

Some Observations on *relatio* and *demonstratio* in the Middle Ages: a Metalinguistic Glance at a few Texts of Ockham*

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Abstract: The present contribution deals with some meanings and uses of the terms *relatio* and *demonstratio* during the Middle Ages, in a very particular and narrow perspective. Two essential steps for the discussion are proposed: the first part summarises the grammatical observations contained in the Greek and Latin treatises on grammar written between the 2nd and 6th century, whereas the second part discusses two texts and a selection of a few quotations of one particular author, interestingly linked to both the concepts and terms of *relatio* and *demonstratio*, *relativus* and *demonstrativus*, from different points of view: William of Ockham (henceforth simply Ockham, as he is traditionally called), philosopher, theologian and Franciscan friar, born in 1285 in Ockham and dying in Munich in 1347. The reading of the selected texts, involving some discussion on demonstrative and relative pronouns, seems to suggest that at least two traditions are involved: on the one hand, the philosophical (logical and theological) perspective, mostly based on a long-standing tradition coming from Aristotle, and on the other, the grammatical and metalinguistic heritage, derived from the work of ancient grammarians of the Hellenistic era. This second approach is the focus of the analysis and comments.

Keywords: Ockham; *Relatio*; *Demonstratio*; Ancient grammar; Metalinguistic approach.

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1. *The metalinguistic background: Apollonius and Priscian*

Before making observations on the Middle Ages, it is worth briefly retracing the history of the two terms addressed by the present work. First of all, it should be remembered that the Latin terms *relatio* and *demonstratio* are loan translations of the terms ἀναφορά and δείξις which belong to the Greek lexicon and are still employed as loanwords (*anaphora* and *deixis*) in linguistic research, as well as in philosophy, philology and literature.

Among the first attestations, such terms are occasionally found in the works of Plato and Aristotle. On the one hand, the term ἀναφορά gives a general idea of ‘relationship’ existing for example between words and the elements (letters or sounds) that compose them (e.g. Plato, *Crat.* 424 c 5-d 7). On the other, the term δείξις, together with other terms of the semantic field, namely the verb δείκνυμι ‘show’ and the adjective δεικτικός ‘evident, demonstrative’, very often occurs in discussions on logic (e.g. Aristotle, *Anal. Priora* B 14 62 b 29-35). The use of these terms in logical arguments is also found in the Stoics, known through the indirect tradition (cf. in part. Diogenes Laertius): in Stoicism ἀναφορά and δείξις are mostly employed in order to analyse and classify the types of propositions on the basis of the notions of truth (e.g. Fr. 204 SVF II 66).

However, it should be pointed out that in all these authors, thus between the 5th and the 1st century BC, the two terms, although they may refer in some cases to the linguistic field, seem never to appear in the same argumentative context, or as parts of the same system of conceptual and terminological oppositions.

The picture changes with the grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus who lived in the 2nd century AD and to whom a real theory of *anaphora* and *deixis* could be assigned, coherently structured and organised on the basis of linguistic data¹. This theory is rooted in the traditional question of the *merismós*, namely the analysis of the parts of speech, which represents the starting point of the Western linguistic and grammatical thought in the Greek and Latin tradi-

¹ For the analysis of contexts in which Apollonius described the different properties of anaphoric and deictic elements in a sentence, see Merlin (2016) and references therein.

tion. According to the theory of Apollonius Dyscolus, ἀναφορά and δείξις are two properties that prototypically affect the class of the article and that of the pronoun respectively.

According to his terminology, the article, ἄρθρον (which for the Greek grammars included both the definite article ὁ and the relative pronoun ὅς), is anaphoric in the sense that it is able to recall a linguistic element already present in the speech, while the pronoun can be both deictic and anaphoric, depending on certain conditions. In the Apollonian system, a pronoun is deictic when it indicates for the first time an entity in the extra-linguistic context, whereas it is anaphoric when it recalls something already mentioned, present in a previous “chunk” of speech. Apollonius argues that the 1st and 2nd personal pronouns, namely *I* and *you*, are always deictic pronouns since they are the participants of the linguistic interaction. However, 3rd person² pronouns, such as *he*, *she*, *it*, together with *this* or *that*, can be alternatively deictic or anaphoric depending on the syntactic structure in which the pronoun is used: for instance, the form corresponding to *this* is deictic in sentences such as «Look at *this* book», namely the book that is here, now, in front of the eyes, whereas it is anaphoric in an English sentence like «*Those* people *who* come from Italy» in which, using modern terminology, the demonstrative pronoun *those* and the relative pronoun *who* share the feature of ἀναφορά, namely the “relativeness” being related or linked one to the other in the same linguistic expression.

The subsequent Latin grammatical tradition is marked by a substantial split between Priscian and the other authors more or less explicitly related to the work of the grammarian Donatus. Priscian, unlike others, declared that he modelled the linguistic description of the Latin language on Apollonius’ theories. In particular, Priscian developed the same clear-cut linguistic opposition between the two different processes of ἀναφορά and δείξις, by means of the introduction in the Latin metalinguistic lexicon of the two opposed terms *relatio* and *demonstratio* mostly used in refer-

² This substantial division between the first two persons and the third will be pointed out, many centuries later, by Benveniste (1956) who admitted that the third person does not participate in the category of ‘person’, being thus the *non-personne*. In effect, this position, that has become traditional and is common in modern linguistics, requires that the person must be related to the actual, present, deictic instance of discourse in pragmatic terms of interaction between two speakers.

ence to the class of pronouns, with the same distinction between the linguistic and extra-linguistic context found in Apollonius.

It is also worth noting that Priscian extended the class of relative nouns including the pronoun *qui* and its paradigm, namely what is now considered the relative pronoun. Although such observations conducted by Priscian could be considered a minor issue within the discussion of word classes, it actually reveals a turning point in the history of Western linguistics, with respect to the analysis of the parts-of-speech system: the feature of relativeness, that Priscian pointed out by means of a comparative analysis between Greek and Latin, constitutes the basis for considering forms such as *qui* as relatives, as well as any other forms syntactically related to something else already present in the linguistic expression.

Such a metalinguistic operation had a second very important consequence, not so deeply explored by Priscian but necessary for the further development of grammar: since the relative pronoun (as already Apollonius observed) requires another verb, the analysis of the context in which it occurs opened the path to the analysis of complex sentences and also to the notion of dependency which was beyond the scope of the greater part of the ancient analysis of grammar based on the concept of *merismós*³.

2. Ockham

The following section is devoted to the analysis of some selected texts from Ockham's corpus: such passages are particularly relevant from the linguistic point of view because they are part of the discussion on *relatio* and *demonstratio*, showing a manifold system of oppositions, both in theological and logical works.

As a matter of fact, Ockham's contribution to Medieval thought was essential not only for theology but also for the development of logical science, expressed in the *Expositions* of Aristotle's *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, and *Sophistical Refutations* (1321-1324) and of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, then in *Summa Logicae* (c. 1323-1325), which is a large, independent and systematic treatment of logic and semantics. More specifically, Ockham played a substantial part in the devel-

³ On the possible broadening by Priscian, see Merlin Defanti i.p.

opment of the philosophy of language of Scholasticism, being one of the most influential representatives of Nominalism, one of the two sides that formed the so-called medieval dispute on universals between Nominalism and Realism, centred on the relationship between words, notions and entities in the real world⁴. Moreover, it is worth mentioning the famous distinction found in Ockham, inherited from Saint Augustine and Boethius, between the three levels of discourse or speech: written, oral and mental, the last being structurally different from the others because it is not related to any specific language. Each of these three levels is differently linked to the entities of the world (*res*) by means of, respectively, the letter in the written form (*littera*), the voice or vocal expression (*vox*) in oral speech, and the concept (*conceptus*) for the mental level, and the different ways of interaction between such levels is determined and ruled according to the theory of *suppositio*⁵.

So, how do *relatio* and *demonstratio* fit Ockham's theoretical system? How are they considered and exploited in his works and in a new cultural paradigm such as the scholastic one was with respect to that of Ancient grammarians? Finally, could it be possible to identify some guidelines coming from the previous metalinguistic tradition?

2.1. *On ambiguity*

The first passage belongs to the Ockham's commentary on the *Sophistical Refutations*, the last book of the collection of the six logical writings of Aristotle known as *Organon*. The comment of

⁴ Briefly, Nominalism definitely avoids any relation between words and things, saying that the level of speech and that of reality never coincide. Although in the debate between nominalists and realists Ockham is certainly a partisan of the first faction, his position is nuanced. Differently from the strict nominalist school (based on the now lost writings of Roscellinus) which established the pure conventionality of nouns, Ockham admitted that a concept is in a certain way related to a thing. As Petrus Abelardus said before him, the concept related to a set of individuals *naturally* generates in our mind. This is why it has been proposed defining Ockham as a "conceptualist" or at least a "moderate nominalist". Cf. Ghisalberti (1976: 68-71; 1990: 147-151). I thank E. Dezza for this comment.

⁵ For a discussion on the semantic values of propositions within the theory of *suppositio*, see Marmo (1984). For a description of the properties of the linguistic sign, see Tabarroni (1984) and Conti (2012).

Ockham concerns the *aequivocatio* ('equivocation, ambiguity'), which is one of the possible fallacies of speech, namely faulty reasoning.

This text is based on a Latin translation of Aristotle (*Sophistici Elenchi*, SE) and, as the literary genre required, is organised as a comment of single words or short sentences⁶. The specific text of reference is recalled at the beginning of § 6 (*Et is his quae habent...*, to which the passage quoted belongs) and corresponds to SE 176c 19; 177a 26-32, but is also thematically related to a previous passage (Arist. SE 164 c4; 165b 23-30), commented on by Ockham in the first book of the same work⁷. That is why the two couples of texts must be read together, by reason of their complementarity: the first being dedicated to the questioner and the establishment of the faulty reasoning (*paralogismus*), the second to the respondent and the strategies needed to solve it⁸.

In Aristotle, the passage devoted to homonymy and amphiboly with respect to the questioner occupies lines 164b 23-166 a 23 and is included in chapter 4 which is, together with chapter 5, the most important and famous legacy of this treatise which has also found correspondences in other logical works⁹. Homonymy is defined as the ambiguity of a single word, whereas the amphiboly is the syntactic ambiguity, which involves sentence construction. As in the passage quoted below, amphiboly particularly refers to those constructions in which a neuter pronoun is found, being in its nominative and accusative form, both in Greek and in Latin, homonymous.

⁶ The same structure is also found in the scholia, both of literary and technical works.

⁷ At the beginning of the discussion, Ockham recalls the distinction of fallacies between internal and external to the speech: «dicit ergo primo quod modi arguendi sophistic sunt duo, scilicet in dictione et extra dictione. Modi autem arguendi in dictione sunt sex, scilicet aequivocatio, amphibolia, compositio, divisio, accentus et figura dictionis» (Liber I, cap. 2, p. 15, 17-20). On this distinction based on Aristotle's *παρὰ τὴν λέξιν* vs. *ἔξω τῆς λέξεως* (165b 24), see also *Summa Logicae*, pars III-4, cap. 1, p. 750, 33-40. In general, the fallacies of *aequivocatio* and *amphibolia* occupy the first chapters of pars III-4 De Fallaciis, *Summa Logicae*, p. 749 ff.

⁸ The titles to the two sections in Ockham's edition are respectively *De fallacia aequivocatione et amphiboliae* and *De solutione fallaciae et amphiboliae*. As for the need of solving problems, and the metalinguistic use of this verb, cf. e.g. *Et per ipsum modum solvuntur talia sophismata*, in *Expositio super libros Elenchorum*, II, 4, p. 177, 79. The respondent is called to understand the fallacy and, consequently, to solve the problem.

⁹ See Fait 2007, *Introduction*, pp. XIII-XVII; chapters 4-5 and 12-14 corresponds to *Topics* II-VII (ivi, p. L).

Expositio super libros Elenchorum Liber II, cap. 4, pp. 176, 68-177, 81.

Unde eadem vox potest esse unius partis orationis et alterius, sicut ‘quod’ potest esse pronomen dictio coniunctio, et similiter ‘quia’ et sic de aliis. Similiter aliquando eadem dictio potest esse aequivalens diversis dictionibus; et isto modo tales dictiones ‘per’, ‘in’, ‘de’, ‘quod’, ‘quia’ et huiusmodi multa sunt aequivoca, quia, quamvis multa earum non significant primo et per se diversa, sicut nec significant aliquando proprie aliquid, sed magis consignant, et ideo de nullo praedicantur quia magis consignant quam significant. Isto modo etiam est aequivocatio penes pronomina, sive demonstrativa sive relativa, quia illa quae dicunt¹⁰ vel referunt sunt significata eorum, quia alia non habent. Et per istum modum solvuntur talia sophismata: quod quis videt hoc videt; sed columnam videt quis; ergo columna videt. Nam li ‘hoc’ in maiori potest demonstrare visum vel videntem¹¹.

This passage presents a linguistic discussion concerning the classification of words within the part-of-speech system: the same word (*vox*), Ockham says, can belong to one class or to another, for instance the word *quod* can be the relative pronoun ‘that’ or the conjunction ‘that’¹², and similarly *quia* which means ‘because’

¹⁰ *denotant* in ms. L = Londinii, Bibl. Lambeth 70. At a first sight, it seems to me that this option would be better integrated within the grammatical framework transmitted by Apollonius and Priscian. However, it is possible that, as the modern edition shows, this *lectio* has been excluded because Ockham himself did not use this form. Still, it remains interesting when one considers the whole picture and the transmission of theoretical tools.

¹¹ «Therefore the same word can be a part of speech or another one, such as *quod* that can be a pronoun or a conjunction and, similarly, *quia* and so others. Similarly sometimes the same word can correspond to different expressions: in this way words such as *per*, *in*, *de*, *quod*, *quia* and many others are ambiguous because, although many of them do not have in principle different meanings in themselves, at the same time they do not have any inherent meaning, but rather co-signify so that they do not predicate on nothing, thus contributing to the meaning, more than having a meaning in themselves. In the same way there is ambiguity in pronouns, both demonstrative and relative, because their meaning is what they say [or ‘denote’ according to a different *lectio*, see fn. 4 above] or refer to, having no other meaning. In this way fallacies of this kind are solved: what someone sees, that sees: someone sees a column, so the column (SBJ) sees. In fact, the word *hoc* in the first part of the faulty syllogism (i.e. *quod quis videt hoc videt*) can indicate both what sees and what is seen». Translations, here and below, are my own. I thank Francesco Ginelli for checking them. Further comments or explanations are reported within square brackets.

¹² Interestingly, the same problem of homophony and homonymy is still present in many IE languages, see e.g. Engl. *that*, Fr. *que*, It. *che*. As for Romance languages, it is usually said that the pronoun is derived from the Latin pronominal stem *qui*-(*s*), whereas the conjunction from the Latin conjunction *quod* and *quia*, both being in fact related to a common PIE **k^wi-/k^wo/e-* stem. The use of the conjunction *quod* to open a “that-clause”

and from Late Latin (see Lewis-Short, 1879) can also open an object clause, meaning ‘that’.

In the same way, many other words (*dictiones*) such as *per*, *in*, *de*, *quod*, *quia* are ambiguous (*aequivoca*) not because they have multiple meanings but because they co-signify rather than signify something in particular, namely they carry a meaning not on their own, but in association with other words that compose the sentence or proposition.

This is the case, Ockham continues, of pronouns. Therefore, ambiguity is typical of pronouns, both demonstratives and relatives, since they do not have their own meaning as their meaning depends on what they respectively present or refer to. The following is an example of such ambiguity:

quod quis videt hoc videt; sed columnam videt quis; ergo columna videt.	what someone sees this sees: someone sees a column (OBJ), therefore, the column (SBJ) sees.
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The same example is already present in Aristotle (ἄρα ὃ ὀρθῶς τις, τοῦτο ὀρθῶς; ὀρθῶς δὲ τὸν κίονα, ὥστε ὀρθῶς ὁ κίων)¹³ and is quoted by Ockham twice, in the first book (I, 2, 18, 22-23) and here, in the second from which the passage is taken. Presenting this syllogism, Ockham shows there are two possible interpretations on the basis of the “ambiguous” form *hoc*, since such a neuter pronoun has the same form for the nominative and the accusative case:

- a) a more typical form, that could be said to be a default or unmarked interpretation, in which the pronoun *hoc* is in the accusative case, being the object of the verb.
- b) a second possible, marked or non-canonical one, in which the pronoun *hoc* is in the nominative case, as in the sentence chosen here. This interpretation, suggested by Ockham in order to display the ambiguity of language, is opened by the conjunction

(i.e. an argument clause with the function of an object) represents probably a typological development from a construction split into two main clauses, e.g. I know that: you are right > I know *that* you are right.

¹³ The formulation is slightly different, since the Greek shows in the first member of the syllogism an interrogative construction: «what one sees, isn't it that sees? One sees a column, so the column sees». Despite this point, the example is exactly the same, in meaning and function.

*sed*¹⁴ and closed by the final *ergo*. The pronoun *hoc* is replaced by the noun (in the accusative case) *columnnam* that becomes the subject of the third final sentence, changing the expected interpretation of the sentence. This is summarised in the concluding remark: the word *hoc* can mean alternatively the *visum* ‘what is seen’ and the *videns* ‘who (or what) sees’, here *videntem* as required by the syntax of the text.

As for the reference to demonstrative and relative pronouns, this passage does not provide a particular discussion on their possible differences (as will be the case in the following one, see § 2.2): both are pronouns and because of that they do not signify anything in their own, but they need to be “linked” to something elsewhere. This is precisely the sense of co-signification. As Panaccio (1980; 1981) observed, Ockham did not establish any complete or explicit theory on pronouns, but provides some interesting theoretical comments on their status, saying for instance that demonstrative pronouns always depend on the speaker since they find their meaning in the “intention” of the speaker («pronomen demonstrativum non est significativum nisi ex intentione profertis», *Quodl.* II, 19: 14-5), thus being more similar to *syncategoremata* than *cathegoremata*. In other terms, pronouns were not imposed as nouns on entities but on the contrary they signify different things according to who uses them in discourse. Furthermore, despite such a low level of theorisation, the role of deictic/demonstrative pronouns are particularly relevant in the logical framework elaborated by Ockham functioning as «désignateurs directs» (Panaccio) in a similar way to the ‘logically proper names’ in Russell’s modern semantic theory. In this sense, «les démonstratifs font le pont entre l’individualité des choses et la généralité des signes» (Panaccio, 1980: 195).

What is important to notice with respect to the terminology is that the grammatical/technical terms inherited from Priscian are fully accepted and used here to describe the class of pronouns and the properties of such a part of speech.

¹⁴ Even though *sed* in classical Latin has an adversative meaning, namely ‘however’, this is not fully pertinent in the argumentation since the use of such a conjunction is a common device in the minor premise, also in true syllogism. I thank C. Marmo for this clarification.

A final remark concerns the use of *li* as a metalinguistic device in the expression *li hoc* in order to isolate a particular word to describe its form and function in the sentence¹⁵. A similar construction is also found in Aristotle with the article τὸ, for instance in τὸ γράμματα (166a 20): even though some scholars have intervened by re-establishing the agreement (τὰ γράμματα), in the end it may be not be necessary if we consider that the function of τὸ is properly to metalinguistically isolate a form to be commented on¹⁶.

2.2. On the pronoun ille

The second passage comes from the *Sum of Logic* (*Summa Logicae*) and it is particularly relevant in our perspective since it concerns the difference between demonstrative and relative pronouns. It is contained in chapter 76, explicitly devoted to the concept of *relativum* as defined by the grammarians, and not by logicians. From the title and the opening lines it must be understood that Ockham (and possibly all the Scholastic tradition in which he was inserted) was perfectly aware of such a distinction in terminology between logic and grammar. The reference text of grammar was certainly Priscian who investigated in some depth differences among the category of pronouns, a study inherited from Apollonius and developed in the XVII chapter of the *Institutiones* focussed on syntax (*De constructione*).

The passage quoted below is the beginning of a broader discussion on the properties of relatives in the sense of anaphoric pronouns, within the theory of *suppositio*.

Summa Logicae pars 1, cap. 76, 1-30 (pp. 233-4)

[De suppositione terminorum relativum, accipiendo relativum sicut accipit grammaticus et non sicut logicus]

Istis visis de suppositione terminorum absolutorum, videndum est de suppositione relativorum, non accipiendo ‘relativum’ illo modo quo logicus acci-

¹⁵ Cf. also *li ille* in the next passage, § 2.2. As is clear, the form *li* functions as a determiner, or a definite article; as an interesting loanword of a grammatical bound morpheme, is taken from the ancient French in which it is found and registered as a variant of *le*, also the current form for the masculine singular definite article in modern French. See e.g. *Carles li reis*, and other examples in Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tout ses dialectes, du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881, s.v. *le*.

¹⁶ Cf. the comment by Fait (2007: 110).

pit, sed illo modo quo grammaticus accipit, secundum quod dicit quod ‘relativum est ante latae rei recordativum’ [...]’¹⁷ Et de istis dantur regulae: quod semper supponunt pro illo pro quo supponunt sua antecedentia, ita quod pro eodem verificantur, si verificentur. Sicut patet hic ‘Sortes currit et ille disputat’: ad hoc quod ista copulativa sit vera requiritur quod secunda pars verificetur pro illo eodem pro quo prima pars verificatur. Similiter hic ‘homo est species et ille praedicatur de pluribus’. Unde sciendum est quod tale relativum numquam debet poni in eadem categorica cum suo antecedente, sic dicendo ‘Sortes est ille’, nam hic *li ille* est pronomen demonstrativum et non relativum. Similiter sciendum quod numquam, quando antecedens relativi est terminus communis supponens personaliter, est licitum ponere antecedens loco relativi ad habendum propositionem convertibilem et aequivalentem. Sicut istae non aequipollent ‘homo currit et ille disputat’, ‘homo currit et homo disputat’. In aliis casibus contingit, nam istae aequipollent ‘Sortes currit et ille disputat’, ‘Sortes currit et Sortes disputat’¹⁸.

Here the discussion focusses on the meaning of the pronoun *ille* and is helpfully based on different examples. The first one displays two sentences linked by the coordinative conjunction *et*: «Sortes currit et ille disputat», i.e. ‘Sortes runs and *ille* discusses’, in which

¹⁷ Since it is not essential for the purposes of the present argumentation, I have omitted the passage in which Ockham, following the grammatical approach (*secundum quod grammatici utuntur relativo*) distinguished between *relativum substantiae*, such as *iste, ille, idem*, and *relativum accidentis*, such as *talis, tantus, tot*, referring to the traditional philosophical distinction (first defined by Aristotle) between substance and accidents. Cf. Rosier (1985: 4).

¹⁸ «[Ch. 76: on the *suppositio* (=standing for) of relative terms, taking ‘relative’ as the grammarian does and not the logician]. After considering the *suppositio* of absolute terms, we must now turn to the *suppositio* of relative terms, taking ‘relative’ not in a logical, but in a grammatical sense, according to which ‘relative’ is a reminder of something mentioned before. And these are the norms for these kind of forms [i.e. relatives]: relatives always stand for (*supponunt*) the entity which the antecedent stands for, so that they are effectively true, if they can be true. Thus, it is evident in this example: ‘Sortes runs and he (*ille*) discusses’ that in order for this coordinate period to be true, it is necessary that the second part [=he discusses] is true for the same element for which the first part is true. Similarly, the example ‘the man is a species and he [=the man] can have many predicates’. Therefore, it must be understood that such a relative must never be put in the same assertion of its antecedent in examples like ‘Sortes is that man’: in fact, the word ‘that’ (*ille*) is here a demonstrative and not a relative pronoun. Similarly, it must be understood that when the antecedent of the relative is a common noun that stands for a present entity (*supponens personaliter*), it is never licit to put the antecedent instead of the relative in order to have a convertible and equivalent proposition. So, ‘the man runs and he discusses’ and ‘the man runs and the man discusses’ are not equivalent. In other cases it happens: indeed ‘Sortes runs and he discusses’ is equivalent to ‘Sortes runs and Sortes discusses’».

ille, being an anaphoric pronoun (*relativum*) must be rendered by 'he', and not 'that man', and omitted according to the rules of English. Yet, in order for such coordinate clauses, here defined *copulativa*, to be true, it is necessary that the second part is true for the same person (i.e. the same referent) as the first part is.

Such relative use of the pronoun *ille*, Ockham continues, requires that *ille* never appears in the same assertion (*categorica*) as its antecedent, otherwise it would be a demonstrative pronoun and no longer a relative one: in fact, in the sentence «Sortes est ille», since the pronoun *ille* does not belong to a coordinate clause but is part of the main clause, it is here *demonstrativum* and no more *relativum*. Such discussion involves the distinction between the linguistic and the extra-linguistic context, showing that the process of *relatio* concerns a syntactic relation between different parts of the linguistic expression, whereas the opposite process of *demonstratio* indicates an external reference to the situational context. Therefore, the solution here expressed by Ockham is perfectly aligned to the grammatical explanation given by Priscian and modelled on Apollonian theory.

In the following part of the argumentation, Ockham addresses the question of the possibility of converting a sentence containing a pronoun in a sentence containing a noun: if a common noun (as *homo*) is involved, the two sentences do not correspond one to the other, whereas if the expression contains a proper noun (as *Sortes*) the two sentences are equivalent and can be changed one into the other. This operation is of a primary importance within the theory of *suppositio*¹⁹ (here mentioned in the kind of *suppositio personalis*, in which a term stands for what it signifies) since it involves a discussion on the different status of common vs. proper nouns, questioning the semantic equivalence between sentences. Nonetheless, the insertion of such a discussion within also the grammatical framework allows us to observe these examples from the syntactic point of view, since they show some possible grammatical

¹⁹ On different kind of *suppositio*, see the representation in Müller (1986: 357 ff.), who interestingly reminds us, quoting Ockham himself (*Summa Logicae*, I, ch. 64, p. 193, 60-66), that the term *personalis* must not be seen as etymologically related to *persona*, but is part of a logical tradition, not at all times unambiguous; particularly on the *suppositio materialis* (also opposite to the *suppositio personalis*) see Panaccio - Perini-Santos (2004).

constructions of the pronoun *ille* in relation to different possible meanings of the sentence. As for the difference between relative/anaphoric and demonstrative/deictic pronouns, the syntactic behaviour, i.e. the appurtenance of the pronoun *ille* to the same assertion of the antecedent, determines the classification according to the parts of speech (or word classes)²⁰.

2.3. *Relatio and demonstratio as pure philosophical terms*

This third and last section will provide some brief remarks on the occurrences of *relatio* and *demonstratio* found in the *Commentary on the First Book of Sentences of Petrus Lombardus*²¹. The choice of this particular work to make some comments on is based on two reasons: first of all, it is a theological work and a codified literary genre developed in the Middle Ages and explored by many medieval authors. Secondly, going through Ockham's commentary it is immediately evident that the occurrences of *relatio* are not of the same kind as the grammatical ones found before: as a matter of fact, *relatio* is not systematically opposed to *demonstratio* but belongs to a broader philosophical sphere according to which it indicates how different objects are or behave in relation to each other.

Relatio, indeed, is one of the most articulated concepts developed in philosophy since Aristotle's *Categories*: in very general terms, it expresses any relationship or connection between entities both of the mind and of the world. During the Middle Ages it integrated different theological frameworks, being part of the discussion on the nature of the Trinity and the Divine creation²².

²⁰ This point, which will not be further explored here, seems to be very close to that of distributional criteria in defining the parts of speech of a given language.

²¹ Petrus Lombardus was a Scholastic theologian who lived in the first part of the 12th century (Novara 1096-Paris 1160). Born in the Northern Italy, he moved to Paris, first to the Saint Victor then the Cathedral School and there he composed the *Four Books of Sentences*, his most famous work, a major treatise of the theology of those times and a work of reference in European medieval Universities. In the following centuries, students and eminent scholars (such as Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus and Ockham himself) commented on this work and such comments became a literary genre in its own right.

²² For a general introduction to the theories of relation in medieval philosophy, see Brower (2018). In this respect it is particularly worth remembering that the term *relatio*

In Ockham's commentary to the *Sentences*, *relatio* has some terminological and conceptual counterparts: in particular, *relatio* and *relationes* are mentioned together with *essentia*, *persona*, *notiones*²³. The term also appears in the phrases *res relativae (sive absolutae)*, *conceptus relativus*, *in genere relationis* (e.g. *pater ~ filius*), and *relatio personalis vel simplex*²⁴. Likewise, the terms *demonstratio* and *demonstrationes* often appear with the meaning of evidence or proof, and not in counterpart to *relationes*.

Furthermore, as Cotticelli (2016) has shown exploring the semantic domain of the Greek term σύνταξις, it is far from certain that the semantic sphere of *relatio* and that of the correspondent adjective *relativus* perfectly coincide: in fact, in the metalinguistic system since Ancient times, it seem very possible to catch a “hierarchy of technicisms”, according to which the adjective has a more technical meaning than the noun, which in turn usually has a more technical meaning than the verb²⁵.

itself can be used also as a synonym of the expression *ad aliquid*, thus representing the Latin calque both of the Greek ἀναφορά and of the prepositional phrase πρὸς τι. I thank G. Graffi for this suggestion during the conference. This highlights the complexity and the stratification of a term belonging at the same time to a philosophical and a grammatical tradition. See also Conti (2013) on the type of relation involving the category of *ad aliquid*, which corresponds to the Greek πρὸς τι exemplified by means of relational nouns, such as *father* and *son*, which indicate two entities existing one as the result of the other.

²³ Some examples: I.2.104,19-22: «Secundo arguo quod nullum notionale potest demonstrari de divina essentia per aliud notionale, quia nulla est distinctio ibi nisi praecise inter essentiam et relationem et relationes inter se, ita tamen quod in proprietate unius personae nulla est distinctio». I.2.111,18-21: «Sed nihil realiter idem cum Deo potest predicari prius de aliquo quam de divina essentia, quia nihil tale est – sicut suppono ad praesens et inferius declarabitur – nisi persona vel aliqua relatio». I.2.117,19-23: «Quia omnia talia predicata prius conveniunt vel ipsi divinae essentiae, sicut relationes et notiones, vel personae, et similiter conceptus negativi et connotativi proprii Deo, vel primum conveniunt alicui communi Deo et creaturis, sicut esse verum, unum, bonum, et sic de aliis».

²⁴ Not only in this work, but also in some passages of the *Summa Logicae*.

²⁵ The different degrees of “technicism” could be simply represented by the following schema: verb > noun > adjective (and adverbs), putting on the right side the most technical meaning and on the left side the least. An analogous distinction, from a semiotic perspective, is found in Marmo (1984: 118) in reference to different values of the verb *significare* vs. the adjective-participle *significatum*.

3. *Provisional results*

After having collected some occurrences of *relatio* and *demonstratio* within the corpus of Ockham's texts, a first very provisional result is that in the philosophy and theology of the 13th century two traditions are at work in the definition of such terms, namely a philosophical and a grammatical one. In the philosophical tradition, mostly evident in the theological works such as the *Commentary on Petrus Lombardus*, each of these two terms has its own meaningful dimension inspired by the Aristotelian theory of relation between different objects and between concepts or notions and objects of the world. Differently, according to the grammatical tradition both linguistic and metalinguistic as systematised by Apollonius Dyscolus and followed by Priscian, *relatio* and *demonstratio* are opposed to each other as linguistic processes and have a specific meaning determined first of all by some syntactic criteria based on the reference to the linguistic or extra-linguistic situation. Such grammatical uses of the two terms are more evident in the logical discussion when Ockham approached the theory of *suppositio*, one of the cornerstones of his philosophy of language.

However, these two different traditions must have had something in common: in fact, the philosophical and grammatical meaning of 'relative' share the basic concept that *relativus* is something which cannot be interpreted or understood in isolation but needs to be referred to something else in discourse, as the Latin verbal root *re-fero*, participle *re-latus*, clearly evokes; moreover, the etymological value of such a technical term must be almost self-evident in Latin scripts of medieval times. In the same way, the relative pronoun in later grammatical analysis, namely that of a pronoun opening a relative clause, is the final step of a metalinguistic development in which the basic concept of relation with an antecedent, already mentioned in the linguistic context, preserves all its pertinence.

But one might ask: how did grammatical terminology appear to the logical system of a Scholastic theologian? It is long been known (cf. Kneepkens, 1976; 1977) that every medieval scholar, thus Ockham as well, had at his disposal a quite common lexicon for sciences, widespread in the Universities of that time and in a more or less explicit way related to the great personalities of the

past. Both the logical and the grammatical framework constituted the “natural” background of every scholar and doctor in philosophy: theologians and logicians were well trained in grammar and consequently had a repertoire of descriptive tools and a related terminology for the investigation of the different aspects of human language and cognition.

But if the philosophical aspect is the more expected in relation to the typology of texts we have analysed above, the metalinguistic and grammatical one can be the more surprising, at the same time revealing a widespread and sound knowledge of the essential concepts of grammar. It seems also important to point out that the grammatical model of Ockham was Priscian, the only author within the Latin tradition who inherited the Greek theory, differently from the school tradition represented by Donatus. Ockham, as a theologian who taught in Universities, looked to Priscian as representative of a high level of grammatical analysis devoted to linguistic description and theoretical speculation which goes much further than the pedagogical purposes in teaching Latin to native speakers or as a foreign language. This last minor point could be a further element able to support the hypothesis that linguistic analysis has always been split into two different approaches, a descriptive and a prescriptive one, both legitimate, but respectively related to different groups of recipients or beneficiaries, and different degrees of metalinguistic depth and awareness.

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