyed.⁸⁰

Compared with Durandus' reproach of foolishness or with the anonymous treatise from Vienna stating that images of the divine are "to be rejected as something close to an error," Brulefer is much more radical with his request to *abolish* these images. And he is also clearer about why these images should be destroyed:

79 *Ibid.*, 294rb: "Et pro istis ponitur talis propositio prima: Nulla creatura secundum se et absolute considerata est beatificanda seu adoranda adoratione latriae. Patet ex praedictis in diffinitione latriae. Correlarium: Nulla imago cuiuscunque sancti, etiam ipsius Christi est adoranda adoratione latriae. Et probatur de imagine contra antiquos doctores qui dicunt quod crux in quantum est signum Christi crucifixi adoratur eadem adoratione qua ipse Christus in se adoratur, ita quod non est nisi unus et idem motus ad imaginem et imaginatum. Contra hoc arguitur sic: quia illa habitudo quae est signi ad signatum est vera creatura. Non enim est aliud quam relatio – vel realis vel rationis – quae est in ipsa cruce, et per consequens est creatura et sic non est adoranda adoratione latriae."

80 *Ibid.*, 294rb–va: "Secundum correlarium: Imagines factae ad repraesentandum Patrem in divinis vel Spiritum Sanctum quo ad Deitatem nullo honore sunt venerandae nec adorandae adoratione latriae, sed potius sunt destruendae. Quia quicquid est impium debet destrui in ecclesia. Sed istae imagines factae ad repraesentandum Patrem vel Spiritum Sanctum in divinis sunt maximae impietatis, ergo sunt penitus destruendae."

Any false and erroneously shaped sign whatsoever must be repelled and destroyed under the Law of truth. But these images mentioned before are false signs, therefore etc. The minor is proven: A false sign is that which represents something differently from how it is in truth. Yet, the aforementioned images do falsely and erroneously represent the Father and the Holy Spirit differently from how they are in truth, for they represent the Father himself as an old, bearded man and the Holy Spirit as a dove, which is false and impious to believe.⁸¹

This notion of a false sign is interesting, of course, for it seems not only to lead directly to the Reformed conception of mendacious signs, but also evokes more clearly than Durandus's account the epistemological side of the whole discussion: as false signs bound to the limits of finite beings, these images are not able to evoke a true conception of the infinite God.⁸²

All that which incites idolatry is to be destroyed and abolished. But this kind of images do incite idolatry, therefore etc. The major premise is evident, and the minor is proven, for it is clear that the images that are painted in the churches are only made for the simple folk, but the simple who see the kind of aforementioned images, reason and believe that the Father and the Holy Spirit are in themselves such as depicted. Therefore etc.⁸³

As seen at the outset, this combination of epistemological and pastoral concerns is also present in Brulefer's earlier treatise on the depictability of the Trinity, where he said that uncreated paternity has no similarity with created paternity, and that, therefore, simple and unlettered folks would be induced into maintaining wrong ideas of the divine.⁸⁴ As was later to become common in Reformed circles, Brulefer, our Scotist Franciscan who believed in the incommensurability of the divine and the created spheres, for fear of mis-leading unlearned people in their conceptions of the infinite, *per se* un-imaginable being that is God, advocates the destruction of religious images.

81 *Ibid.*, 294va: "Item quicquid est signum falsum et erronee figuratum debet repelli et destrui in lege veritatis. Sed istae imagines praedictae sunt signa falsa, ergo etc. Minor patet: illud est signum falsum quod aliter repraesentat signatum quam sit in rei veritate. Sed praedictae imagines false et erronee repraesentant Patrem et Spiritum Sanctum aliter quam sunt in veritate, quia repraesentant ipsum Patrem ut antiquum barbatus, et Spiritum Sanctum ut columba, quod est falsum et impium credere."

82 See again Duns Scotus, *Ord.* I, dist. 3, p. 2, q. 2, n. 35 (ed. Vat. III), 24, as quoted above, note 28.

83 *Ibid.*, 294va: "Item omne quod est provocativum ad idolatriam est destruendum et abolendum, sed huiusmodi imagines sunt provocativae ad idolatriam, ergo etc. Maior est nota, et minor probatur, quia clarum est quod haec imagines quae in ecclesia depinguntur fiunt propter laicos simplices tantummodo, sed videntes simplices huiusmodi imagines praedictas, iudicant et credunt Patrem et Spiritum Sanctum esse tales in se. Ergo etc."

84 See above, note 8.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the late medieval – mainly Scotist – discussions of the adoration of objects belonging to the realm of creation, and of religious images in particular. We have seen that while, as it seems, Scotus did not pronounce himself on the question of images, with his metaphysics of the infinite and its distinction from categorical being, he laid the grounds for a critical stance on these topics – a critical stance that indeed is manifest in his own discussion of the adoration of Christ’s humanity. It is interesting, however, that Durandus and Auriol were the only ones in the immediate wake of Scotus to continue this direction and even to radicalize it. By contrast, the further we go into the 14th century, the more widespread, at least among Franciscan authors, a re-reading of Scotus in traditional terms becomes, accompanied by a standard defense of the veneration of images. It was only with the Hussite revolution at the beginning of the 15th century that the arguments for a critique of religious images reappeared in the broader discussion. Strikingly enough, this did not reinforce an interpretation of Scotus in even more traditional terms. Rather, from Vorillon over Orbellis to Brulefer, the original account of Scotus on the adoration of Christ’s humanity was laid bare, having the effect in Brulefer that he took a radical stance on religious images and advocated, for epistemological reasons, their destruction. In Brulefer’s view, which also came to be the one of the Reformed branch of the Reformation, the distinction between God and all that which is formally not God is so fundamental that images with their rootedness in finite being are not able to lead to any true cognition of God. In this regard, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to understand Brulefer’s position on the adoration of images – and, accordingly, the Reformed theologians with their epistemological concerns – as belonging to the Scotist tradition, even if, in medieval times, Brulefer seems to have been the most explicit and also the most radical author on this issue.

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