

OCKHAM, *SUPPOSITIO*, AND MODERN LOGIC

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In a discussion (*Philosophical Review*, Jan. 1964) of the alleged difficulties of rendering the *descensus* of Ockham's *suppositio*-doctrine in terms of modern logic, G. B. Matthews is concerned with the inferences corresponding to the following theses:

- .1 If some man is animal, then this man is animal or that man is animal or
- .2 If all men are animal then each man is either this animal or that animal or
- .3 If some man is animal then some man is this animal or some man is that animal or
- .4 If all men are animal then this man is animal and that man is animal and
- .5 $(\exists x)(Fx \cdot Gx) \supset (Fx_1 \cdot Gx_1 \cdot \vee \cdot Fx_2 \cdot Gx_2 \cdot \vee \dots\dots\dots)$

It will be more convenient to continue the discussion in terms of such theses, rather than in terms of the corresponding inferences, but this, of course, has no material effect on the points at issue. The first of these is whether (as alleged by P. Boehner in his *Medieval Logic*) .5 is a proper modern logical rendering of the form of .1 as understood by Ockham. That it cannot be is then shown by pointing out that the consequent of .5 would also have to be the *prima facie* modern rendering of the consequent of .3, thereby missing Ockham's point that there is a difference here. More complex renderings in terms of predicate calculus enriched by identity are suggested, but rejected on account of their involving double quantification over nominal variables and a "wastage of disjuncts" (or conjuncts) in that a consequent such as that of .5 must range over all the x 's and not just all the men, as does the consequent of .1. The second issue is whether Boehner's reason for alleging that modern logic and Ockham's part company because the former has nothing parallel to .2 is adequate; the conclusion reached, after an attempt to render the consequent of .4 in terms similar to those earlier applied in respect of that of .3, is that in all the cases in question, i.e. .1 to .4, the basic trouble is that "Ockham quantifies over terms, whereas modern logicians quantify over variables"; ergo modern logic is here inadequate.