

Buridan's Divided Modal Syllogistic

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Abstract In *Jean Buridan's Logic: The Treatise on Supposition; The Treatise on Consequences*, Peter King raises a problem concerning Buridan's divided modal syllogistic. As King interprets Buridan's theory, there are two pairs of premisses to which Buridan is committed to holding one of his theorems applies when, in fact, it does not appear to. I argue, however, that the source of the problem is not Buridan's theory, but King's interpretation of that theory. After drawing attention to certain respects in which King's interpretation seems to me to be mistaken, I present an alternative interpretation on which King's problem simply does not arise.

1 Introduction In his recent and welcome work, *Jean Buridan's Logic: The Treatise on Supposition; The Treatise on Consequences* ([1]), Peter King raises a problem concerning the section of *The Treatise on Consequences* in which Buridan presents his "pure divided modal syllogistic" ([1], p. 82). The problem in question concerns Buridan's Theorem IV-5:

In the second figure, (a) there is always a valid syllogism from a pair of premisses *de necessario* or from ⟨a pair of premisses⟩ one of which is *de necessario* and the other *de possibili* to a conclusion ⟨which is⟩ *de necessario*; but (b) there is no valid syllogism from two sentences *de possibili*. ([1], p. 299)

In a note ([1], p. 356), King presents a list of second-figure divided modal syllogisms to whose "acceptability"¹ he takes Buridan to be committed by virtue of this theorem. King seems to find the construction of most members of the list straightforward; but there are two cases that he finds puzzling for the reason that, with respect to each, "no conclusion at all seems to be entailed by the premisses" ([1], p. 82). The problematic pair is

- (3)(c) All *P* is possibly *M*²
 No *S* is necessarily *M*
 Therefore??

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