Ida Becskereki

# FOREKNOWLEDGE AND SEMANTICS; LOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS IN WILLIAM OCKHAM'S AND ROBERT HOLCOT'S SOLUTION TO DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

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Ida Becskereki

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Budapest May 2012 I, the undersigned, **Ida Becskereki**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 16 May 2012

Signature

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#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Holcot, Quodl Quodlibeta, In Seeing the Future Clearly. Ed. Paul A. Streveler and Katherine H. Tachau. Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1995.
- Holcot, Sent In quatuor libros sententiarum quaestiones, In Seeing the Future Clearly. Ed. Paul A. Streveler and Katherine H. Tachau. Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1995.
- Holcot, Sent (Lyons, 1518) *In quatuor libros sententiarum quaestiones*, Lyons, 1518. Reprinted Frankfurt: Minerva GMBH, 1967.
- Holcot, UDPS Utrum Deus possit scire plura quam scit In "A Revised Text of Robert Holcot's Quodlibetal Dispute on Whether God Is Able to Know More Than He Knows." Ed. William J. Courtenay, Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 5, no. 1 (1971): 1-21.
- Holcot, UHSC Utrum haec sit concedenda, In Exploring the Boundaries of Reason, Three Questions on the Nature of God by Robert Holcot. Ed. Hester G. Gelber. Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1983.
- Ockham, Exp *Expositio in librum Perihermenias Aristotelis*, In Opera Philosophica, *II*, 341-504. St Bonaventure: St Bonaventure University, 1978.
- **Ockham, Quodl** *Quodlibeta septem*, In *Opera theologica IX*. St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University, 1980.
- Ockham, Sent Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum, Distinctiones XIX.-XLVIII, In Opera theologica IV. St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University, 1979. and Quaestiones in librum quartum sententiarum, In Opera theologica VII. St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University, 1984.
- **Ockham, SL** *Summa logicae*, In *Opera philosophica I*. St Bonaventure: St Bonaventure University, 1974.
- **Ockham, Tract** Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei respectu futurorum contingentium, In Opera philosophica II. St Bonaventure: St Bonaventure University, 1978. 505-539.

\* \* \*

a – articulus
c - capitulum
d – distinctio
q – quaestio

<> – inserui ... – omisi

#### Introduction

Haec quae in hac materia scribo vel dico, sine pertinacia gratia investigationis scribo. Et licet nullam responsionem haberem ad concordandum cum rerum contingentia divinam praescientiam et revelationes, non minus ideo crederem quin verae simul stent: Deum tales propositiones posse revelare, et illas post revelationem esse contingentes Robert Holcot<sup>1</sup>

In the long history of the debates on philosophical and theological fatalism a seminal chapter was written by the theologians of early fourteenth-century England. I will consider the analyses of two important authors from this period, first William Ockham (OFM ca. 1288-1347), who is credited with great influence on contemporary thought and then Robert Holcot (OP ca. 1290-1349), who developed and modified Ockham's influential ideas.

My main interest in this paper is to investigate the unexplored connections between the two theologians' semantic theories and the theological solutions they gave to the problem of divine foreknowledge. Upon a closer examination, however, it is not proper to speak of *the* problem of foreknowledge because there are many diverse problems that cluster around this concept. These sub-problems can be labeled with such concepts as: fatalism, revelation (prophecy and beatific vision), transitivity, unchangeability, and eternity.

I begin my study with the most obvious one: *fatalism*. I use the term 'fatalism' in a broad sense referring to the doctrine according to which all the events of the world are predetermined. Fatalism has three main forms: **a**) logical (or philosophical), **b**) causal (or metaphysical), and **c**) theological. Logical fatalism concludes the necessity of future events based on the (alleged) truth value of future-tensed propositions. If a proposition referring to a future state of affairs is determinately true or false now, the future event *must* happen in correspondence with the proposition. Causal fatalism means the theory that since everything runs along certain natural and metaphysical laws, if one knew all these laws and could

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sent II. q.2. a.8. 827-832.

describe the present state of the world completely he could calculate all the future states of affairs from these data. According to causal fatalism future events are included in the present state of affairs. The third form of fatalism is theological fatalism, which claims that since God is omniscient and thus infallibly knows the future, the future *must* happen as God knows it. In this paper I focus on theological fatalism and the implied problem of divine foreknowledge. I will omit a discussion of causal fatalism, but since theological fatalism is closely linked to logical fatalism, I will also make a brief analysis of the latter.

Fatalism is an untenable idea for those who want to attribute free will and moral responsibility to humans. The possible way out of philosophical fatalism is to deny that propositions referring to future events have truth value. It logically ensures that the future is contingent and thus free will is saved. In the case of theological fatalism the situation is slightly more difficult since if the solution of the anti-fatalist philosophical argument were accepted, then the consequence that divine foreknowledge is impossible should also be accepted. Since in the context of medieval theology both human free will and divine foreknowledge are taken as unquestionable principles, theologians had to develop new solutions for an existing problem. In accordance with standard usage I will call the standpoint which intends to reconcile free will (i.e., the contingency of the future) with divine foreknowledge *compatibilism*.

After introducing philosophical fatalism and Aristotle's traditional way out of it as understood by the scholastics (Chapter One), and Ockham's and Holcot's compatibilist view regarding divine foreknowledge (Chapter Two), I direct the discourse towards the subproblems, out of which I explain three. The first two (prophecy and beatific vision) are logically connected therefore I discuss them in the same chapter (Chapter Three). As will be seen, both Ockham's and Holcot's argument for the compatibilist view contains the claim that there is a certain gap between God's foreknowledge and human knowledge about the scope and content of this foreknowledge. This could be a flaw in argumentation because Biblical theology presupposes that there are certain cases when the transitivity of divine knowledge seems to be not only possible but factual. These cases are prophetic revelations and blessed souls' beatific vision. If God reveals to humans a contingent event (either by prophetic revelation or by a single vision of his essence) the question is whether this contingent event remains contingent or becomes necessary as a consequence of divine infallibility.

In the last chapter of this thesis I will discuss a temporal problem related to foreknowledge (Chapter Four). Since both theologians maintain that God knows future events *beforehand*, they presuppose some sort of temporal relation between God and the created world. The inevitable consequence of this solution is that there must be a kind of change in God's knowledge. If one maintains that God *knows now* in advance what *will happen* tomorrow, then he also has to maintain that God *will know* the day after tomorrow what *happened* a day earlier. This seems to cause a change in God's knowledge and thus it is problematic, since traditionally God's knowledge is held as immutable.

These cases, however, do not cover all the possible sub-problems of foreknowledge; there are other baffling theological doctrines, for example, the idea of God's providence or predestination. *Predestination* means the divine decision to provide eternal life for certain humans after the last judgment.<sup>2</sup> Predestination is one of the central issues both for Ockham and Holcot; they discuss this question together with future contingents and divine foreknowledge. In the case of predestination the contingency of the future attains an important role since if it is determinately true or false now that someone is predestined or not, then the predestination is solely the decision of God, independent of human merits or faults. Both theologians agree that predestination is a future contingent, but their different answers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> There is no double predestination in either Ockham or in Holcot; for them predestination means to be ordered to eternal happiness.

given to the problem of divine foreknowledge entail different solutions for predestination. In this case Holcot's theory seems to be the more problematic. Since he thinks that God does not know future contingents determinately, he has to conclude that divine predestination is not based on God's foreknowledge of future merits.<sup>3</sup> If predestination is not based on future merits it raises the question: What is the basis of predestination? To answer this question I would have to encompass Holcot's whole salvation and ethical theory which -- roughly speaking -- would have duplicated the number of texts needed for the analysis. Since the present opportunity does not make this possible I have to disregard the discussion of this otherwise important question here.

The problem of divine foreknowledge was closely related to general logical questions (as for example, to the problem of modalities). Therefore – as many other theological problems – it was analyzed by logico-linguistic methods. By the time of Ockham and Holcot using logico-linguistic and, more generally, natural philosophical tools in solving theological problems was widely accepted. Schoolmen at the theological faculties discussed both theological and philosophical problems and since they were educated in philosophical reasoning, i.e., in Aristotelian logic, they did it with the help of logic. As a consequence of using Aristotelian logic in theology they came to realize that there are serious contradictions between theological and philosophical implications. It was in this context that the question of the relation between theology and philosophy emerged; i.e., what the relation is between faith and reason. The problem surfaced in the thirteenth century but with the increasing sophistication of logical methodology in the fourteenth century the problem became acute. A

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> See: An deus ordinaverit se alicui daturum vitam eternam propter aliquid in predestinato: vel propter hoc quod praescit aliquid futurum in predestinato. Hoc est an talis causalis sit vera. Deus predestinavit et preordinavit Petrum ad vitam eternam: quia scivit Petrum crediturum in deum et finaliter dilecturum deum: et iste sensus tractatur proprie ad propositum apud doctores. et dicitur quod non. immo econverso est hec causalis vera: quia scilicet deus preordinavit Petrum ad vitam eternam: immo Petrus fuit crediturus in deum: et finaliter dilecturus. ita quod sicut ista consequentia est bona, terra directe interponitur inter solem et lunam: ergo est eclipsis: et non econtrario. Ita ista consequentia est bona: deus preordinavit Petrum ad vitam eternam: ergo Petrus fuit crediturus etc. Holcot, Sent II. q.1. (Lyons, 1518) In transcribing the early printed text I will retain the medieval spelling.

typical form of discussing this issue was posing the question whether theology is a science. The question was discussed naturally both by Ockham and Holcot. Besides their explicit discussions of the relation between philosophy and theology, however, Ockham's and Holcot's solutions given to the problem of divine foreknowledge can be considered as interesting examples of the relation between Aristotelian logic and theological doctrines.<sup>4</sup> In the conclusion I will give a brief summary how their theological ideas fit their theories about the universality of Aristotelian logic.

I have attempted a comparative analysis of Ockham's and Holcot's solution to the topics mentioned above. Although, as will be seen, the final outputs of the two authors were diverse, however, since they worked within the same logical and philosophical framework, the line of their arguments is often similar. These similarities are the effects of their shared historical, that is, institutional and intellectual environment.

Both Ockham and Holcot were Oxford schoolmen trained within the same educational milieu. Their activity in Oxford fell at the time when there was a temporary separation between Oxford and Paris in theological discussion and Oxford theologians began to develop their own style of discussing theological problems.<sup>5</sup> Both Ockham and Holcot played significant roles in the development of this so-called English theology.<sup>6</sup>

Although they were close contemporaries, by the time Holcot began to give his Sentence lectures in Oxford (1331-32<sup>7</sup>) Ockham had been living outside of England for almost a decade. After spending four years in Avignon, he had gone into "self-imposed exile"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> I think the problem of God's foreknowledge, divine revelation, and predestination are essentially theological questions; interestingly the modern editors of Ockham's works considered his *Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei respectu futurorum contingentium* a philosophical work and published it in the series of the Philosophical Works of Ockham instead of the Theological Works.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> At the same time, independently from the Oxford discussion, a similar debate on future contingents took place in Paris. For more about this debate see: Chris Schabel, *Theology at Paris, 1316-1345, Peter Auriol and The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For more about this see: William J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Katherine H. Tachau, "Robert Holcot on Contingency and Divine Deception," in *Filosofia e teologia nel trecento: Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi*, ed. Luca Bianchi (Louvain-la-neuve: Fédération internationale des instituts d'études médiévales, 1994), 165.

in Munich and devoted himself entirely to the study of theological political problems. The consequence of this historical fact is that the references between the two authors go only in one direction. Holcot mentioned and at some points criticized Ockham's doctrine, but the Venerable Inceptor did not return any reflection on them.

By Holcot's time, Ockham's doctrines were widely accepted at Oxford and at many other medieval universities,<sup>8</sup> so their influence on Holcot seems somehow natural. At the same time, their close agreement is interesting since, although the two theologians received the same education at Oxford, they have quite different theoretical and spiritual backgrounds due to their engagement in different monastic orders. Holcot was a Black Friar, Ockham was a Franciscan.

These orders are generally considered to embody two basically different theological traditions. The case of Ockham and Holcot, however, shows that the picture is not so simple that it would be possible to understand their theological disagreement in terms of the opposition between Thomism and Scotism, or between Aristotelianism and Augustinianism.

Contrary to his few (but significant) critical remarks, some historians have considered Holcot an "Ockhamist" thinker.<sup>9</sup> This characterization seems to be pertinent inasmuch as Holcot agreed with Ockham on some important "Ockhamist" theses; for example, he strictly adhered to the idea of "*nominalism*;" i.e., to the philosophical standpoint which denies the existence of universal beings. At the same time, however, there are significant discrepancies between the two authors especially regarding epistemological questions.<sup>10</sup> Based on these discrepancies William J. Courtenay, has noted that although there are important similarities

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See, William J. Courtenay, "Was There an Ockhamist School?" in *Philosophy and Learning, Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, J. H. Josef Schneider and Georg Wieland, (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 274.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See for example Konstanty Michalski, "Le problème de la volonté à Oxford et à Paris au XIV siècle," *Studia Philosophica: Commentarii Societatis Philosophicae Polonorum* 2 (1937): 233-365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The most important disagreement between Ockham and Holcot that while the Franciscan theologian denies the role of species in cognition Holcot considered it indispensable. For this see: Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham: Optics, Epistemology, and Foundations of Semantics, 1250-1345* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 244-255.

between the two authors "the parallels between Ockham and Robert Holcot are too few to allow us to apply the label 'Ockhamist' to Holcot."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it is also historically problematic to consider Holcot an 'Ockhamist' or 'nominalist' since it is questionable in what sense it is possible to speak about 'Ockhamism' or 'nominalism' at all. While earlier historiographers supposed the existence of a so-called Ockhamist school, more recent researchers have concluded that "it is highly unlikely that there was a continuous stream we can call Ockhamism."<sup>12</sup> According to the new historical results it is better to speak of individual thinkers sharing certain common ontological, logical, and methodological presuppositions than a uniform Ockhamist or nominalist tradition,<sup>13</sup> that is, following Courtenay's apt suggestion it is better to try to study them 'nominalistically,' i.e., as individual thinkers.<sup>14</sup>

Nowadays there are two basic ways of approaching the medieval discussion of future contingents (and late medieval philosophy in general): historical and analytical. Historical approaches study philosophical and theological arguments in a historical framework, trying to understand the relation between the texts and their contexts. These studies put strong emphasis on the temporal development of ideas within the same author and the (inter)relations among different authors. They try to detect how ideas traveled in time and space, which schoolman had some effect on another one, whether an author was acquainted with certain books or theories, how historical events or certain social features like the institutional background were instrumental in shaping medieval arguments.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Courtenay, Schools and Scholars..., 217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> William J. Courtenay, "Was There an Ockhamist School?" in *Philosophy and Learning, Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, J. H. Josef Schneider and Georg Wieland, (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 270.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For further details see: William J. Courtenay, *Ockham and Ockhamism, Studies in the Dissemination and Impact of His Thought*, (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2008) 14-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> William J. Courtenay, "Late Medieval Nominalism Revisited: 1972-1982," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44 (1983): 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Besides the writings mentioned above the most important historical approaches to the problem can be found in: Hester G. Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise: Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford 1300–1350,* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen, , *Marsilius of Inghen: Divine Knowledge in* 

The analytical approach, however, concentrates mainly on the philosophical or theological content, the inner structure of a given argument. It analyses the reasoning separated from its historical context and tests its validity in a purely theoretical framework. The aim of such an analysis is not historical inquiry, but rather to use medieval arguments to solve lasting philosophical problems. In modern philosophy our topic has attracted special attention. While the sub-problems identified within this topic and the tools used in trying to formulate a sound solution have changed considerably, the problem of foreknowledge and fatalism have remained a central issue during the long centuries from ancient philosophy until now.<sup>16</sup>

My methodology largely follows this analytical approach. I intend to analyze the logical structure of the arguments and detect the unexpressed premises lying behind the different theological solutions offered by Ockham and Holcot. I will develop the hypothesis that these premises consist of different semantic theories closely interrelated to the theological answers.

\* \* \*

In my thesis I will use some formulae which serve as abbreviations, I will follow standard notations of the propositional and predicate calculi. Some additional notations are required by the temporal character of the context which are the following:

Late Medieval Thought (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Jos Decorte, "Sed modum exprimere nescio, Franciscan Solutions to the Problem of Divine Foreknowledge of Future Contingents," Franziskanische Studien 70, no. 2-4. (1988): 123-175; Calvin Normore, "Future Contingents," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 358-381. Idem., 'Divine Omniscience, Omnipotence and Future Contingents: An Overview,' in *Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Tamar Rudavsky, (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985), 3–22. Simo Knuuttila, "Medieval Theories of Future Contingents," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-futcont/ (Accessed: May 12, 2012); Idem, "Medieval Commentators on Future Contingents in De interpretatione 9," Vivarium 48 (2010): 75–95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Such a basically analytic approach characterizes the following works: Richard Gaskin, *The Sea Battle and the Master Argument, Aristotle and Diodorus Kronus on the Metaphysics of the Future* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995); William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom, The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience* (Leiden: Brill, 1991); Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge,* (New York: Oxford University, 1991). Gordon Leff, "Future Knowledge," in idem. *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975). A concise summary of the recent analytic studies of divine foreknowledge can be found in John Martin Fisher, "Recent Work on God and Freedom," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1992): 91-109.

All the following operators are used for propositions (either analyzed or unanalyzed). Analyzed propositions take the standard subject – copula – predicate form: S e P.

#### **Temporal indexicals:**

Upper indexes signify the actual (i.e., logical) temporality of a proposition's meaning:

- p<sup>p</sup>, a (logically) past tensed proposition referring something past relative to the actual 'now'
- p<sup>n,</sup> a (logically) present-tensed proposition referring to an event at the actual now
- pf, a (logically) future-tensed proposition referring to an event which is future relative to the actual 'now'

Lower indexes:

T= set of ordered moments of time, like points on an extended line

 $t_n$ ,  $t_m$ ,  $t_l \in T$  arbitrary moments in time following each other sequentially; they signify the time when a proposition is formed

 $t_0$ ,  $\in$ T the actual present, or 'now'

#### Modal (temporal) operators:

- $\diamond$ , possible;  $\diamond p = _{def} \exists t . p_t$
- $\Box$ , necessary;  $\Box p = _{def} \forall t . p_t$

#### 1. The Logical Background of Fatalism

The problem of theological fatalism was generated by certain conflicting Christian doctrines, namely, divine omniscience (a special case of omnipotence), and essentially free human action. It was not an entirely new and independent issue, however, since a special form of logical (or philosophical) fatalism had already been discussed in ancient philosophy. Its *locus classicus* was Aristotle's *Hermeneutics*, which remained the central text throughout the medieval discussions of the topic. Although in the Middle Ages Aristotle's argument was interpreted as a denial of divine foreknowledge,<sup>17</sup> his solution to the problem of philosophical fatalism was – explicitly or implicitly – in the background of the scholastic arguments about divine foreknowledge. Aristotelian (or school) logic<sup>18</sup> served as a methodological background for the scholastic arguments. In order to establish a proper background for the issue, in this chapter I will discuss some basic concepts and principles of this logic by following the interpretation of Ockham.

The discussion of the Aristotelian principles ought to begin with an explanation of the semantic framework laid down in the first chapter of the *Hermeneutics* which formed the common conceptual space for medieval theologians to argue about logical/linguistic problems. According to this famous passage

Spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ockham draws this conclusion from the argument in the *Hermeneutics* that regarding future contingents *ideo* diceret Philosophus quod etiam Deus non plus scit unam partem contradictionis quam aliam; immo neutra scitur a Deo, Exp I. c.6. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> By the fourteenth century interpretations of the Aristotelian doctrines had already been established, both those belonging to the *logica vetus* and those which had been translated into Latin during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. 'Aristotelian' logic or more properly its medieval interpretation became the part of the curricula of the philosophy faculties. Whenever I deal with Aristotelian philosophy in this thesis I treat it according to this peculiar medieval interpretation; I do not make any distinction between the ancient or "original" Aristotelian logic and that *quae est inventa a philosophis et tradita ab Aristotele et tractatur communiter in scholis* (Holcot, *Utrum cum unitate essentiae divinae*, a.2. 60-61. (In *Exploring the Boundaries of Reason, Three Questions on the Nature of God by Robert Holcot*, ed. Hester G. Gelber, Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1983.)

men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of—affections of the soul—are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of—actual things—are also the same.<sup>19</sup>

Briefly, this approach makes a threefold division of beings: words, concepts, and things. With the help of these three sets all beings can be classified. Words, concepts, and things are three disjunct (non-empty) subsets of being, while signification is a function making correspondences between the elements of the three sets.<sup>20</sup> This theory provides a complex system of relations, in which words signify concepts and concepts (naturally) signify things, but therefore words can also signify things, albeit only secondarily. From this follows the principle that De Rijk calls the "Main Rule" of Ancient/Aristotelian semantics, namely that

the phrase 'an expression's significate' can be used to stand for both (a) mental entities — what in the opening lines of *Int.* is designated (16a6-7) by 'affections of the soul' ( $\pi\alpha\theta\dot{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\tau\leftarrow \zeta\psi\nu\chi\dot{\eta}\zeta$ ) — i.e. things (states of affairs) *qua conceived of,* and (b) the things (states of affairs) signified taken as extra-linguistic entities.<sup>21</sup>

This "Main Rule" had complex influences on the medieval discussion; during the high Middle Ages there were important debates about the question of whether words signify concepts or things. Signification, together with supposition, the other medieval theory of semantic relations,<sup>22</sup> regulates the truth conditions of a proposition. The definition of truth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Hermeneutics* 16a4-16a8, trans. J. L. Ackrill. All of the English quotations of Aristotle are from: *The Complete Works of Aristotle I-II*, ed Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> As a consequence of the system, there are beings, for example, which are only words without any counterpart among things or concepts (e.g., *buba blictrix*), while some are words which belong to a particular concept, but not to a thing (e.g., chimera), etc. It must be added that according to the medieval authors the elements of these sets are rendered together by two different functions: signification and supposition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Lambertus M. De Rijk, *Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology – Vol. 1.General Introduction; The Works on Logic* (Leiden, Brill 2002), 64-65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Signification is a causal relation between a sign and the concept or the thing signified; that is, a word signifies something if it makes us think of something (See: Augustine, De doctrina christiana, II, 1.1). Expressing signification in modern terms is close to 'meaning'. Supposition is something similar to 'reference;' it is a relation between a word and that about which we want to speak by that word. One of the main differences between them is that words can supposit for something only if they are the part of a proposition, while terms have signification prior to entering a proposition. The other main difference is that while words (although just by convention) always signify the same thing, they can supposit for different things depending on the context; in improper supposition even for things not signified by them.

itself is interpreted within the framework of this three-level semantics. For Aristotle and for scholastic thinkers:

1) Truth is an *adaequatio* between a proposition and a state of affairs (or facts, or events).<sup>23</sup>

*Adaequatio* means that if a proposition is true then the state of affairs is as the proposition states and a proposition is false if the state of affairs is otherwise than described by the proposition. However, Aristotle is clear that propositions are not the causes of events:

if there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally—since if the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing's existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement's being true: it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is called true or false.<sup>24</sup>

Since the relation between propositions and states of affairs is not transitive, states of

affairs cannot be true or false. To predicate truth or falsity is possible only of a

proposition; thus, it must conclude that:

**2)** Only a proposition can be true.<sup>25</sup>

It is not exactly clear, however, whether in Aristotle the truth-bearer is a type proposition or a token proposition. A token proposition is an actual sentence formed individually, while the type proposition is the common element of all those token sentences which have identical qualities. While token propositions are always linked to the given

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Although there is no direct reference to the *adaequatio* theory in his works, Aristotle is traditionally considered its first propagator. One of the most relevant passages contributing to the correspondence theory of truth can be found in the *Metaphysics*: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" (Met 1011b25-26, trans. William David Ross). <sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Categories* 14b18-23 (trans. John Lloyd Ackrill). It is also worth mentioning that correspondence is

only a necessary but not a sufficient cause of having truth value because for a proposition being true or false it is also necessary that  $\mathbf{a}$ ) the proposition is conceived by someone and  $\mathbf{b}$ ) that it is conceived together with an act of judgment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Like Aristotle I hold that truth and falsity are not really distinct from the true or false proposition. Thus, if the abstract terms 'truth' and 'falsity' do not incorporate any syncategorematic terms and expressions equivalent to such, one must grant the following propositions: 'Truth is a true proposition' and 'Falsity is a false proposition.'" Trans. Michael J. Loux. (*Dico quod Aristoteles diceret quod veritas et falsitas non sunt res distinctae realiter a propositione vera el falsa. Et ideo nisi ista abstracta 'veritas' et 'falsitas' includant aliqua syncategoremata vel aliquas dictiones aequivalentes, haec est concedenda 'veritas est propositio vera et falsitas est propositio falsa,' Ockham, SL I. 43. 241-244.)* 

pragmatic context in which they appear, type propositions are free from any pragmatic considerations.

Although amongst late medieval theologians it is generally accepted that:

3) There are only single token propositions but no type sentences,

within the Aristotelian framework it remains a question whether type propositions exist or not. Aristotle's remark that a proposition can be true at one time while false at another time,<sup>26</sup> however, seems to suggest that the real truth-bearers are type propositions and not token ones.<sup>27</sup>

Since the problems of fatalism, antifatalism, and divine foreknowledge can be treated only in a temporal and modal logical framework, it is necessary to discuss briefly these fields of the Aristotelian logic as well. As it will be seen within scholastic logic temporality and modality is closely interrelated. I will approach the topic through the question of temporalities.

There are two different ways in which propositions can express temporal relations; these ways are the consequences of the Aristotelian theory of time. The key concept of Aristotle's theory of time is the 'now'. Generally Aristotle treats the concept of the 'now' by analogy with the concept of a point on a line; the 'now', like the point, is without extension and the 'now' is not adjacent to another 'now' because the time between two moments is infinitely divisible. However, he seems to characterize the 'now' in two ways; each of them describes a special role played by the 'now' in the constitution of time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "For the same statement seems to be both true and false. Suppose, for example, that the statement that somebody is sitting is true; after he has got up this same statement will be false. Similarly with beliefs. Suppose you believe truly that somebody is sitting; after he has got up you will believe falsely if you hold the same belief about him." Aristotle, *Categories* 4a22-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Surely neither the two *orationes prolatae* uttered at two different times nor the two thoughts which are signified by them are numerically identical and therefore it leads to a tricky puzzle about how they could be the bearer of truth-value.

First, the 'now' is the link between the two parts of time, past and future, and as such itself is not a part of time.<sup>28</sup> This description credits the 'now' with the role of the (philosophical sense of the) actual present, which can create a constant flow of time from the past through the present into the future. Secondly, since the 'now' has no duration, humans are not able to experience time "within" just one 'now', only between two 'nows.'<sup>29</sup> The two 'nows' form the relational pair of after and before; two 'nows' jointly make possible speaking about time in a relational sense as one thing being earlier or later than another thing.

These two roles of the 'now' create two series of ordered events; one makes it possible to speak about events as *actually* past, present, or future related to the actual 'now', while the other makes it possible to speak about events as *relatively* past, present, or future; that is, as being earlier, at the same time, or later than another event. With a modern parallel I will call these ordered series of events the A series and B series, where the A series refers to *actually* past, present or future things, while the B series contains the *relatively* past, present or future things.<sup>30</sup>

The temporality of the two series can be expressed by two different types of propositions. Actual temporalities can be expressed by *significantly tensed* propositions; that is, propositions in which the temporal indexical is related to the actual 'now.' These propositions are, for example: 'It is raining,' 'Socrates will sit tomorrow,' or 'It happened one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> The 'now' "appears to be the boundary between past and future" (Aristotle, *Physics*, 218a9), but "the now is not a part, for a part measures [the whole], and the whole must be composed of the parts, but time is not thought to be composed of nows," (ibidem 218a6-8.). Based on the similarity that both the 'now' and the point is without extension, for the claim that the 'now' are not part of the time one can argue with the argument that points are not parts of the line: "For when the points were in contact and coincided to form a single magnitude, they did not make the whole any bigger (since, when the body was divided into two or more parts, the whole was not a bit smaller or bigger than it was before the division); hence, even if all the points be put together, they will not make any magnitude," (Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, 316a30-34, trans. H. H. Joachim,)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "We say that time has passed when we get a perception of the before and after in change. ... and the soul says the nows are two, one before and one after, then it is and this it is that we say time is. ... So, whenever we perceive the now as one, and not either as before and after in the change, or as the same but pertaining to something which is before and after, no time seems to have passed, because no change [seems to have occurred] either." Aristotle, *Physics*, 219a25-29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> The names, A series and B series were introduced by John Ellis McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind* 17 (1908): 457-474.

month ago.' The truth value of these propositions depends on the time when they are used; they can change their truth value according to the passing of time.<sup>31</sup>

Relative temporalities can be expressed by *dated tensed* propositions, that is, by propositions with a temporal index referring to a certain point of the B series. Sentences like: "The Hungarian Republic *celebrates* its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019' or 'The Thirty Years' War *comes* to an end in 1648,' belong to this type of proposition. In these sentences the predicate terms are used atemporally, since they do not tell anything about the actual temporality of the event to which they refer, they just link it to a certain point of the B series. Contrary to significantly tensed propositions, dated tensed propositions are either always true or always false independently from when they are uttered.

Thus dated tensed propositions make it possible to set up a temporal sequence. For example, from the two propositions above it is possible to conclude that by the time Hungary celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being a republic, the Thirty Years' War will have ended. However, (only) from these two propositions no one can figure out whether these events have already happened, will happen, or maybe one of them is happening right now.

Another important facet of this temporal context is that once the significative relation between state of affairs and propositions is put into a temporal context, both events and propositions will have three types according to the temporal divisions: past, present, and future. Because of the passing of time each future event first becomes present, then past. Therefore in three different times three different tensed propositions can be true about the same event.

According to the Law of the Necessity of the Past (henceforward: the LNP) if an event occurred in the past its occurrence is necessary now in the sense that no one can bring

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Provided that the existence of type propositions are accepted; for this problem see above.

about it not having happened in the past.<sup>32</sup> Since a proposition cannot change its truth value unless the thing it signifies changes,<sup>33</sup> therefore, at the level of the propositions the LNP implies that every proposition about the past will be necessary in the sense that its truth value cannot change.<sup>34</sup> Since a significantly tensed proposition can be true at one time and false at another, it is possible to conclude that the LNP holds only for dated tensed propositions. Thus, the LNP means that it is always possible to form a dated tensed proposition about a past fact which will be either necessarily true or necessarily false.<sup>35</sup>

The LNP is an obvious case which shows the close interrelation between temporality and modality; if something is past, it is necessary. In the Aristotelian logic modalities were primarily formalized in temporal modalities.<sup>36</sup> In the Middle Ages it was commonly held that, strictly speaking, modal propositions have four types: possible, impossible, necessary, and contingent.<sup>37</sup> The first three of them were interpreted in terms of temporality.

A given proposition (let it be: p) is necessary <u>iff</u> (if and only if) there is no such time when it would be true to say that  $\sim p$  is true; that is, whenever it is formed, it is true.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> "Nothing that is past is an object of choice, e.g. no one chooses to have sacked Troy; for no one *deliberates* about the past, but about what is future and contingent, while what is past is not capable of not having taken place; hence Agathon is right in saying For this alone is lacking even to God, To make undone things that have once been done" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b6-11 trans. W. D. Ross). Both Ockham and Holcot consider the fixity of the past as accidental necessity and not as absolute necessity. This interpretation of the LNP was quite general in the Middle Ages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>"Statements and beliefs, on the other hand, themselves remain completely unchangeable in every way; it is because the *actual thing* changes that the contrary comes to belong to them," Aristotle, Categories 4b1-2. In this paper I will use the terms 'thing' and 'things' in a neutral way referring both to facts (states of affairs, events), extant things, and propositions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Omnis propositio de praesenti semel vera habet aliquam de praeterito necessariam, sicut haec 'Sortes sedet'. si est vera, haec semper postea erit necessaria 'Sortes sedit,' Ockham, Tract q.1. 50-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> In this way the LNP turns significantly tensed propositions into dated tensed ones, e.g., although the proposition that 'It was cloudy yesterday' can be true and false at different times, it always will be necessarily true that: "It was true on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2011 that: 'It was cloudy yesterday.""

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> About the connection between temporality and modalities in Aristotle see more in: Jaakko Hintikka, "Necessity, Universality, and Time in Aristotle," in *Articles on Aristotle 3. Metaphysics*, ed. J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1979), 108-124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Et est sciendum quod quamvis omnes Sophistae quasi concordent quod tantum quatuor modi, scilicet 'necessarium', 'impossibile', 'contingens' et 'possibile' faciunt propositionem modalem, et hoc quia Philosophus plures modos non tetigit, nec de pluribus determinavit in libro Priorum tractando de conversione talium propositio num et de syllogismis ex eis compositis Ockham, SL II. q.1. 36-41. For the types of modalities see also: Ockham, Exp II. c.7. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Tamen de propositione necessaria est sciendum quod propositio non propter hoc dicitur necessaria quia semper sit vera, sed quia est vera si sit et non potest esse falsa Ockham, SL II. q.9.72-74.

"Something analogous should be said of an impossible proposition, namely, that it is a proposition which, if it exists, is false."<sup>39</sup> The definition of possibility follows from the definition of necessity; a proposition is possible <u>iff</u> there is at least one time when it is true. Therefore it is possible to conclude that simple possibility is closely linked to the concept of potentiality; something is possible <u>iff</u> there is a time when this possibility (potentiality) was/is/will be actualized. The fact that a proposition is true at one time does not exclude the possibility that it is true at every time. Since the concept of possibility could be defined as not being the case that it is necessarily ~p therefore it does not exclude necessity.<sup>40</sup>

Contingency can be considered a special form of possibility, but it is not treated in terms of temporality. A given event is contingent <u>iff</u> the case can be either p or ~p. In Aristotelian logic a distinction must be made between contingency and possibility because while contingency excludes necessity, possibility does not; that is, while from Cp follows C~p, from  $\diamond$ p does not follow  $\diamond$ ~p<sup>41</sup>. Thus, something is contingently predicated of a subject <u>iff</u> both the affirmative and the negative can possibly predicated of the subject with respect to one and the same time, while something is not contingently predicated of a subject if either the affirmative or the negative can necessarily predicated of the subject.<sup>42</sup>

Based on these considerations the following *preliminary* account of contingency can be given: contingency is indeterminacy for opposite state of affairs or events. The concrete definition of contingency, however, is open to various interpretations. What seems to be sure

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Trans. Freddoso. *Proportionaliter debet dici de propositione impossibili, quod est illa quae si sit, est falsa* Ockham, SL II. q.9. 80-81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ad istam 'possibile est esse' sequitur ista 'non necesse est non esse,' Ockham, Exp II. c.6. 7. However, from  $\Diamond p \Leftrightarrow \neg \Box \neg p$  it can be inferred that  $\Diamond \Box p$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Non omne possibile valet ad opposita, hoa est, non omne possibile esse vel ambulare vel huiusmodi, est possibile non esse etc., sed aliqua sunt in quibus ad possibile esse non sequitur possibile non esse, Ockham Exp, II. c.7. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Dicitur 'contingens' quod potest esse et non esse, et ita repugnat tam necessario quam impossibili, et ideo aequivalet quaelibet talis uni copulativae de possibili, quae scilicet componitur ex una affirmativa de possibili et una negativa de possibili, sicut ista 'contingit hominem esse album' aequivalet isti ' homo potest esse albus et homo potest non esse albus.' ... Hic tamen advertendum quod sicut talis de contingenti aequipollet uni copulativae ex duabus de possibili, ita opposita talis contingentis aequipollet uni disiunctivae ex contradictoriis istarum propositionum de possibili in copulativa, sicut ista 'non contingit hominem esse album' aequipollet isti disiunctivae 'omnis homo de necessitate non est albus vel omnis homo de necessitate est albus.' Ockham, Exp c.7. 9.

is that contingency is not the same as logical possibility. Logical possibility allows that even if now the case is *de facto* p, it is still (logically) possible that ~p; that is logical possibility allows a sort of synchronic contingency which was explicitly denied by Ockham,<sup>43</sup> and neither did I find a text in Holcot where he would allow for such a possibility. Since Ockham and Holcot do not accept synchronic possibilities but both accept the LNP, therefore it must right away refine the preliminary definition of contingency. For them contingency can mean only indeterminacy for opposite *future* state of affairs or events.

It follows from the discussed considerations that a given p can be contingent even if there is no such time t when p is true. Aristotle speaks of this contingency when he says that a cloak can be torn even if there was/is/will be no time when it was/is/will be torn.<sup>44</sup> This concept of contingency was important for Ockham, because it made it possible for him to argue that although everything which is necessary is unchangeable, not everything which is unchangeable (in time) is necessary.<sup>45</sup> In this way he is able to defend the view that, although if future contingents<sup>46</sup> have truth value they will always have the same truth value, nevertheless they remain still contingent.<sup>47</sup>

In order to set the background for the discussion of the fatalist argument it is also necessary to explain another fundamental principle of Aristotelian logic: the Law of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> In creaturis numquam est potentia ad opposita obiecta nec ad oppositos actus sine successione, nec in divinis respectu illorum quae non sunt futura contingentia, Ockham, Tract q.3. 77-79. Ista potentia ad opposita est manifesta et cum successione. Nam in uno instanti haec erit vera 'voluntas vult hoc pro a,' et in alio instanti haec erit vera 'voluntas non vult hoc pro a.' Sed quod in eodem instanti sint ambae verae per quamcumque *potentiam est simpliciter impossibile*, Ockham, Sent d.38. (OTh IV 579, 12-16.). <sup>44</sup> "It is possible for this cloak to be cut up, and yet it will not be cut up but will wear out first," (Herm 19a15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Et ideo bene sequitur 'ibi est necessarium, igitur est immutabile', et non e converso, quia omne necessarium est immutabile, et non e converso, Tract q.2. a.4. 287-288.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Future-tensed propositions referred to contingent future events are called 'future contingents.' The expression 'future contingents,' however, can have double meaning; it also can refer to contingent future events (See: Robert Holcot, Quodl III q.1. 29-43.). In this thesis I will use this expression to refer to propositions about contingent future events.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Non omne immutabile est necessarium, quia est aliqua propositio contingens quae non potest primo esse vera et postea falsa, et e converso, Tract g.1. 117-119.

Excluded Middle (henceforth: the LEM).<sup>48</sup> In the case of propositions, the LEM states that a proposition can be *only* true or false; there is no third possibility.<sup>49</sup> One of the consequences of the LEM is that while it is always possible to form both an affirmative and a negative proposition (i.e., a pair of contradictory statements) about one and the same event, it is necessary that the state of affairs is as the true part of the contradictories describes it.

In the *Hermeneutics* Aristotle faces the problem that if he applies the LEM to future contingents in such a way as it was applied to other types of propositions, it will lead to logical fatalism. Aristotle argues that according to the logical principles noted above it is possible to form a pair of contradictory statements about a future event. According to his renowned example it is possible to create two contradictory propositions about tomorrow's sea battle: 'There will be a sea battle tomorrow,' and, 'There will be no sea battle tomorrow,' out of which necessarily one will be true and the other will be false. The problem is that according to the concept of truth, depending on which of the contradictory pair is true, a sea battle necessarily will or will not take place tomorrow; either way necessity occurs.

Based on, but not strictly following the line of reasoning given in the *Hermeneutics*, it is possible to give a general summary of the problem of philosophical fatalism in this way:

- 4) Every proposition is either true or false. (def LEM)
- 5) Each proposition has a contradictory pair.
- 6) If one of a contradictory pair is true, the other is necessarily false; and vice versa.(Another explication of the LEM.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> In this present essay I do not make any distinction between the LEM and the Law of Contradiction ("The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect," *Metaphysics*, 1005b19) because of applying them to propositions I cannot see any difference between them. However, what is decisive is that neither Ockham nor Holcot gives a hint as to difference between them, therefore, in the present context I interpret them as identical with each other.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> However, Jan Łukasiewicz (idem, "Philosophical Remarks on Many-valued Systems of Propositional Logic," in *Polish Logic 1920-1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) and others among his followers tried to interpret Aristotle's ideas within the framework of a three-valued logic.

Knowledge is veridical; to know something falsely is an error and not knowledge. Therefore:

- **7**) Only the truth is knowable.<sup>50</sup>
- 8) Only propositions can be known. (From 2) and 6).)
- 9) To know what the state of affairs is to know true proposition(s) referring to it. (From

1) and 8).)

- **10**) There are (logically) future-tensed propositions referring to future events.<sup>51</sup> (prem)
- **11**) Future-tensed propositions are either true or false. (from 4))

11) is the key proposition for the fatalist argument. It must be noted, however, that the fatalist

interprets 11) in such a sense that future-tensed propositions are true or false now, previously

to the event to which they refer.

12) One part of a future-tensed contradictory pairs is true, the other is false. (From 11), 5),

and **6**).)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> See: Aristotle. *Posterior Analytics*, 70b 25. and: Ockham, Tract q.2. 66-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ockham calls the attention to the fact that the grammatical structure of a sentence does not signify its logical tense in every case. If a proposition is equivalent to a future tensed proposition; i.e., its truth value depends on the truth value of a future contingent, then it is a future contingent independently of its grammatical tense. (Alique sunt propositiones de praesenti tantum secundum vocem et sunt aequivalenter de futuro, quia earum veritas dependet ex veritate propositionum de futuro, Tract q.1. 212-214.) For example, although the proposition that 'Peter is predestined' grammatically present it is equivalent with the proposition that 'God will give eternal life to Peter at the day of the last judgment' and therefore it is a future contingent. The distinction between these two types of future propositions is in the centre of modern Ockhamist interpretations. John Martin Fisher, for example, goes so far as to consider a foreknowledge argument as Ockhamist if it distinguishes between necessary and non-necessary propositions about the past (John Martin Fischer, "Freedom and Foreknowledge," in The Philosophical Review 42, no. 1 (1983): 67). Contrary to this, I think that Ockham's distinction is just a necessary logical pre-clarification of which propositions are really about the future and which ones are not (which clarification is necessary for Ockham's argument about predestination and foreknowledge). My claim seems to be supported by the fact that Ockham does not intend to attribute the invention of this idea to himself, but he assigns it to the Philosopher. (See: Non tantum in illis de futuro in voce aliquando neutra pars est vera secundum intentionem Philosophi, immo etiam aliquando in illis de praesenti et de praeterito neutra pars est determinate vera. Et hoc verum est quando ista de praeterito vel de praesenti aequivalet illi de futuro, sicut istae duae propositiones videntur aequivalere 'a erit,' 'a est futurum;' et sic de multis. Verumtamen utrum tales propositiones aequivalent de virtute sermonis vel non, non curo ad praesens. Exp I. c.6. 15.). As a consequence of it I do not want to contemplate whether God's knowledge about a contingent future event is a hard type softfact or a soft type hard-fact I do not make any distinction between hardness and fixity. I agree with William Lane Craig that the original aim of the differentiation between 'soft' and 'hard' facts was "to capture the difference between facts which would have been otherwise were some future event not to occur and facts which would have remained the same whether or not some future event were occur. In other words, originally 'hardness' and 'fixity' were mutually entailing and virtually synonymous terms." (William Lane Craig, "'Nice Soft Facts:' Fischer on Foreknowledge," Religious Studies 25, no. 2 [1989]: 236-237).

- 13) If a future-tensed proposition is true (now), the future event will happen as the proposition signifies it now. (From 1).)
- 14) If a future-tensed proposition is false (now), the future event will happen as the negation of the proposition signifies it now. (From 1), 5), and 6).)
- 15) Future events are determined now. (From 13), 14), and 4).)
- 16) Contingency means that future events are not determined, but can be otherwise.(Prem.)
- 17) The future is not contingent. (From 15) and 16).)
- 18) Deliberation and free will are possible only if the future is contingent. (Prem.)
- **19**) There is no deliberation or free will.<sup>52</sup> (From **17**) and **18**).)

This conclusion is unacceptable to both Aristotle and Ockham. They grant that the existence of free will is an evident premise:

**20**) There is free will. (Prem.)

The only difference is that while Aristotle bases this premise on human experience,<sup>53</sup> for Ockham this is an unquestionable element of Christian doctrine. Therefore both of them have to manage this problem somehow.

There are serious debates among modern philosophers about how to reconstruct Aristotle's way out of fatalism; in the following I will give an account of it based on Ockham's interpretation of the *Hermeneutics*. However, an appellation to Ockham's interpretation is not without ambiguity since there is no agreement about exactly what

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> "So there would be no need to deliberate or to take trouble (thinking that if we do this, this will happen, but if we do not, it will not). For there is nothing to prevent someone's having said ten thousand years beforehand that this would be the case, and another's having denied it; so that whichever of the two was true to say then, will be the case of necessity," Aristotle, *Herm* 9. 18b30-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> "But what if this is impossible? For we see that what will be has an origin both in deliberation and in action, and that, in general, in things that are not always actual there is the possibility of being and of not being; here both possibilities are open, both being and not being, and consequently, both coming to be and not coming to be. Many things are obviously like this."Aristotle, *Herm* 19a8-13.

Ockham's interpretation was.<sup>54</sup> What seems to be sure is that if **20**) is once stated, then it entails that **17**) must be denied and instead it must be held that:

21) The future is contingent. (From 20) and 18).)

The main element of the anti-fatalist argument concerns the truth value of future contingents and their relation to the LNP. Ockham maintains that according to Aristotle future events do not have the same reality as past or present ones have; they are not yet facts, and therefore – according to 1) – propositions referring to them cannot be true (or false) previously to the future event. It means that these propositions (i.e., future contingents) do not have a definite truth value, but

22) Each future contingent receives its truth value from a future fact.

Ockham takes proposition **22**) as the basis for defining future contingents. That is, a future contingent is a proposition that receives its truth value from a future state of affairs, therefore:

23) A future contingent is neither true nor false until the fact to which it refers actually happens.

He argues that a future contingent receives its truth value only when its present-tensed case will have been true or false (at a time t, when the future becomes the present), and from this time on it will be necessarily true or necessarily false. Until this time the LEM holds for them only indeterminately.<sup>55</sup> This claim does not discredit the LEM, just interprets it differently. Applied to future contingents **4**) remains true if it is understood in this way:

24) Whenever a proposition has truth value it is either true or false.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> About the conflicting views see the Appendix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Interpreting Aristotle in this way was common among medieval philosophers. They reconstructed Aristotle's argument claiming that the Philosopher wanted to say that the LEM can be applied to future contingents only indeterminately, that is, it is necessary that one part of the contradictory pair is true and another is false, but it is indetermined which is false and which is true. See: *Futurum esse vel non esse est necessarium, hoc est, disiunctiva composita ex duabus partibus contradictionis de futuro est necessaria. Et tamen dividendo non est necessarium, hoc est, neutra pars istius disiunctivae est necessaria, Ockham, Exp I. c.6. 13.* 

In this way Ockham's interpretation can conclude that **11**) does not follow from **4**), but future-tensed propositions remain indefinitely true or false; that is, without truth value.<sup>56</sup> They are neither true nor false *now*, that is:

**25**) Future contingents do not have truth value<sup>57</sup>.

This argument helps to solve the problem which the past seems to cause about the future. Although it sounds strange, it seems that the past can make a future contingent necessary; that is, it is possible to argue that if a past-tensed proposition is true now, then, based on the LNP, its future-tensed case was also necessarily true (in the preceding past). Since every present tensed proposition can have a future tensed case uttered in the (respective) past and since the past cannot change, therefore every future-tensed proposition is necessarily true (or false) before the event to which it refers occurs (or does not occur).

Facing this problem Ockham had to come up with a certain re-interpretation of the LNP; this interpretation has three central theses (a, b, and c). As was mentioned, the LNP means that everything which is about the past is necessary; however, on closer examination this seemingly axiomatic principle proves to be less evident since it allows for different interpretations. In my view, Ockham concludes that: **a**) The LNP holds only with respect to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> I identify being indefinitly true (or false) with being without truth value on the basis of to Richard Gaskin's elaborate analysis. He argues that the distinction between definite and indefinite truth comes from Boëthius, who himself tried to express with them that a proposition is true (or false) in itself (i.e., definitely true) or that a proposition divides truth and falsity with its negation; therefore it is not the case that "there are two varieties of truth – definite and indefinite – which would imply that *modalities* of truth are in question" (Richard Gaskin, *The Sea Battle and the Master Argument*, [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1995.]154-155.) Gaskin emphasizes that Ockham does not follow the Boëthian terminology consistently and uses the expressions "true or false" and "indefinitely true or false" in such a rotation that it is impossible to detect any philosophical distinction between them. However, according to Gaskin, it is not a fault but a consequence of Ockham's deeper insight that he realizes that there is no logical difference between saying that future contingents are neither true nor false, or to say that they are either true or false but not determinately. (Ibidem. 338.) Therefore, for Ockham the fact that a future contingent is indeterminately true means nothing but that it is neither true nor false.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Tota intentio Philosophi quod in futuris contingentibus neutra pars est vera neque falsa, Ockham, Exp I. c.6. 14.

those propositions that are about the real past;<sup>58</sup> that is, those propositions which have a determinate present-tensed case,<sup>59</sup> therefore:

26) The LNP does not hold for future contingents.

At the same time, according to Ockham: **b**) The LNP holds only from that time on, when its present-tensed case  $(p^n)$  came/comes/ will come true.

Regarding past-tensed propositions it is possible to say that at any time later than the assertion of  $p^n$  it will be true that a  $p^p$  referring to the same fact as  $p^n$  always is/will be true. For example, it is necessary that it always will be the case after  $t_n$  that  $p^p$  is true <u>iff</u>  $p^n$  is true at  $t_n$ ; that is:  $p^n_{tn} \Leftrightarrow \square p^p_{tnm>tn}$ . However, the case is not so simple regarding future-tensed propositions which require a specification of the explanation of the LNP.

In my opinion, Ockham maintains that: c) regarding future contingents LNP holds in such a way that it will always be true to say at any time later than the assertion of  $p^n$  that 'it was true to say at any time earlier than the assertion of  $p^n$  that the future tensed case of it *was* true;<sup>60</sup> but:

27) It does not mean, however, that it is true to say at any time earlier than the assertion of p<sup>n</sup> that 'the future-tensed case of it *is* true.'<sup>61</sup>

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Est universaliter verum quod omnis propositio de praesenti vera habet aliquam de praeterito necessariam ...
 Aliquae sunt propositiones ... de futuro ... et in talibus non est ista regula vera quod omnis propositio vera de praesenti habet aliquam de praeterito necessariam, Ockham, Tract q.1. 209-216.
 <sup>59</sup> The present tense case of a past or future one is such a proposition which has a dictum equivalent to the other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> The present tense case of a past or future one is such a proposition which has a dictum equivalent to the other one, and in which both the subject and the predicate supposit for the same things; however the subject terms of the two propositions are not necessarily the same. For example, the present tensed case of the proposition: 'The white was black' is not 'The white is black' (since it would be a contradiction and therefore false) but 'The thing which is white now was black;' see: Ockham, SL II. 22.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Et ideo licet ... propositio ... <de futuro> sit modo vera et possit esse falsa, quia tamen quando erit falsa verum est dicere quod numquam fuit vera, Ockham, Tract q.1. 132-134.
 <sup>61</sup> This interpretation is also supported by the more clearly constructed statement of the Quodlibeta: Quod nullo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>o1</sup> This interpretation is also supported by the more clearly constructed statement of the *Quodlibeta: Quod nullo* modo talis propositio, quae est aequivalenter de futuro, mutatur de veritate in falsitatem, sed si semel sit vera, omni tempore praeterito fuit vera; si semel falsa, semper fuit falsa, (Ockham, Quodl IV.4. 55-58.) Moreover: Si sit vera ante a, semper fuit vera ante a, quia omnis propositio simpliciter de futuro si sit semel vera semper fuit vera, (Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 144-146.). I would like to emphasize that Ockham's idea here does not coincide with the general 'semel est, semper est' formula, but is a variant of it: 'semel est, semper fuit'. According to my reading his propositions are meant to express that if there is a time when a  $p^{f}$  (or more properly the  $p^{n}$  case of it) is true, then it is always true to say that  $p_{f}$  was true.

Interpreted in this way the Aristotelian argument can avoid philosophical fatalism at all points. This solution comes at a price since (from **25**) and **7**))it evidently follows that

**28**) It is impossible to know whether a future contingent is true or false.<sup>62</sup> that is, no knowledge is possible about contingent future events.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Sed numquam est ista consequentia bona: 'a erit, igitur Deus scit a fore'. Et diceret forte Philosophus quod consequentia non valet, quia a non est verum neque falsum; igitur consequentia non valet, Ockham, Exp I. c.6.

#### 2. Foreknowledge and Free Will: Arguments for Compatibilism in Ockham and Holcot

The fact that future contingents have no truth value and therefore are not knowable did not create any problem within the Aristotelian system since the Prime Mover is thinking only about its own thinking and is unconnected to the universe, therefore omniscience does not enter the discussion at all. It causes, however, serious problems in the Christian framework, according to which God is considered omniscient and traditionally omniscience covers the knowledge about future events. In this part of the thesis first I will set out my interpretation of Ockham's analysis of the question<sup>63</sup> and then Holcot's answer to the same problem.

#### 2.1 Ockham: Foreknowledge is about the future, not about the present

From the Aristotelian solution (interpreted by Ockham himself) Ockham accepts many presuppositions and tries to use them in building a coherent argument for the possibility of divine foreknowledge. It is possible to reconstruct Ockham's argument for foreknowledge in the following way:

**29**) God is omniscient.

#### and that:

**30**) Omniscience means that God knows evidently all past, present, and future events.<sup>64</sup> In order to avoid fatalism he also has to maintain that human agents are free as to their future actions which, as is evident from the previous argument, is possible only if:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> I am aware that my interpratation differs significantly from other modern reconstructions therefore I will give a brief comparision in the Appendix, see 8888.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> It would be possible to define the concept of omniscience in another, larger sense: God knows everything that can and cannot happen. Ockham describes omniscience in this larger sense: *Potest tamen dici quod ipse Deus, vel divina essentia, est una cognitio intuitiva, tam sui ipsius quam omnium aliorum factibilium et infactibilium, tam perfecta et tam clara quod ipsa etiam est notitia evidens omnium praeteritorum, futurorum et praesentium, Sent I. d.38. However, it does not affect the fatalist argument because 30) is included in this larger definition.* 

**25**) Future contingents do not have truth value.

My argument that Ockham attributes **25**) to the Philosopher was based on the fact that Ockham writes many times in his *Commentary on the Hermeneutics* that neither part of a future contingent contradictory pair is true (nor false) which, I think, is not possible to interpret otherwise than being without truth value. In the *Tractatus* and in the *Sentence commentary*, however, Ockham does not use the expression 'neither part is true,' but he argues against it. The reason for avoiding this expression is that Ockham supposes that if one says that neither part of a contradictory pair is true it is possible to argue that neither part is known by God.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, in order to save divine foreknowledge he has to avoid this expression. However, according to my interpretation Ockham changes only the words but not the idea behind them; that is, he maintains that future contingents has no truth value.

Nevertheless in the absence of a suitable terminology (i.e., "truth value") Ockham has to fight his way to expressing this meta-logical idea; he uses different terms to express the same thing. The clearest passages are where he says that future contingents can be either true or false.<sup>66</sup> Sometimes, however, he says that future contingents are true *ex suppositione*, but not absolutely, and therefore it is possible that they never were true.<sup>67</sup> In another paragraph he argues that one part of the pairs is *contingently* true in the sense that it is not false,<sup>68</sup> but a few lines below he seems to be more radical saying that one part of a future contingent pair is

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 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> See: In talibus contingentibus futuris neutra pars contradictionis est vera vel falsa, sicut res non magis determinatur ad fore quam ad non fore. Et ideo diceret Philosophus quod etiam Deus non plus scit unam partem contradictionis quam aliam; immo neutra scitur a Deo, quia ex quo neutra pars est vera ... sequitur quod neutra pars est scita, Ockham, Exp I.c.6. 15. 8-14. See also: Tract q.1. 234-238.
 <sup>66</sup> See: <Futura contingentia> possunt esse verae et possunt esse falsae, Ockham, Tract q.1. 155. Et ideo licet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> See: <Futura contingentia> possunt esse verae et possunt esse falsae, Ockham, Tract q.1. 155. Et ideo licet ista propositio 'Petrus est praedestinatus' sit modo vera et possit esse falsa, Tract q.1. 132-133. Moreover: Potest esse vera et potest esse falsa et numquam fuisse vera, Tract q.2. a.1. 79-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> A future contingent sit vera vel fuerit vera ex suppositione, tamen possibile est quod non sit vera et quod numquam fuerit vera absolute Ockham, Tract q.1. 122-123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> See: *Dico quod* <una pars> *est vera, ita quod non falsa, tamen est contingenter vera, quia potest esse falsa, Ockham*, Tract q.1. 289-291.

*determinately* true, such a way that it is not false.<sup>69</sup> I think, however, that these diverse expressions intend to mean the same idea: future contingents have no truth value.

Ockham cannot say out that future contingents are not true, since clearly, if he denied the truth of such statements, then (as a consequence of the LEM) he would assent their falsity. In order to avoid both assigning truth value to future contingents and denying the validity of the LEM, Ockham says that future contingents are (contingently and/or determinately) true, in the sense that they are not false. Thus, it must be concluded that Ockham uses the term "true" equivocally, and that in the present context with the expression' to be true, so that to be not false' he wants to state nothing else but **25**). The adjective *determinately* is somehow baffling but by taking into consideration the intentions of the whole passage (not to mention the intentions of the whole treatise) it means nothing more that being contingently true. Ockham writes:

I maintain that one part is now determinately true, so that [it is] not false, since God wills the one part to be true and the other to be false. Nevertheless He wills contingently. Therefore He can *not* will the one part and He can will the other part, inasmuch as the other part can come to pass.<sup>70</sup>

In this passage he states that one part of a future contingent pair is determinately true because

of the divine will wills it to be true; that is, because of the determination of the divine will.

Ockham, however, claims that this determination of the divine will is contingent:

When something is determined contingently, so that it is still possible that it is not determined and it is possible that it was never determined, then one cannot have certain and infallible cognition based on such a determination. But the determination of the divine will in respect of future contingents is such a determination.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> See: *Dico quod una pars* <futurorum contingentium> *nunc determinate est vera, ita quod non falsa* Ockham, Tract q.1. 295-296.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Adams' translation and italics. *Dico uod una pars nunc determinate est vera, ita quod non falsa, quia Deus vult unam partem esse veram et aliam esse falsam. Tamen contingenter vult, et ideo potest non velle illam partem, et partem aliam potest velle, sicut pars alia potest evenire, Ockham, Tract q.1. 295-298.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Adams' translation. *Quando aliquid determinatur contingenter, ita quod adhuc possibile est non determinari, et possibile est quod numquam fuisset determinatum, propter talem determinationem non potest haberi certa et infallibilis notitia; sed huiusmodi est determinatio voluntatis divinae respectu futurorum contingentium,* Ockham, Tract q.1. 265-269.
It is clear from these remarks that even if future contingents can be determinately true (or false) they remain open for opposite possibilities, which, however, is possible only either if they have no truth value, or if they change their truth value. Ockham argues, however, that:

**31**) A future contingent cannot successively change its truth value before the event to which it refers happen.<sup>72</sup>

Since it refers to the same event, it is impossible that one and the same future contingent might be true at one time and false at another prior to the event; if it is true at one time, it is always true.<sup>73</sup> Future contingents are immutable as for their truth value.

If the present-tensed case of a future contingent gets a truth value, it will always be true that it always had this truth value prior to the event to which it refers. This immutability, Ockham argues, does not imply necessity. As I have already mentioned Ockham states that the truth or falsity of the contingent proposition  $p_{t1}^{f}$  referring to  $t_2$  depends on what the truth value of  $p^{n}$  will be in  $t_2$ , and only *from this time on*  $p^{f}$  will be false or true. Consecutive to this time it will be true to say that in every instance which is *actually* past time relative to  $t_2 - according$  to Aristotle's original notion about the LNP – "future contingents"<sup>74</sup> were necessarily true (or necessarily false).

One question of the *Quodlibeta Septem* concerning this issue also supports this interpretation; here Ockham writes that:

there is no way for such a proposition, which is equivalent to a future-tensed proposition, to change from being true to being false. Rather, if it is true at a given time, then it has been true at every past time; if it is false a given time, then it has always been false.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> <Futura contingentia> possunt esse verae et possunt esse falsae, non tamen succesive ita quod sint verae postquam fuerunt falsae, vel e converso Ockham, Tract q.1. 155-156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ante a non potest primo esse vera et postea falsa; sed si sit vera anta a, semer fuit vera, quia omnis propositio simpliciter de futuro si sit semel vera semper fuit vera. Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 144-146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> I am using the quotation marks because these propositions, of course, will not be future contingents any longer but future tensed only *vocaliter*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Freddoso's translation; (William of Ockham, Quodlibetal Questions I-II., Trans. Alfred J. Freddoso and Francis E. Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), Vol I, 261; Quod nullo modo talis propositio, quae est aequivalenter de futuro, mutatur de veritate in falsitatem, sed si semel sit vera, omni tempore praeterito fuit vera; si semel falsa, semper fuit falsae Quodl IV.4. 55-58.

He does not write that they *are* always true (or false), but they *have been* always true (or false). So, about a future contingent referring to an event happening at  $t_2$  one can truly say in every time after  $t_2$  that it was true at  $t_0$ , but it will be not true to say at  $t_1$  that it was true at  $t_0$ . (But, of course, it will always be true after  $t_2$  that it was true to say at  $t_1$  that it was true at  $t_0$ .)

Since future contingents cannot change their truth values before the event to which they refer happens (and since Ockham rejects synchronic possibility), therefore they can remain open for opposite possibilities only if they have no truth value. Therefore we have to accept **25**) which in turn entails that:

**28)** It is impossible to know whether a future contingent is true or false.

Ockham accepts that **28**) holds for God, too. In this case, however, omniscience cannot expand to the future; consequently in order to remain coherent Ockham denies that **30**) implies that

**32**) God knows which part of the contradictory pair of a future contingent *is* true and which one *is* false.

Instead of **32**) Ockham argues that:

**33**) God knows each future contingent in such a way that he knows which part of a contradictory pair *will be* true and which *will be* false.<sup>76</sup>

That is, God does not know the present truth value of a future contingent (simply because it lies in the future, and has no truth value), but knows what the truth value of a future contingent *will be* when its present tensed case has truth value. Thus, God knows at every time what the truth value of a  $p^{f}$  will be when its present-tensed case is true, but there is no time when God knows what the truth value of a  $p^{f}$  is before its present tensed case is true.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Quod indubitanter est tenendum quod Deus certitudinaliter scit omnia futura contingentia, ita quod certitudinaliter scit quae pars contradictionis erit vera et quae falsa, Ockham, Tract q.1. 239-241. See also Tract q.2. 21-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Let us take p as a proposition referring to a contingent event happening at t<sub>1</sub>; let g = refer to God; K (x,p) = "x know(s) p"; then:  $\forall$ (t). ~K (g, p<sup>f</sup> tn < t1) but  $\forall$ (t) K (g, p<sup>n</sup> tm > t1)). Thus, God knows even before the event

All these mean that for Ockham foreknowledge is *fore*knowledge in the very strict sense; for speaking about *fore*knowledge in its strictest sense a special temporal relation is required: the act of knowledge must precede the thing known in time; that is the act of knowledge must be *actually* past or present with respect to the subject of knowledge, while in turn the subject of knowledge must be *actually* future respect to the act of knowledge. Ockham's concept of foreknowledge meets this requirement, first because according to him God knows future things in advance; that is, he knows them now, secondly because what is known by his foreknowledge is the real future, not something in the present. By his foreknowledge God does not know the present truth value of a future contingent, since in this case it would be improper to speak about knowing the future, but knows something ontologically different, something which *actually* lies in the future.

This theory, however, has some consequences since proposition **33**) means that God has access to something which is future and this solution presupposes a special kind of eternity. According to the classical theory about God's relation to temporal events (the so-called Boëthian – Thomistic solution) God's eternity is beyond time because time is the measure of movement, and movement is change,<sup>78</sup> but contrary to this God is unchangeable. Thus, God (and his eternity) is atemporal.<sup>79</sup>

A consequence of this theory is that since God is not in time therefore he cannot to be in relation to created things at their genesis, but things are present to him in a timeless 'now.'<sup>80</sup> According to this doctrine, God has no *fore*knowledge of future contingents because there is nothing future for him but everything is equally present. This solution, however, has

happens what is the truth value of  $p^n$  at  $t_1$ , but he never knows, not even after the event happened what is the truth value of  $p^f$  at  $t_{n < t_1}$ , since it has no truth value.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> See: "time is just this—number of motion in respect of 'before' and 'after'. Hence time is not movement, but only movement in so far as it admits of enumeration." Aristotle, *Physics*, 219b1-219b9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> See: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) p.I. q.10. a.4. co. http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth1003.html Accessed: 20. 04. 2012.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>See: Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* p.I. q.14. a.13. co. http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth1003.html Accessed: 20. 04. 2012.

the unfortunate consequence that God has no temporal relation with the world.<sup>81</sup> God knows all events from eternity and he also knows their ordering, their temporal-relational sequence, but he does not know their actual temporality, namely, whether they are past, present, or future events, and therefore he is not omniscient.<sup>82</sup>

There are certain elements in Ockham's solution which seem to presuppose such a kind of atemporal eternity. He maintains, for example, that according to faith it must be believed that "God does not know things that are becoming in a way different from that in which [He knows] things that have already occurred;"<sup>83</sup> and that:

just as the [human] intellect on the basis of one and the same [intuitive] cognition of certain non-complexes can have evident cognition of contradictory contingent propositions such as 'A exists,' 'A does not exist,' in the same way it can be granted that the divine essence is intuitive cognition that is so perfect, so clear, that it is evident cognition of all things past and future, so that it knows which part of a contradiction [involving such things] will be true and which part false.<sup>84</sup>

This paragraph clearly assigns to God knowledge which is equally certain and evident, and, in a sense, this knowledge has the same character for past, present, and future things; however, how these different sorts of knowledge are similar is not explained clearly. The handiest answer to this question would be to assume that things which are past, present, or future for us are somehow equally present for God (a Boëthian/Thomistic sort of solution).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> There were attempts, however, to establish a possible relation between the atemporal God and temporal events. Norman Kretzman and Eleonore Stump for example, argue for a kind of eternal-temporal simultaneity by using the relativity theory. (See: Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity," *Journal of Philosophy* 78, 429-458.) For an intresting summary of the problems clustering around the concept of an atemporal God and the possible solutions from Aquinas to Kretzmann-Stump see: Brian Leftow, "The Roots of Eternity," *Religious Studies* 24, no. 2 (1988): 189-212.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> That is, God does not know the A series, just the B series of time. For this critique of atemporal eternity see for example: Nicholas Wolterstorff, "God Everlasting," in idem *Inquiring About God*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol I. 133-156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Adams; translation, *Deus non aliter cognoscit fienda quam facta*. Ockham Tract q.1. 280.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Here I use Adams' translation (*Predestination, God's foreknowledge...,* 50) with the modification of translating the verb '*erit*' as 'will be' and not as 'is'; for the reason of it see the Appendix. Sicut ex eadem notitia intuitiva aliquorum incomplexorum potest intellectus evidenter cognoscere propositiones contingentes contradictorias, puta quod a est, a non est, eodem modo potest concedi quod essentia divina est notitia intuitiva quae est tam perfecta, tam clara quod ipsa est notitia evidens omninum praeteritorum at futurorum, ita quod ipsa scit quae pars contradictionis erit vera et quae pars falsa., Ockham, Tract q.1. 281-287.

Ockham does not discuss this point in detail, nevertheless, in the *Ordinatio*, after setting out the same ideas which were quoted above, he says that the fact that God evidently knows which part of a contradiction will be true and which one false:

is not because future contingents would be present to Him to be cognized either by means of ideas or by means of reasons, but by the divine essence itself or the divine cognition, which is the cognition by which it is known what is false and what is true, what was false and what was true, what will be false and what will be true.<sup>85</sup>

From this passage it is possible to conclude that Ockham rejects the "Platonic" idea that future things are ideas in the divine mind. However, the text does not explain clearly how future things are "present" for God, and exactly what is present for God; which question, as it will be seen, plays an important role in Holcot.

Nevertheless, as it was discussed above, Ockham's solution presupposes that God is in a temporal relation with his creatures and that God has foreknowledge in the strict sense; that is, God knows future things in advance. God is in temporal relation with the created world since – as Gaskin puts it – "God's foreknowledge can be conceived to lie outside time, or in the past but in such a way as to co-vary with the foreknown event,"<sup>86</sup> and therefore Ockham's standpoint can be considered as a unique modification of the atemporal theory.<sup>87</sup>

Ockham's argument for compatibilism is built on the distinction between **32**) and **33**) which distinction presupposes that there is a real ontological difference between present (or past) and future things. If they were equally present for God, then there would be something actual to which a future contingent could refer and in this case **25**) should be denied. Thus, in order to remain coherent it must be concluded that God's relation to present (or past) and to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Trans. Adams. *Et hoc non esse quia futura contingentia essent sibi praesentia, nec per ideas tamquam per rationes cognoscendi, sed per ipsammet divinam essentiam vel divinam cognitionem, quae est notitia qua scitur quid est falsum et quid est verum, quid fuit falsum et quid fuit verum, quid erit falsum et quid erit verum,* Ord d. 38. q.1 (OTh 4: 585. 15-20.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Richard Gaskin, "Peter of Ailly and other Fourteenth-Century Thinkers on Divine Power and the Necessity of the Past," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 79, no. 3 (1997), 275.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> This co-variation holds not only for future knowledge, but as it will be discussed in the fourth chapter, Ockham maintain that God's knowledge can change in time according to the changing events, and thus he can know different things at different times.

future things are different and therefore in a respect God is in time. However, it remains a question how God can be in time.

In Aristotle there are two ways of being in time: to be when time is and to be submitted to time.<sup>88</sup> In his Commentary on the fourth book of the Physics, Ockham informs the reader that according to Aristotle, properly speaking, only the second way of being in time is being in time, but later he adds his own remarks to Aristotle saying that:

to be in time is taken in a twofold sense: one way that it signifies to be or to coexist with time, and in this way it is taken broadly. And taken to be in time in this way everything which is, is in time. Another way in the strict sense to be in time signifies that which can be known by time how long <it lasts> and when it does not remain any longer, and this means to be measured by time. And in this way everlasting-existences are not in time, because it is not possible to be known how long, and not longer, they last.<sup>89</sup>

Based on this remark it is possible to conclude that according to Ockham God is in time in the broad sense; i.e., he coexists with time. To coexist with time, however, means not only to coexist with all of its "now" (in an atemporal "now"), but to coexist with all of its "now," temporally.<sup>90</sup> Since everlasting beings are not affected by time, therefore to exist in time in the broad sense does not despoil God of immutability.

These texts, I think, suggest that for Ockham God's eternity has a double character: both temporal and atemporal. Although God's existence transcends time, he cannot be measured by time, but while time exists he participates in creation and thus, in time. By this theory, Ockham seems to hold two seemingly contradictory doctrines.<sup>91</sup> On the one hand, he argues for real ontological differences between past, present, and future things. On the other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> For Aristotle's analysis see: *Physics*, 221 a9 – 221 b22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Esse in tempore accipitur dupliciter: uno modo ut significet idem quod esse vel coexistere tempori, et tunc accipitur large. Et isto modo accipiendo esse in tempore, omne quod est, est in tempore. Aliter accipitur esse in tempore stricte, ut significet idem quod posse sciri per tempus quamdiu et non plus durat, et hoc est mensurari a tempore. Et sic semper-existentia non sunt in tempre, quia non potest sciri quamdiu durant et non amplius. William of Ockham, Expositio in libros Physicorum Aristotelis IV. c.25.3. 41-47, in idem, Opera Philosophica V. (Saint Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University 1985). My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> That is, God knows both the A series and the B series.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> A possible way out of this contradiction could be the assumption that while time exists, God exists in time, but "before" the creation and "after" the end of the world his existence is atemporal. A similar theory is held by William Lane Craig. See Craig, 'Timelessnes and Omnitemporality,' http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/ docs/omnitemporality.html (Accessed: May 8, 2012).

hand, he claims that God knows them in the same way and that his knowledge about past, present, and future events is equally determined; i.e., equally certain. By arguing for a 'semi-temporal' God Ockham is able to maintain both these doctrines in a coherent way.

Another interesting facet of Ockham's solution is resulted from **31**). On the one hand it ensures the certainty and immutability of divine foreknowledge, since it makes impossible for God to know different propositions at different times prior to the event to which the propositions refer happens, therefore it excludes the possibility that divine foreknowledge would be changeable which would mean that foreknowledge in not real foreknowledge but rather guessing based on the present state of affairs.

On the other hand **31**) is unclear whether this immutability causes necessity. Here Ockham uses the earlier mentioned argument that not everything which is immutable is necessary.<sup>92</sup> He argues that since future contingents are contingent therefore God knows them contingently.<sup>93</sup> For Ockham, however, to know contingently does not mean that God's knowledge is not determinate, i.e., uncertain, just only that God knows them as contingent (and not as necessary) events. It is the same as in human knowledge; for example if I drop a stone I know my dropping as contingent, but I know the falling of the stone as necessary. It does not mean, however, that I know my dropping with less certainty than the falling of the stone.

This interpretation is clear from a passage of the *Ordinatio*, where Ockham explains in what sense God's knowledge about future contingents is necessary. He claims that God's knowledge by which future contingents (and everything else) are known is necessary, however, it does not mean that: "God necessarily knows *this* future contingent. It is not to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> See footnote 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Tenendum est quod <Deus> scit contingenter tantum <i.e., futura contingentia>, Ockham, Tract q.1. 278-279.

granted that He has necessary knowledge in that way, for just as it contingently will be, so God contingently knows that it will be."<sup>94</sup>

Therefore to say that "God necessarily knows  $p^{f}$  or  $\sim p^{f}$ " is true according to the *de dicto* interpretation, but false according to the *de re*.<sup>95</sup> Thus, it is necessary that God knows either  $p^{f}$  or  $\sim p^{f}$  [that is:  $\Box \{K(g,p^{f})\nabla K(g,\sim p^{f})\}$ ], but neither is it necessary that he knows  $p^{f}$  nor that he knows  $\sim p^{f}$  [that is:  $\sim \{\Box K(g,p^{f})\nabla \Box K(g,\sim p^{f})\}$ ]. In this way, contingency attributed to divine knowledge does not violate the certainty of it.

Another important element of Ockham's argument that since knowledge about the future in the sense of **33**) pertains only to God, he can maintain that although God's knowledge about the future is determinate, but:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Adams' translation, my italics. The whole argument runs as follows: Sed habere scientiam de futuris contingentibus dupliciter potest intelligi: vel quod scientia illa qua sciuntur futura contingentia sit necessaria, vel quod illa scientia necessario sciatur. Primo modo dico quod Deus de futuris contingentibus habet scientiam necessariam, quia in Deo est unica cognitio quae est complexorum et incomplexorum, necessariorum et contingentium et universaliter omnium imaginabilium. Et illa scientia est ipsa divina essentia quae est necessaria et immutabilis. Secundo modo sic intelligendo Deum habere scientiam necessariam de futuris contingentibus, quod Deus necessario sciat hoc futurum contingens, sic non est concedendum quod habeat scientiam neccssariam. Quia sicut ipsum contingenter erit, ita Deus contingenter scit ipsum fore, Ockham, Sent I. d.38. (OTh IV 587, 7-19.). Ockham also discusses this issue in the Tractatus, where he argues that the claim that Gos knows future things necessaria. Et hoc est verum, quia ipsa essentia divina est unica cognitio necessaria et immutabilis omnium tam complexorum quam incomplexorum, necessariorum et contingentia. Et sic non necessaria, Tract q.2. a.4.

a.4. <sup>95</sup> The *de dicto – de re* distinction was presumably introduced by Abelard (John Marenbon, "The Twelfth Century" in *Medieval Philosophy* [New York: Routledge, 2003.] 158.) and was generally accepted and used in the time of Ockham. In the first case (i.e., *de dicto*) the modality is predicated of the *dictum* of the proposition (for example: 'it is necessary "that every true proposition is true""), while in the second case (i.e., *de re*) the modality refers to the relation between the thing and that is predicated of it (i.e., 'every true propositionem *et divisionem. In sensu compositionis semper denotatur quod talis modus verificetur de propositione illius dicti, sicut per istam 'omnem hominem esse animal est necessarium' denotatur quod iste modus 'necessarium' verificetur de ista propositionis talis propositionis semper aequipollet propositioni acceptae cum modo, sine tali dicto; sicut ista 'omnem hominem esse animal est necessarium' in sensu divisionis aequipollet isti 'omnis homo est animal'. Similiter ista in sensu divisionis aequipollet isti 'sortes scitur esse animal.' <i>Et sic de aliis*, Ockham SL II. 9.

34) Every proposition about God's knowledge of contingent future events is itself a future contingent.<sup>96</sup>

It follows from 34) and 25) that:

35) Any proposition about God's knowledge of future events is neither true nor false.

*In statu viatoris,* our propositions about God's foreknowledge are true only *ex suppositione,* but not absolutely. Therefore, such propositions as: 'God knows that S will be P' or: 'God knows from eternity that S will be P' do not differ from the proposition: 'S will be P', and therefore they are equivalent to a future contingent.<sup>97</sup>

Ockham does not discuss it explicitly, but it is clearly seen from many of his arguments that the truth value gap in propositions about God's foreknowledge not only holds for these propositions. Whenever a proposition with a truth value gap enters into a demonstration its truth value gap comes down in the argument and affects the truth value of the conclusion; that is, a truth value gap is hereditary.

Ockham uses this logical rule to avoid possible contra-arguments. For example, he argues that the argument: a) God knows that I will sit tomorrow, b) it is possible that I will not sit tomorrow, c) therefore it is possible that God errs is not valid,<sup>98</sup> because for the validity of this argument it is needed that a) might be a simple assertoric proposition. Proposition a), however, is not assertoric, but contingent without truth value; therefore c) does not follow.<sup>99</sup> This way the chasm between God's knowledge and human knowledge about God's knowledge is essential for the argument because it impedes that the determinateness by which God knows future contingents can cause necessity in the events.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Omnes tales sunt contingentes 'Deus ab aeterno voluit hanc partem esse veram', 'Deus ab aeterno determinavit hoc' et huiusmodi ... et possunt per consequens esse verae et falsae Ockham, Tract q.1. 273-275. See also Tract q.1. 149-162, and 242-243.
<sup>97</sup> Cf Tract q.1. 149-162. Indeed, if humans had knowledge about the content of God's foreknowledge, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Cf Tract q.1. 149-162. Indeed, if humans had knowledge about the content of God's foreknowledge, the relation would be transitive and therefore man also would have foreknowledge, which is denied as impossible.
<sup>98</sup> See: Ockham, Tract q.2. a.2. 47-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> See: Secunda <consequentia> non valet, quia ad hoc talis mixtio valeret, oporteret quod maior esset de inesse simpliciter, ita quod semper esset necessrio vera quantumcumque illa de possibili poneretur in esse. ... Igitur ad hoc quod prima mixtio valeat, oportet quod maior sit de inesse simpliciter. Sed patet quod non est, quia est mere contingens, quia potest esse vera et potest esse falsa et numquam fuisse vera. Ockham, Tract q.2. a.2. 68-80.

Due to the facts that future contingents have no truth value and that only truth is knowable Ockham is obliged to conclude that although based on the authorities it is sure that God has foreknowledge, it is not possible to express *how* God has knowledge about future contingents.<sup>100</sup> However, in my view, with this argument Ockham does not intend to prove the existence of divine foreknowledge (a thesis he adheres to), but to prove the *possibility* of divine foreknowledge; i.e., that it is not logically impossible or contradictory to maintain a compatibilist view about foreknowledge and human freedom. At the same time he maintains that the lack of the ultimate proof of the mode of how God knows future contingents is not due to philosophical weakness or error in the argumentation, but is a consequence of an ontological fact and therefore it is *impossible* for humans to know about it.<sup>101</sup>

### 2.2 Holcot: Nothing can be foreknown except the present

Compared to Ockham's argument, one can find several similarities in Holcot's line of reasoning, but there is a significant discrepancy between their conclusions. Even in cases when Holcot accepts some elements of the Ockhamian argument, he interprets the concepts and terms so differently that it entails a considerably divergent position. While sometimes Holcot seems to be treating problems in a more accurate and detailed way, in some other cases he just throws in shorthand references to certain ideas. One reason for this may be that many terms and theories which were still in development one decade earlier had been settled by Holcot's time. For example, while for Ockham it was a constant struggle to explain exactly what it means that a future contingent is true but can be false in such a way that it is possible that it never was true, Holcot just drops a few words about the same thing, saying that it is a common understanding of the issue amongst contemporary theologians.<sup>102</sup>

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Ideo dico quod impossibile est clare exprimere modum quo Deus scit futura contingentia Tract q.1. 277-278.
 <sup>101</sup> Et ideo dico ad quaestionem quod indubitanter est tenendum quod Deus certitudinaliter et evidenter scit omnia futura contingentia. Sed hoc evidenter declarare et modum quo scit omnia futura contingentia exprimere est impossibile omni intellectui pro statu isto, Ockham, Sent I. d.38. (OTh IV 583, 21-584,2.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Sicut communiter dicitur, quod propositio de futuro est vera, sic tamen quod potest numquam fuisse ver, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.7. 749.

To interpret Holcot, first of all one must define at least some of his main concepts. As for the expression "future contingents," although he accepts that it can have two meanings: a) "propositions about the future which has no determinate truth or falsity, because they can be true or false; those, however, which are true are able never have been true and those which are false are able never have been false"<sup>103</sup> and b) "which is not but will be, while it is possible that it never will be,"<sup>104</sup> nevertheless, he argues that in the strict sense only things which *are* now can *be* contingently future things.<sup>105</sup> The possible reason behind this claim is the following: In order to predicate the contingency and futurity of *something*, this something must exist, otherwise if the thing itself was future, then whatever would be predicated of it (according to **25**)) it would be neither true nor false. Since the references of the future-tensed propositions, that is, the future events themselves, *do not exist* now, therefore they *cannot be* future contingents in the strict sense. The only things which are present and still contingently future are propositions, therefore properly speaking only propositions can be future contingents.

Thus, in the proper sense, for Holcot to speak about divine foreknowledge is meaningful only if we talk about the foreknowledge of future contingent propositions. To understand Holcot's theory of foreknowledge, it is necessary to explain what his doctrine about these future-tensed contingent propositions is. On this issue Holcot seems to agree with his contemporaries that future contingents are true in such a way that they are able to have never been true. He asserts that he thinks:

as it is commonly said that a proposition about the future is true, however, on such a way that it is possible that it never was true. And therefore it is true differently than that which is simply true about the past or about the present and which does not require for its truth that a proposition about the future will

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Propositiones de futuro quarum non est veritas determinata vel falsitas, quia, licet sint verae vel falsae, illae tamen quae sunt verae possunt numquam fuisse verae, et illae quae sunt falsae possunt numquam fuisse falsae Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 30-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Quod non est sed erit, possibile est tamen quod numquam sit, Holcot, Quodl q.1. 42-43. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Futura contingentia primo modo loquendi sunt contingenter futura, id est, possunt esse in futurum <sic!>; et possunt non esse in futurum <sic!>; sed sunt res praesentes Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. a.2..70-73. My translation.

be true. Nevertheless if such a <past- or present-tensed proposition> is true, it is necessary that afterwards it always was true. Regarding propositions about contingent future matters, however, each of the two parts of the contradiction can be true, but neither simultaneously, nor successively.<sup>106</sup>

Holcot is right that all these things are commonly *said* about future contingents, but it is questionable whether the similarities between Holcot's and other fourteenth-century schoolmen's theory(ies) are on the vocal level or in the meaning. In the case of Ockham I argue that the expression 'future contingents are true (by supposition / inasmuch as they are not false)' means only that they are neither true nor false. Some passages in Holcot, however, seem to suggest that he assigns a kind of truth value to future contingents.

Regarding Holcot's interpretation of Aristotle's standpoint on this issue, he agrees with Ockham in saying that according to Aristotle "about contingent matters neither part of the contradiction is true or false."<sup>107</sup> Holcot notes that "the theologians' opinion is the contrary: <br/>because> we believe that God knows that resurrection will happen and that he determinately knows one part of all the contradictories about the future."<sup>108</sup> Thus, the texts suggests that for Holcot the contraposition between the theological and the philosophical doctrines on this issue is not that according to the Philosopher God would not able to know future contingents, but that the Philosopher claims that future contingents have no truth value, and it is the latter against which the theologians maintain that they are true (in some sense).<sup>109</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Sicut communiter dicitur, quod propositio de futuro est vera, sic tamen quod potest numquam fuisse vera. Et ideo aliter est vera quam illa quae est simpliciter vera de praeterito vel de praesenti, sic quod nullo modo ad suam veritatem requirat aliquam de futuro esse veram. Nam si aliqua talis est vera, necessarium est postea quod illa fuit vera. In propositionibus autem de futuro in materia contingenti sic est quod utrumque contradictoriorum potest esse verum, et tamen nec simul nec successive, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.7. 758-765.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Neutra pars contradictoriorum in materia contingenti est vera vel falsa, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.7. 749-750. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Sed sententia theologorum est huic contraria; credimus enim Deum scire resurrectionem esse futuram et omnium contradictorium de futuro alteram partem determinate, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.7. 750-752. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Although based on this texts it is possible to conlude that Holcot assigns some sort of truth value to future contingents, this conclusion is not necessary. Holcot's argument seems to run parallel to that of Ockham (mentioned above, see footnote 65), only that the Dominican Master drops the middle of the argument. Both assueme that divine foreknowledge contradicts the Philosopher's claim in the sense that if neither part of a contradiction is true it is possible to argue that neither can be known. It seems, however, that the two theologians faced the same problem and gave the same answer; i.e., they denied that neither pair of a future contingent pair is true, but, as it was seen, in case of Ockham it did not mean to attribute truth value to future

If one accepted that for Holcot the contradiction to Aristotle turns on the point of whether future contingents have or do not have truth value, then the paragraph may suggest that the same expression (to be true, but to be able never to have been true) means something significantly different in Holcot than in Ockham; namely, that while for Ockham it means 'without truth value' for Holcot it could mean 'with a special truth value.' When speaking about the truth of future contingents both theologians use the term "true" equivocally, but while in Ockham this equivocality is the consequence of speaking about logical and metalogical issues, in Holcot the two equivocal meanings seem to refer to the same level of discourse: the logic of the propositions.

Based on this opposition to Aristotle it is possible to argue – as Gelber does<sup>110</sup> – that while Ockham uses: 'to be true, but to be able never have been true' as 'neither true nor false' and in this way applies a third truth value ("unknown" or "maybe"),<sup>111</sup> Holcot introduces a four-valued logic. By attributing some kind of truth values to future contingents there could be four values: a) true, b) false, c) true but able to never have been true, and d) false, but able to never have been false. Thus, while in Ockham the two expressions: 'to be true, but to be able never have been true' and 'to be false, but to able never have been false' referred to one and the same "truth value" (or, more properly, the absence of it), a four-valued logic entails that there must be a difference between these two. It speaks against this interpretation, however, that nowhere in the Holcotian corpus can any criterion be found as to what is needed to satisfy one or the other; that is, there is no explicit distinction between 'to be true, but able to never have been true' and 'to be false, but able to never have been false' which

contingents. Reading the Holcotian passage with these considerations in mind, and accepting, as Holcot himself writes, that his standpoint regarding future contingents is the same as the common opinion (see footnote 106) I cannot see such a radical difference between Holcot's view written in the *Sentence Commentary* and between that of written in his *Quodlibet* which is supposed, for example, by Schabel (See: *"Theology at Paris..."* 248-249).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Hester G. Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, *Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology in Oxford*, 1300-1350 (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> In the case of Ockham, however, it is more appropriate to speak about a truth-value gap rather than a third truth value, and about value-gap logic rather than a three-valued logic.

distinction would be required for a four-valued logic. What is sure, however, is that the truth values that Holcot attributed to future contingents by definition are not determinate truth values.<sup>112</sup>

In order to get a more detailed picture of Holcot's theory about divine foreknowledge, besides his theory of the truth value of future contingents, it is necessary to examine the other side of the coin; i.e., Holcot's theory about the knowledge by which future contingents are known. In the passage cited above<sup>113</sup> (and in some other places) Holcot emphasizes his agreement with the teaching of the Church regarding divine foreknowledge. It is worth, however, making a closer examination of what this politically correct assertion '*credimus enim Deum scire* ...' means exactly; the answer depends on what *scire* means for Holcot in this context.

While Ockham differentiates two senses of *scire*,<sup>114</sup> Holcot has a tripartite classification. In the first sense he takes 'to know' in the same way as Ockham; that is, to know something in the broadest sense means to cognize either true or false, complex or non-complex things. In a stricter sense, and this is missing from Ockham, 'to know' means

an evident knowledge by which someone assents to a truth and by which man assents without any fear that the state of affairs is as the this truth denotes; and in this way Socrates is able to know: 'the sun will rise tomorrow.'<sup>115</sup>

In the third and strictest way, 'to know' refers to "the assent by which a man believes in a truth by assenting to it without any fear that the state of affairs is as the truth denote and that the state of affairs cannot be otherwise."<sup>116</sup> Holcot claims that:

In the first way God knows everything which is apprehended by the creatures both what is true or false, possible or impossible, complex or non-complex, as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> See footnote 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> See: footnote 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> See: footnote 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> <Scire> accipitur magis stricte pro notitia evidenti assentiva alicui vero qua homo assentit quod ita est in re sicut per illud verum denotatur sine formidine; et sic Sortes potest scire istam: "sol orietur cras," Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 856-858. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Accipitur iste terminus 'scire' strictissime pro assensu quo homo credit alicui vero sine formidine assentiendi quod sic est sicut per illud verum denotatur et quod non potest aliter esse Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 858-861. My translation.

it is clear. In the second sense God knows future contingents. But not in the third way because those propositions are true in such a way that they are able to never have been true, as it was said in the seventh article.<sup>117</sup>

This theory presented a bundle of problems for Holcot's interpretation. What seems certain is that Holcot excludes the possibility that God knows future contingents in the third way. First, because he sees a contradiction in it; if God knew future contingents with certainty in the third sense, then God would not be omnipotent because in this case the future cannot be otherwise than it is known by God, consequently even God himself could not insure that the opposite of his knowledge will be true,<sup>118</sup> and second, because future contingents do not have the appropriate property (a determinate truth value) to be the objects of such knowledge.

One question remains, however: What is the difference between God and Socrates regarding knowledge about the future?<sup>119</sup> The main difference is that while humans can err regarding future things "only divine *notitia* is in which there cannot be any error, since in it there could be the *notitia* of the opposites."<sup>120</sup> However, as Holcot emphasizes in several passages, God knows about the opposites neither simultaneously nor sequentially. Propositions 'God knows p will happen' and 'a man knows p will happen' differ in the fact that if it turns out that events happen contrary to p, then it must be said that the man erred, a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Primo modo Deus scit omnia apprehensa a creatura, vera et falsa, possibilia et impossibilia, complexa and incomplexa, sicut manifestum est. Secundo modo Deus scit futura contingentia. Tertio modo non, quia propositiones tales sic sunt verae quod possunt numquam fuisse verae, sicut dictum fuit articulo vii Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 870-874. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> See: Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 902-906.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Paul Streveler seems to conclude that there is no real distinction between them; he suggests that "although the mode or manner of God's knowing may be quite different from ours (that is, not mediated by sense-perception); yet, the objects of our knowledge (that is, propositions) are exactly the same. Thus we, no less than God, can know future contingencies [...] The gist of the solution is always to remember that God, no less than we, knows these future contingencies, contingently, that is, in such a way that we, no less than God, could-never-have-known them." Paul A. Streveler, "Robert Holcot on Future Contingencies: A Preliminary Account," *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 8-9. ed. J. R. Sommerfeldt and E. R. Elder, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1976), 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Sola notitia divina est in qua non potest esse error, licet in ea possit esse notitia oppositorum, Holcot, Quodl 3. q.8. a.3. 428-429. See also: Holcot, Sent II. q.2. 990-994.

situation which never holds for God.<sup>121</sup> Holcot remains silent about how this knowledge is possible for God; his conclusion is similar to that of Ockham; the way of divine foreknowledge is undetectable for wayfarers. God knows future contingents as propositions which are true, but which are able not to be true, however, if they will be not true, God never knew them as true "and this is because of the illumination of the *notitia* which is God and which we can admire but which we cannot measure."<sup>122</sup>

By arranging Holcot's doctrines about the truth value of future-tensed propositions and about the knowledge by which future contingents are known the following solution can be given to the problem of divine foreknowledge. Taking the term 'future contingent' strictly (i.e., future-tensed propositions) it is possible to conclude that God knows them as they are; that is, without definite truth values. God knows future-tensed propositions indeterminately, since it is *per definitionem* impossible to know future contingents determinately. This weak sense of knowledge does not impair divine omnipotence because omnipotence means to be able to do whatever does not involve a contradiction.

Holcot argues that taking the term 'future contingent' according to its improper meaning (i.e., future events) it must be concluded that God does not know them. Since it is impossible to know about something which does not exist, it would entail a contradiction if it were supposed that God has knowledge about future events.<sup>123</sup> In this way, assigning ignorance of future events to God also does not entail any problem regarding omnipotence. In the framework of the Holcotian semantic theory it is enough to accept that 'if a future event

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Holcot discusses this difference between Christ's human and divine *notitia*: Inter istas notitias sit talis differentia quod notitia creata potest esse error permutationemrei cuius est, quia notitia istius, "a erit" nec potest esse notitia istius "a non erit." Sed notitia increata numquam potest esse error. Et similiter licet sit notitia istius, "a erit," potest tamen esse notitia istius "a non erit," et sine sui mutatione, et numquam fuisse notitia istius "a erit," Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.10. 1215-1220.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Et hoc est propter illuminationem notitiae quae est Deus, quam admirari possumus, sed non mensurare, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.10. 1221-1222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Item, si Deus videt omnia talia <quae non sunt, sed erunt et possunt numquam esse>, videt plura talia; ergo videt quod sunt plura nunc; ergo sunt aliqua plura praesentia nunc; ergo futura contingentia sunt aliqua plura nunc praesentia. Consequens contra descriptionem datam termini, quae est quod futura contingentia dicuntur quae non sunt nunc, sed erunt et possunt numquam esse, Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 88-92.

existed, God would know it determinately' is true, and in this way divine foreknowledge is saved, although this solution raises the question of in which sense it is possible to speak of *'fore*knowledge' at all.

## 2.3 Semantic considerations

This idea points to the fact that behind the argument Holcot has a radical semantic doctrine, more radical than Ockham's. Regarding the question of what the relation is between the factual value (i.e., the *denotatum*) of an individual name contained in the proposition and the factual value of the proposition itself (i.e., its truth value) the starting point is the *adaequatio* theory, or **1**), according to which for the truth or falsity of a proposition refers. If nothing is present to which the proposition refers it is an empty proposition. A proposition can be empty either because its predicate term or its subject term does not refer to anything extant. Empty predicates seem to cause a problem that easier to solve; Ockham discusses this problem extensively in his *Summa Logicae* and gives a coherent solution to it.<sup>124</sup> Concerning future contingents, however, the problem arises mainly because of the emptiness of the subject term because the thing of which something is predicated does not exist by definition, since taking the term 'future contingent' in its second sense, it means something which is not but which will be.

Holcot argues that subject terms signifying non-existent things do not signify anything in the strict sense, but signify only by the power of voices, based on an earlier settled usage.<sup>125</sup> Based on this *vox significativa* it can be said that past-tensed propositions about non-existent things are true (or false) in the sense that if the thing signified by their subject term existed, the predicate term would be truly (or falsely) predicated of it in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> See: Ockham, SL II. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> See: Unde concedo quod iste terminus 'Caesar' est modo vox significativa, sed tamen nihil significat nec alicuius est significativus, sed fuit aliquando institutus ad significandum Caesarem; et si ille esset modo, sine nova institutione illum significaret Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 219-222.

proper mode.<sup>126</sup> Since in the case of future things it is hardly possible to speak about an earlier settled usage, it is possible to conclude that future contingents seem to be "more false" than past-tensed propositions. Holcot is not entirely coherent here because, on the one hand, he assigns past-tensed propositions to the same set as present-tensed propositions, saying that their truth value, contrary to that of future contingents is (accidentally) necessary; that is the LNP holds for them.<sup>127</sup> On the other hand, according to his other classification, both past- and future-tensed propositions come under the same category as propositions containing figment terms. These propositions are false in the strict sense even if they express the self-identity of the thing referred to by the subject term, as, for example, propositions such as: 'a chimera is a chimera' or that the 'the sea battle tomorrow is a sea battle' because they refer to nothing that exists.<sup>128</sup>

In harmony with this doctrine, Holcot maintains that meaningful speaking is possible only about the present. He quotes Augustine's Confessions, saying that although it is possible to speak about past and future things, in reality we always speak about present things; the only difference is that sometimes we speak about present things as present, but sometimes we speak about present things as past or future. According to Holcot's interpretation by this:

Augustine wants to say that properly speaking nothing is known, except that which exists. Therefore if it would be said that Caesar or the Antichrist is known: by this, indeed, it is said that the *species* which this or that would have, if <this or that> would exist is known now.<sup>129</sup>

That is, past- and future-tensed propositions as well as propositions with figment terms are true only if they are taken as conditionals, the antecedent of which states the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Talis terminus est quod ipso audito multi ex certa institutione formant conceptus qui forent conceptus Caesaris, si Caesar esset, et per tanto dicitur apud eos significare Caesarem Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 223-225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Et haec est differentia inter propositiones de futuro in materia contingenti et eis aequivalentes, sive sint de praesenti sive de praeterito, et propositiones de praesenti et de praeterito quae non aequivalent talibus nec tales virtualiter includunt; quia si aliqua sit propositio vera de praesenti vel de praeterito, necessario postea erit semper verum dicere quod illa fuit vera, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. 324-329. See also: Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.7. 758-763. Quoted in footnote: 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> See: Holcot Quodl III. q.1. 241-247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Augustinus vult dicere quod proprie loquendo nihil cognoscitur nisi illud quod est. unde si dicatur quod cesar vel antichristus cognoscitur: hoc immo dicitur quia species quae foret hius vel illius si esset: est qui iam cognoscitur, Holcot, Sent I. q.1. (Lyons, 1518)

existence of the thing for which the subject term of the consequent supposits. Thus, 'if there is a chimera, then a chimera is a chimera,' 'if the Antichrist exists, the Antichrist is known by God' and 'if Caesar did exist, it would be truly predicated of him that he was the emperor of Rome' are true.

For Holcot not only empty categorical propositions but propositions expressing the possible existence of something non-existent are also false in the strict sense. For example, the proposition 'the rose can exist,' will be false, too, if no rose exists.<sup>130</sup> Holcot claims that this proposition can be true (by *termini significativi*) if it is taken in the sense that as

'it is possible that a rose be' or something similar. However, it is not possible for us to express ourselves perfectly, that is, we, in our ineptness, would not speak properly; it is sufficient, however, to have a sane intellect and to know that we speak improperly.<sup>131</sup>

He indicates that this expression is logically inadequate, and that because of the constrains of human language it is not possible to speak about non-existent things.

Ockham agrees with Holcot on the interpretation of the 'chimera;' he also claims that if a fictitious term enters a proposition this proposition can be true only if it is taken as a conditional in the way mentioned above.<sup>132</sup> Regarding past-tensed, future-tensed and *de possibili* propositions, however, he has different ideas. Ockham's position on the issue is the consequence of his theory of signification. He, contrary to Holcot, takes the concept of signification not in one sense but in four out of which the first two are relevant now. A word

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> See: Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 268-269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> 'Potest esse quod rosa sit,' vel pro consimili. Sed in ista materia non est possibile quod evolvamus nos perfecte quin malis gratibus nostris improprie loquamur; sed sufficit habere sanum intellectum et scire quod improprie loquimur, Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. 269-273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Ex quo sequitur quod sic accipiendo definitionem aliquando praedicatio definitionis de definito per hoc verbum 'est', utroque significative sumpto, est impossibilis, sicut haec est impossibilis 'chimaera est animal compositum ex capra et bove'; sit haec eius definitio. Et hoc propter implicationem impossibilem, qua scilicet implicatur aliquid componi ex capra et bove. ... Verumtamen condicionalis ex tali definito et definitione composita vera est. Ista enim vera est 'si aliquid est chimaera, ipsum est compositum ex homine et leone' et e converso, Ockham, SL I. q.26. 122-136. And: Dicendum est quod de virtute vocis ista est falsa 'chimaera est chimaera' si termini supponant significative, eo quod falsum implicatur. ... Sicut si haec esset vera 'chimaera est aliquid', haec esset vera 'chimaera est chimaera'. Et ita nulla propositio in qua praedicatur aliquid de hoc nomine 'chimaera', significative sumpto, potest esse verior illa in qua hoc nomen 'chimaera' praedicatur de se ipso. Cum hoc tamen stat quod nec illa nec ista sit vera, Ockham, SL II. q.15. 39-51.

has the first type of signification "when it (i) truly supposits for that thing in a nonmodal present-tense proposition and (ii) is truly and affirmatively predicated of that thing."<sup>133</sup> This sense of signification given by Ockham coincides with that accepted by Holcot. Since this sense of signification is possible only for names or words contained in present-tensed non-modal propositions, to accept this sense of signification as the only possible one would entail denying the signification of terms used in past-tensed, future-tensed or modal propositions and therefore all of those propositions would be false. According to Ockham there is another sense of signification and in this sense "a name is understood to signify something when it is able to supposit for what it signifies in a proposition that is present-tense or future-tense or modal."<sup>134</sup> Ockham argues that if the reference of a term ceases to exist, this term loses its signification in the first sense, but not in the second. Therefore, contrary to Holcot's semantics theory, Ockham's doctrine does not make it meaningless and impossible to speak about non-existent (past, future or possible) things.

The main difference between Ockham's and Holcot's reasoning on the relation between signification and supposition is the direction of the argument. Holcot's starting point is that:

36) Signification presupposes that terms refer to something presently extant.

He takes **36**) as a general rule and he concludes that therefore only present-tensed, non-modal propositions can be true, Ockham first takes into consideration the different types of propositions and concludes that for their truth a type of signification is required that differs from that which is needed for present-tensed *de inesse* propositions. Thus, according to Ockham **36**) cannot be taken universally.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Trans. Alfred J. Freddoso. *Quando vere pro illo supponit in propositione de inesse et de praesenti, et vere et affirmative praedicatur eo,* Ockham, Quodl V. q.16. 15-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Trans. Alfred J. Freddoso. *Quando nomen potest pro illo significato supponere in aliqua propositione de praeterito velde futuro vel de modo*, Ockham, Quodl V. q.16.

Based on the relevant texts of the *Summa logicae* and the *Quodlibeta*,<sup>135</sup> it is possible to reconstruct that, according to Ockham, in order to a past- or future-tensed proposition have truth value it is required that (i) there is/was/will be a time when the subject term supposits for a thing in a present-tensed proposition<sup>136</sup> and that (ii) there is/was/will be a time when the predicate term truly and affirmatively predicated of that thing for which the subject term supposits/supposited/will supposit. It is *not* required, however, that (iii) the predicate term might be predicated of the thing for which the subject term supposits at the same time when the subject term supposits for it.<sup>137</sup>

Ockham's standpoint entails that if there is a time when the predicate term might be truly predicated of the thing for which the subject term supposits the proposition is true. The difference between past- and future-tensed propositions is that while in the case of pasttensed propositions there has already been a time when their present-tensed case was true and therefore past-tensed propositions are (accidentally) necessary. In the case of future contingents there is no such time yet, therefore, these propositions remain contingent and without truth value.

The main point, however, is that this semantic theory allows Ockham to speak meaningfully about non-existent future things. In the framework of Holcot's semantic system, to speak about divine foreknowledge only makes sense if the expression "future contingents" is taken in the strict sense; i.e., as future-tensed propositions. Within the Holcotian framework the concept of foreknowledge itself seems to be contradictory and meaningless since while to know about future events is impossible, to know presently extant future-tensed propositions without their future truth value can hardly be properly called as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> See: Ockham, SL II. q.7. and Quodl V. q.16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> See: Subjectum potest supponere pro eo quod est vel pro eo quod fuit, si sit propositio de praeterito, aut pro eo quod est vel pro eo quod erit, si sit propositio de futuro, Ockham, SL II. q.7. 6-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Ockham argues that in some cases it is downright impossible that they might refer to the same thing at the same time, for example, in the case of the proposition 'a white thing was black' because the proposition 'a white thing is black' is impossible, but it is possible that a thing which is white now was black yesterday. See: Ockham, SL II. 7. and Tract q.1. 216-220.

*fore*knowledge. Ockham's system, however, makes it possible to speak about God's foreknowledge of future contingents not only as foreknowledge of future-tensed propositions, but also the foreknowledge of future things, future states of affairs.

# **2.3 Conclusions**

The main difference between Ockham's and Holcot's solutions is that while Ockham argues for the possibility of divine foreknowledge maintaining both **25**) and **30**), Holcot claims that it is impossible to hold these two together and argues that future contingents have (a special type of) truth value. The interesting thing is the inverse ratio between the truth value of future contingents and God's knowledge about them. Ockham maintains that future contingents have no truth value, but he attributes definite knowledge to God regarding future events. In contrast, Holcot struggles continuously to assign a kind of truth value to future-tensed propositions (at least at the level of words), nevertheless he renders God's knowledge about the future more contingent. Holcot's texts are clear that the truth value of future contingents is not definitive and therefore does not render future contingents able to be the subject of evident knowledge. What is more, in reality his analysis may suggest that this truth value is nothing more than to be neither false nor true.

Ockham tries to give a coherent logical analysis about the possibility of divine foreknowledge; that is, to negate some (real or supposed) arguments the conclusions of which jeopardize the theological standpoint. His main tool for this is **35**), that is, it is impossible to form a determinately true or determinately false proposition about the content of God's foreknowledge and the logical rule of the heredity of the truth value gap in demonstrations. But when the discussion reaches the heart of the debate, Ockham subjects logical considerations to theological doctrines. He simply claims that divine properties do not have to be in accordance with certain logical rules. This idea is in harmony with his general theory that many theological truths are not provable by philosophical arguments. In contrast to Ockham, Holcot strives to maintain a greater harmony between theology and philosophy, between logic and (divine) epistemology. He presupposes that the factual value of a proposition has to be at the same epistemological level as knowledge gathered about the state of affairs referred to by that proposition. Regarding their epistemological standpoint, Ockham seems to be closer to the Boëthian idea that knowledge depends mainly on the cognitive ability of the knower and not on the thing which is known,<sup>138</sup> while Holcot tries to ground all possible knowledge in the passive signification of the propositions. This position forces Holcot, on the one hand, to ensure a kind of truth value for future-tensed propositions, while, on the other hand, he has to present a special sense of knowing proper to this truth value.

Regarding their final achievements, however, Holcot's efforts do not seem to yield fruit; both Ockham and Holcot had to conclude that it is impossible to discover how divine foreknowledge (either determinate or contingent) is possible. What is more, based on Holcot's restricted signification theory, it is possible to conclude that not only the way *how* God foreknows the future events, or the content of divine foreknowledge are undetectable issues for humans in this world, but all human talk about divine foreknowledge verges on meaninglessness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> See: Boëthius, Consolatio Philosophiae – The Consolation of Philosophy (Bilingual ed., trans. S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library, (London: Harvard University, 1978) 130-435. V. 4. Omne enim quod cognoscitur non secundum sui vim sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem.

# 3. Prophecy and Beatific Vision: Can Humans Know the Future?

According to my interpretation both Ockham's and Holcot's arguments for compatibilism rest on the claim that future contingents have no truth value before the event to which they refer happens or does not happen. If there is no corresponding reality, neither in the divine mind nor anywhere in the "platonic realm," and thus events are not settled in advance, there cannot be any definitely true or definitely false propositions about them.

There are special cases, however, when to turn divine foreknowledge into propositions with definite truth value seems to be either possible or even necessary. The beatific vision of God seems to give humans the opportunity to see the future, while in the case of the earthly revelation of future things, i.e., in prophecy, it seems to be downright necessary to know *true* future contingents.<sup>139</sup> The main question in the issue is that if there is revelation about a contingent future event whether this event remains contingent after the revelation, or not. Both Ockham's and Holcot's answer to this question is explicitly affirmative,<sup>140</sup> but their ways of reasoning are different.

#### **3.1 The Problem of Prophecy**

The concept of prophecy seems to be contradictory in itself because it is possible to define it as a necessarily true proposition about a contingent future event given by divine revelation. Since, because of the symmetric relation between the modality of propositions and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> It must be mentioned that during the Middle Ages the problem of foreknowledge was exclusively a theological problem. It can be said that the concept of foreknowledge could be predicated singularly of God; the possibility of human foreknowledge is out of question except through divine revelation. In modern receptions of medieval arguments, however, the problem is extended to human agents. (See for example: Nelson Pike, "Of God and Freedom: A Rejoinder," *The Philosophical Review* 75, no. 3 (1966), 369-379.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> Dico quod tale revelatum contingenter eveniet et non necessario. Et dico quod potest non evenire, Ockham, Quodl IV. 31-32. Dico quod omnis propositio de futuro contingenter vera, tamdiu est contingenter vera, quamdiu est vera, sicut quamdiu ista erit vera: 'resurrectio corporum erit,' tamdiu erit vera: 'resurrectio corporum contingenter erit,' quantumcumque fiat revelatio super hoc alicui creaturae, quia semper Deus potest facere quod talis propositio numquam fuit vera, quia sic est vera quod potuit numquam fuisse vera, Holcot, Quodl III. q.8. 401-408.

events, a proposition referring to a contingent event must be contingent, it leads to the question of how the same proposition can be necessary and contingent at one and the same time. Therefore, in the case of prophecy one can reformulate the fatalist argument in this way:

**37**) Prophetic propositions are about future events.

# Therefore:

**38**) Prophetic propositions are future contingents.

25) Future contingents do not have truth value.

It follows from 25) and 37) that

**39**) Prophetic propositions have no truth value.

**40**) If a proposition has no truth value, it can be false.

41) If a prophesized statement can be false, then God can deceive men.

42) It is impossible that God deceives man.

Therefore

43) Prophetic propositions are necessarily true.

Therefore:

44) Events referred to by prophetical propositions are necessary.

In order to defend contingency; i.e., divine and human freedom, both Ockham and Holcot come up with many arguments of two main types. The first one tries to find a way out of this tricky puzzle by denying **41**); the second tries to argue for the strange claim that both **39**) and **43**) are true in such a way that **43**) does not imply **44**).

### **3.1.1 Divine Deception**

Although both Ockham and Holcot accept **39**), **40**), and **42**), they deny **41**), that is, they deny the inference that if a prophetic proposition can be false or is even actually false,

then we are deceived by God. Contrary to this, they argue that although God can reveal something false to us, he is unable to deceive us.

In this case the two philosophers reached a similar solution. They start from the same point in that they take at face value the biblical passages according to which God revealed something false to men, as for example in the case of Achab<sup>141</sup> They do not deny the mere fact that something false was revealed in these cases, but they argue with the aid of signification theory that in these cases it is not proper to say that God deceived men. They both agree that terms signifying moral value are connotative terms; that is, terms which signify not only one thing, but two, something primarily and something secondarily.<sup>142</sup>

Holcot does not give a deep logical analysis of the issue, but discusses it both in his Sentence commentary and in his *Quodlibet questiones*.<sup>143</sup> He accepts that "God is able to deceive and cheat in the sense that he is able to create voluntarily an error in the human mind and bring about man to believe otherwise than the state of affairs is;"<sup>144</sup> however, according to him the word 'to deceive' in the strict sense includes an injust cause to deceive someone and since God can never reveal something false by maleficent will, he cannot deceive us.<sup>145</sup>

In Ockham I was not able to find any text referring to this concrete problem, but it is possible to infer from various passages that he maintained the logical possibility of false revelation. According to Okham's "divine commandment theory," moral terms always

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Holcot, Sent 2 q.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Nomen autem connotativum est illud quod significat aliquid primario et aliquid secundario, Ockham SL I. 10. OPh 1. 36. For example, the word "white" is a connotative term because it signifies both the white thing (a wall, for example) and whiteness itself. Unde si quaeras, quid significat hoc nomen 'album', dices quod illud idem quod ista oratio tota 'aliquid informatum albedine' vel 'aliquid habens albedinem, Ibidem. <sup>143</sup> Sent Holpet, Sent 2 a 2 a 8, 060,076

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> See: Holcot, Sent 2 q.2. a.8. 960-976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Concedo quod deus potest fallere et decipere idest voluntarie causare errorem in mente hominis: et facere eum credere aliter quod res se habet, Holcot, Sent I. q.1. (Lyons, 1518). My translation. Here: 'Ad quintum principale.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Augustinus autem accepit fallere et decipere sic videlicet quod in diffinitione exprimente quid nominis istius: quod dico fallere: includatur iniuste causare errorem: vel deordinate causare errorem: vel aliquis talis terminus sive determinatio quae deo convenire non posset: et sic tenet argumentum suum de lxxiii. questionibus q. xiiii. sed ad virtutem vocis capiendo propones: argumentum suum non concludit nisi sicut ex impossibili sequitur quodlibet: quia hec modo est impossibilis: Christus fefellit in hoc facto, Holcot, Sent I. q.1. (Lyons, 1518) Here: 'Ad quintum principale.'

express whether the act they signify is in accordance with divine obligation or against it.<sup>146</sup> Since God cannot contradict his own obligation, and since 'to deceive' connotes that the act is against God's commandment, therefore it is impossible for God to deceive us. Since a term can never supposite for something which it does not signify,<sup>147</sup> therefore, even if God caused false cognition in us<sup>148</sup> it would not be an act of deceiving.

The possibility that God can reveal something false to us, however, does not solve all the problems. On the one hand, Holcot says that 'prophecy' is also a connotative term and that, strictly speaking, only true revelations can be considered prophecies;<sup>149</sup> on the other hand, even if it is possible to argue that since there are false prophecies and therefore not all of the revealed events will come true, it always remains the case that if something is revealed as truth then it will necessarily occur. If God once revealed something either falsely or truly, after the time of revelation it will be true to say that it was revealed by God and therefore the LNP holds for it. Now, if the LNP holds for it, then between the time of revelation and the time to which the revelation refers it is/will always be necessary either that it does not happen (in the case of false revelation) or that it does happen (in the case of true revelation).

### 3.1.2 Ockham's solution

In order to save the contingency of the future Ockham developed the idea that although prophetic statements are true, they are not categorical propositions but a type of hypothetical ones; that is:

**45**) Each prophetic proposition is a conditional.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> *Quia bonita moralis vel malitia connotant quod agens obligatur ad illum actum vel eius oppositum*, Ockham, Sent. II. q.15. (OTh V. 353.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Est igitur una regula generalis quod numquam terminus in aliqua propositione, saltem quando significative accipitur, supponit pro aliquo nisi de quo vere praedicatur, SL I. 63. (OPh I. 194.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Ockham explicitly argues for the claim that God is able to cause a false cognition in us and to cause it to be believed true; however, since intuitive cognition *per definitionem* means that the state of affairs is according to the cognition, therefore God can cause it only by an abstractive cognition and not by an intuitive one. *Deus potest causare actum creditivum per quem credo rem esse praesentem quae est absens. Et dico quod illa cognitio creditiva erit abstractiva, non intuitiva; et per talem actum fidei potest apparere res esse praesens quando est absens, non tamen per actum evidentem,* Ockham, Quodl. V. 5. 72-76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Iste terminus 'propheta' est terminus connotativus, cuius significatum est aliquis praedicens verum, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. 1283-1285.

According to Ockham, there are two types of prophesized conditionals: sometimes both the antecedent and the consequent of it are revealed, while in other cases the antecedent remains unexpressed.<sup>150</sup> Ockham gives examples from the Bible for both cases. The antecedent of the conditional was expressed in the revelation given to David: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore."<sup>151</sup> Although it remained unexpressed in the case of Niniveh, one must include it in the prophecy in this way: Unless you, people of Niniveh, do not repent of your sins "yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."<sup>152</sup>

Prophecy can be understood as a necessary implication: If the antecedent holds, the consequent holds necessarily.<sup>153</sup> The necessity of the consequence, however, does not mean that the consequent is necessarily true. Since a conditional can be true even if its antecedent is false or if both the antecedent and the consequent are false; and what is more, according to Ockham, it can be *necessarily* true even if both parts of it are impossible.<sup>154</sup> Therefore the proposition, 'if it was revealed by God it will happen necessarily,' is true *de dicto*, but false *de re* and in this way both **39**) and **43**) hold for prophecy, but not **44**).

Since the consequent of a conditional could be true either the antecedent is true or false, it seems possible to avoid fatalism regarding both human and divine agents. Since it is always within our power to do or not to do according to the antecedent, and since the necessity of implication holds only if the antecedent is true, in this way prophecy does not entail necessity in the order of the events; so human free will is saved.<sup>155</sup> At the same time the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Omnes prophetiae de quibuscumque futuris contingentibus fuerunt condicionales, quamvis non semper exprimebatur condicio, Ockham, Tract q.1. 176-178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Psalms 132.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Jonah 3.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Condicionalis est vera quando antecedens infert consequens et non aliter SL II. 31. 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Est etiam sciendum quod ad veritatem condicionalis nec requiritur veritas antecedentis nec veritas consequentis, immo est aliquando condicionalis necessaria et quaelibet pars eius est impossibilis, sicut hic 'si Sortes est asinus, Sortes est rudibilis,' SL II. 31. 14-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Let us suppose that God gave me the revelation: 'You will not catch your bus tomorrow' with the unexpressed antecedent: 'If you do not leave home at 7 am.' Since it is (hopefully) within my power to decide

falsity of the antecedent does not implies the falsity of the consequent, so it can happen even if the antecedent is false and in this way divine free will also seems to be saved.<sup>156</sup>

By further analysis, however, the problem does not seem to be solved just delayed. Let us take the case that the antecedent is true; because of the necessity of the consequence from that time on when the antecedent became true it will not be within God's power not to bring about the consequent, which seems to be false.<sup>157</sup> To my knowledge, Ockham does not reflect on this concrete problem, but he offers another solution to solve another problem related to prophetical statements, which solution seems to secure the way out of this problem, too.

This other problem arises because of applying the LNP to revelation. According to the LNP, once something has been revealed it will always be necessary that it was revealed. Ockham notes that the LNP can be applied to revelation in two ways. Supposing that God revealed the proposition  $p^{f}$ , according to the LNP the proposition "God revealed it" will necessarily be true at all times after the revelation (even before the time of the revealed event); however, it does not mean that the revealed event comes by necessity. Ockham argues that the LNP holds for the proposition "God revealed *it*" only inasmuch as 'it' refers to  $p^{f}$ ; that is, after the revelation it always was/is/will be necessary that God revealed a certain future-tensed proposition. Inasmuch, however, as 'it' refers to the future event, the proposition is not necessary. Since the future event itself is a future contingent and therefore it is impossible to compose a determinately true or determinately false proposition about it,

whether I will leave home at that time or not, I can bring about that the prophesized event does not happen, however, my action does not affect the truth value of the revealed proposition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Presupposing the situation posed in the previous footnote, leaving my home at 7 am does not necessitate God letting me catch my bus, since, for example, it could happen that although I leave home at the given time, I miss a step on the stairs, get injured, and am not able to catch the bus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Supposing that I can leave home only at 7:10 am, there is/will still be a possibility for God to bring about that for some reason the bus leaves later and I catch it.

therefore as was said in **26**), the LNP does not hold for it.<sup>158</sup> From these it follows that the following proposition:

'God is causing this proposition or quality' does not imply that the proposition referred to will be true or that it will be false. Hence, one should say almost the same thing in all respects about this case as was said about those who are predestined and foreknown and about the succession of contraries or contradictories in them.<sup>159</sup>

Since, as I have already mentioned,<sup>160</sup> an evident cognition necessarily means that the subject of the cognition is present, therefore Ockham claims that God can cause the knowledge of a future thing in a man only taken 'knowledge' in the broad sense,<sup>161</sup> that is knowing not a true proposition but a proposition neither true nor false. Thus, he is able to cause evident knowledge of a future-tensed proposition, but not of a future event. With this answer Ockham is able to preserve the chasm between divine and human knowledge.

This solution, however, poses the question of whether there is a real need for Ockham's other solution based on the claim that prophetic statements are conditionals. If revelation is certain only regarding propositions but contingent regarding the truth value of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Dico quod haec propositio 'Deus causavit hoc', si per li hoc demonstratur illa propositio de futuro vel illa qualitas quae est propositio, est necessaria post instans causationis, quia sua de praesenti non dependet a futuro. Sed si demonstretur per li hoc revelatum vel notitia evidens, tunc est illa de praeterito contingens, quia illa de praesenti dependet ex futuro, Ockham, Quodl IV.4. 64-69. Calvin Normore and Aron Edidin argue that this passage seems to entail the changeability of the past, since – according to Normore's interpretation – the fact whether Christ revealed the prophesied event or not depends on whether the prophesied proposition becomes true or not. The truth value of the proposition has backward causation; God's utterance about a future event will became revelation only when the uttered proposition will have become true. In this way "the contingency of revelation is based on contingency of meaning" (Edidin and Normore, "Ockham on Prophecy," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 13, no.3 [1982] 185.). I am, however, on the side of Gaskin who argues that Ockham's claim "bears another interpretation: while the fact of Christ's utterance to Peter (say), being past, attracts the necessity of the past, its status as a revelation remains sub judice until the relevant moment arrives, because its status as a true prediction only gets settled when Peter acts one way or the other. That is not because its very identity as a prediction (i.e., which prediction Christ intended his utterance to express) is contingent upon how Peter acts, but because the truth of the prediction (conceived as having a fixed content from the moment of its utterance) is contingent upon how events subsequently unfold." (Richard Gaskin, "Peter of Ailly and other Fourteenth-Century Thinkers on Divine Power and the Necessity of the Past," 277.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Ista 'Deus causat hanc propositionem vel qualitatem' non importat quod illa propositio erit vera neque falsa. Unde in ista materia fere dicendum est per omnia sicut de praedestinato et praescito, et de successione contrariorum vel contradictorium in illis, Ockham, Quodl IV.4. 73-76. English trans. Alfred J. Freddoso; see: see: William of Ockham, Quodlibetal Questions, 262.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> See: footnote 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Dico quod futurum contingens potest sciri evidenter, large accipiendo 'scire' pro evidenter cognoscere Ockham, Quodl IV. 4 104-106.

the revealed propositions, then arguing with true hypothetical propositions seems to be redundant; therefore they should be cut off with "Ockham's razor."<sup>162</sup>

## 3.1.3 Holcot's way out

Holcot discusses the problem of prophecy a much greater length than the general problem of foreknowledge. As Courtenay writes, focusing on this sub-problem was a general tendency in English theology from the late 1320s.<sup>163</sup> In order to be able to give a correct account of Holcot's standpoint his direct historical motivation must be taken into consideration. As historians of the Middle Ages have pointed out, Holcot's arguments were basically formed by his debates with his contemporary Oxford fellows.<sup>164</sup> His arguments on my topic were intended to defend and emphasize human and divine freedom against the idea of a certain Master Walter,<sup>165</sup> whose theory is not known from his own writings but transmitted to us through the summaries given by Holcot and Adam Wodeham.<sup>166</sup> Holcot summarizes Walter's argument in this way:

the opinion of a certain worthy one is that, when an absolute revelation has been made concerning any given article of faith, such as "there will be a resurrection of the dead" that article does not thereafter remain contingent, but it's necessary (*necesse est*) that [things] be just as denoted by what is revealed as going to be. Nor is God able to impede [what he has revealed], nor omit fulfilling it, because to be so able would be against God's will and truth, and thus it would not be 'to be able' (*posse*) -- just as to be able to make contradictories simultaneously true is not 'to be able;' indeed, this [is] against God's power.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Since the *Quodlibeta* is probably later than the *Tractatus* (for the chronological order of Ockham's nonpolitical works see: Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham: Predestination, God's Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, 115-118. [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969]) therfore it is possible to argue (as for example Normore suggests; see: Edidin and Normore, "Ockham on Prophecy,") that Ockham changed his theory of prophecy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> William J. Courtenay, Schools and Scholars ..., 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> See for example: Katherine H. Tachau, "Introduction" in *Seeing the Future Clearly, Questions on Future Contingents by Robert Holcot*, ed. Paul A. Streveler and K. H. Tachau (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1995), 1-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Master Walter was a fellow theologian of Holcot giving his Sentence lectures in Oxford a year earlier than Holcot.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> See: Katherine H. Tachau, "Robert Holcot on Contingency and Divine Deception," 168-169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Katherine Tachau's translation "Robert Holcot on Contingency and Divine Deception, 169. Est opinio cuiusdam valentis quod facta revelatione absoluta de quocumque articulo de futuro, cuiusmodi est ista: "resurrectio mortuorum erit", non manet ille articulus postea contingens, sed necesse est sic esse per illud revelatum denotatur fore. Nec potest Deus impedire vel omittere ne illud impleat, quia tale posse foret contra

Thus, according to Holcot's interpretation, Walter claims that the revealed thing will be necessary after the revelation so much so that even God is not able to cause it to be otherwise than it was revealed. To counter this idea which was totally unacceptable to Holcot, made Holcot to put more emphasis on contingency than Ochkam did.

In order to clarify the problem of prophecy, Holcot makes a distinction between two meanings of *revelare*. His distinction seems similar to Ockham's, however, in the latter,<sup>168</sup> the distinction is only implicit and not discussed directly. According to Holcot, in the first sense 'to reveal' means "to cause a new assent to a *true* proposition (complexo) in someone else's mind, since in the proper sense no one can reveal something to himself."<sup>169</sup> In the other sense, 'to reveal' means "to cause a new assent to a proposition in someone else's mind."<sup>170</sup>

Holcot argues that in the second sense of the term the proposition: 'God revealed to Socrates that the day of the last judgment will come' is necessary because it means only that a proposition which has no truth value, but can be either true or false, was revealed by God, and in this sense Holcot permits that God revealed something false.<sup>171</sup> But taking 'revelation' in the first sense, that is, as an assent to a *true* proposition, Holcot considers the same sentence: 'God revealed to Socrates that the day of the last judgment will come' as contingent<sup>172</sup> for two reasons. His first argument coincides with Ockham's; since the proposition: 'the day of the last judgment will come' is a future contingent (even after a revelation), therefore any proposition about its truth value must necessarily be contingent.

Dei voluntatem et veritatem, et ideo non foret posse, sicut posse facere contradictoria esse simul vera non est *posse, immo contra potentiam Dei,* Holcot, Quodl III, q.8. <sup>168</sup> See: page 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Causare novum assensum in intellectu alterius alicui vero complexo, quia sibiipsi nemo dicitur proprie 'revelare,' Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 911-912. My translation and my italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Causare assensum alicui complexo in intellectu alterius de novo, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.8. 915-916. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Accipiatur iste terminus 'revelare' secundo modo, pro eo quod est simpliciter causare assensum alicui complexo. sic haec est necessaria: 'Deus revelavit Sorti quod dies judicii erit,' et non dependet ab aliquo futuro. Et sic potest Deus revelare falsum, Holcot, Sent II q.2. 930-933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Si primo modo accipiatur iste terminus 'revelare,' haec est contingens: "Deus revelavit Sorti diem judici fore," Holcot Sent II. q.2. a.8. 919-920.

The proposition: "God revealed to Socrates that the day of the last judgment will come" is equivalent to: 'the day of the last judgment will come and God revealed it to Socrates,' but if one part of a conjunctive proposition is contingent then the whole proposition is contingent.

Holcot, however, goes further and states that not only the first part of this conjunction (i.e., 'the day of the last judgment will come'), but its second part ('and God revealed it to Socrates') is contingent, too. Holcot emphasizes the fact that human agents can never be certain about whether a revelation happened or not. Although God's assertion is more certain than any man's assertion, "humans can be more certain about the fact that an assertion of a human that that an assertion of God is the assertion of God."<sup>173</sup>

In another place Holcot explains this problem in relation to the LNP. He writes that since revealed contingents remain contingents therefore God is able to make the past not to be the past, because:

since if God revealed to Peter that the day of the last judgment will be, then its truth was when Peter was; therefore its truth is past now. But God is able to do now that the day of the last judgment will not come, therefore he is able to do that this <proposition> never was true, and what is more, its truth never was in Peter. Thus, God is able to do that the past not to be the past. And therefore it must be granted that a thing was yesterday, and still it is possible today that it would not have been, because the truth of this: 'the day of the last judgment will come' was yesterday, and still it is possible that it has not been.<sup>174</sup>

This text may suggest that Holcot denies the LNP and claims that past is no less changeable than the future, but both of them are contingent regarding to God's will.<sup>175</sup> Paul Streveler develops a similar view when he claims that according to Holcot "the contingency applicable to the future is no less applicable to the past. Or, alternatively speaking, there is no genuine sense of necessity applicable to past tense propositions which is not applicable to future tense

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Magis potest constare homini quod assertio hominis est assertio hominis quam quod assertio Dei est assertio Dei, Holcot, Quodl III. q.3. 90-92. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> Quia si Deus revelavit Petro quod dies judicii erit, ergo veritas huius fuit quando Petrus fuit; ergo veritas huius iam est praeterita. Sed Deus potest facere modo quod dies judicii non erit; ergo potest facere quod numquam fuit haec vera, et ultra, ergo numquam fuit veritas huius in Petro. Et sic est concedendum quod aliqua res heri fuit, et tamen hodie potest numquam fuisse, quia veritas huius 'dies judicii erit' fuit heri, et tamen potest numquam fuisse, Holcot, Sent II.q.2. 665-672. My translation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> This conclusion was drawn by Katherine Tachau and Paul Streveler, the modern editors of Holcot's text.

proposition.<sup>176</sup> While I do not agree with him on this issue, I do agree with him that his interpretation here "may be a bit more radical than Holkot wishes his own position to be.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, Streveler claims that his interpretation is in accordance with Holcot's Sentences commentary, which in effect entails this position.<sup>178</sup>

Katherine Tachau offers a similar interpretation. Based on the passage cited above, she explains that while someone can be certain (at least in some cases) whether another man revealed something to him, this certainty is impossible if the person who made the revelation "were to make it happen *after the fact* that his revelation of «q» to person B had never come about – a possibility only when the actions of divine persons come into play."<sup>179</sup> This remark suggests that Tachau thinks that it is possible that although God revealed something, he can do it after the revelation that the revelation in question never had happened.

I think this interpretation is far from Holcot's original intentions, on the one hand, because the cases when he challenges the validity of the LNP are restricted only to future contingents. In this sense 'to change the past' means only that a proposition which was indeterminately true (or false), and which was never *simply* true (or false) can "change"<sup>180</sup> to be false (or true). In these cases, however, the proposition: 'the past has changed' is past-tensed only *vocaliter*, but not *realiter*, because the term 'past' in reality refers to something future. On the other hand, the text quoted by Tachau is just a supposition which is answered by Holcot in the tenth *articulus*, where he accepts that God cannot bring about that something which has happened does not happen. The argument runs in this way:

Let a be Christ's assertion by which he asserts to his listening disciples that the day of the last judgment will come. Then it is possible to argue in this way: it was uttered by Christ at time b, by revealing a; this was false at time b,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Streveler, "Robert Holcot on Future Contingencies...," 167-168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> Streveler, "Robert Holcot on Future Contingencies...," 171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Streveler does not give any further explication just states that: "Reading through the early passages of the question in the *Sentence Commentary* ... I feel strongly inclined to ascribe this insight to Holcot," Ibidem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Tachau, "Robert Holcot on Contingency and Divine Deception," 175. Italics Tachau's.

 $<sup>^{180}</sup>$  I put "change" into quotation marks since because of **31**) it is not possible to speak about a change in this context.

therefore something which was false at time *b* was uttered by Christ at time *b*. The major is accidentally necessary, since God is not able to bring about that now not be <the case> that Christ uttered *a* in the face of his disciples at time b.<sup>181</sup>

Moreover, in this sense Holcot does not reserve the opportunity to change the "past" only for God, but he thinks that humans an also change it. He argues that if someone prophesized something about me a hundred years ago, and if it is within my power to do or not to do the prophesized action, then it is also in my power to make that person be or not be a prophet;<sup>182</sup> therefore I can affect the "past." For example, now, on April 27, 2012, it is in my power to make the proposition 's prophesized that I will think about prophecies on April 27, 2012' (where s refers to a human person who died a hundred years before 2012) to be true or to be false, and thus it is also within my power to make these sentences: 's was a prophet' or 's had a correct knowledge about the future' to be true or false.<sup>183</sup> To make the proposition: 's was a prophet' is past-tensed only *vocaliter*. In reality, this proposition is a future contingent because it is equivalent to this: 's was a prophet and his prophecies came true.<sup>184</sup>

## 3.2 Beatific Vision; Necessary contingency versus contingent contingency

The beatific vision is another case when to know future contingents seems to be at least possible. Independently from the problem of foreknowledge beatific vision was a hotly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Assertio Christi vocalis qua asseruit diem iudicii fore audientibus discipulis suis sit a. Tunc arguitur sic: hoc fuit prolatum a Christo in b tempore, demonstrato a; hoc fuit falsum in b tempore, ergo falsum in b tempore fuit prolatum a Christo in b tempore. Maior est necessaria per accidens, quia Deus non potest facere quin modo ita sit quod Christus protulit a coram discipulis suis in b tempore. Holcot. Sent II, a 2, a 10, 1153-1158

sit quod Christus protulit a coram discipulis suis in b tempore, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.10. 1153-1158. <sup>182</sup> Modo est in potestate mea facere aliquem mortuum a centum annis fuisse prophetam, quia iste terminu 'propheta' est terminus connotativus, cuius significatum est aliquis praedicens verum. Et planumest quod si de me aliquid praedixerit me facturum quod possum facere et non facere libere, consequens est quod possum facere eum fuisse prophetam et non fuisse prophetam, quia possum facere quod ipse dixit verum vel falsum, Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.10. 1282-1288.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> See: Holcot, Sent II. q.2. a.10. 1288-1290.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Man can influence the "past", however, only regarding other men, but not regarding God. Although it is also in my power to make the proposition 'g prophesized that I will think about prophecies on April 27, 2012' (where g refers to God as an individuum name) to be true or false, there is a difference because it does not mean that it is also within my power to make 'g had a correct knowledge about the future' be true or false. Since according to Holcot God cannot err (See: above) therefore whatever the future will be God will have the right knowledge about it.

debate issue at Ockham's and Holcot's time. The central questions were whether the beatific vision consists in the vision of the divine essence and whether sinless or absolutely purificated soul of the deads can see God immediately after their death<sup>185</sup>.

Holcot devotes an entire *quodlibet* question to discussing the problem, whether the blessed ones in the state of the beatific vision are able to see the future by seeing God. Ockham does not examine this problem concretely narrowed to future contingents, but he questions in general that whether in the state of beatific vision someone is able to see not only God, but all creatures. Even if is not possible to make a direct comparative analysis of the two authors' theories on this isuue, I still think it is worth discussing Holcot's doctrine, since this topic highlights some interesting consequences of his theory of foreknowledge.

Ockham and Holcot share some theological presuppositions that the beatific vision consists in the vision of the divine essence. Since God evidently sees both himself and all creatures, the possibility arises that by seeing God the blesseds also see the creatures. The two friars also agree that vision in this sense means intellectual vision; that is, cognition.

Holcot discusses beatific vision in terms of propositional knowledge. He maintains that in the beatific vision the blessed souls apprehend God in one single *notitia*, but he claims that it is possible to speak about beatific vision in terms of propositions. His reason for this is that he accepts the possibility that in a state of beatific vision blessed souls could form propositions about God.<sup>186</sup> The Dominican master's theory of eternal vision is somehow the consequence of his above discussed ideas. Since, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, according to Holcot even God himself is not able to see future events (since they are not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Pope Benedict XII tried to settle the continuously debated issue with his *Benedictus Deus* bull in 1336 arguing for the immediate vision of the divine essence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Deus apprehenditur a beato notitia incomplexa, licet de eo posset forteformaremulta complexa, Holcot, Quodl III, q.1. a.1. 57-59.
existent now), just future-tensed propositions; the same holds for the saints. The blessed can see future contingents but not the event to which they refer.<sup>187</sup>

Holcot also discusses the question of *how many* future contingents a blessed can see. Holcot draws two tricky conclusions on this issue. According to the first conclusion: "who sees God sees *all* future contingents in the first sense"<sup>188</sup> (that is, future contingents as futuretensed propositions). The argument of this conclusion runs thus: a) God sees all future contingents, b) God sees Himself, therefore: c) who sees God sees all future contingents.<sup>189</sup>

At first glance Holcot's second conclusion seems to contradict to the first one. Here the theologian argues that not all of the saints can see *all* future contingents because it is within God's power to create an infinite number of future-tensed propositions,<sup>190</sup> however, finite human intellect cannot apprehend numerically infinite things. The two arguments remain coherent if the first one is understood with an existential quantifier and the second argument with a universal quantifier. Interpreted in this way, the first conclusion says: There is at least one blessed who, seeing God, sees all the future contingents. That is:  $\exists x. \forall p^{f}$ {V(x,g) & V(x,p^{f})} where x is a rational soul, g is God, p<sup>f</sup> is future contingent proposition, and V(x,y) means that "x see(s) in beatific vision y."

The second conclusion says that the conclusion that 'one who sees all future contingents in beatific vision' cannot be extended to all those who see God. By using the previous notation:  $\sim \forall x$ .  $\forall p^f \{V(x,g) \& V(g,p^f) \supset V(x,p^f)\}$ . It remains unexpressed but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> See: Nullus videns Deum clare videt omnia future contingentia secundo modo distinctionis secundae, ut, videlicet, istud complexum 'future contingentia' exponatur sic: quae non sunt, sed erunt et possunt numquam esse. Haec probatur sic: sua opposite infert contradictoria, ergo haec est vera. Antecedens probo, quia sequitur: aliquis videns Deum videt omnia future contingentia, ergo videt aliqua futura contingentia; sed nulla futura contingentia sunt, ergo videt aliqua quae non sunt; sed omnia aliqua sunt, ergo videt aliqua quae sunt et non sunt, Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. a.2. 76-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> Clare videns Deum videt omnia futura contingentia primo modo, Holcot, Quodl III. q.1. a.2. 61-62. My translation and my italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> See: Idem 62-64. *Hanc probo sic: Deus videt omnia futura contingentia; Deus est clare videns Deum; ergo clare videns Deum videt omnia futura contingentia.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Conclusio est quod non omnis videns clare Deum videt omnia futura contingentia ... quia Deus non revelavit beatis omnia talia, quia infinita talia Christus potest revelare, Holcot Quodl III q.1. a.2. 93-101.

follows from these arguments that:  $\exists x. \forall p^f \{V(x,g) \& V(g,p^f) \supset V(x,p^f)\}$  is true only for one single x, if x = g. That is, only God can see all future contingents.

The argument, however does not go well with Holcot's other theory. As was discussed according to Holcot's signification theory:

36) Signification presupposes that terms refer to something presently extant.

A consequence of it, as I also mentioned, is that propositions about possible things are false. Therefore the proposition: 'There could be an infinite number of propositions and if there were infinite numbers of propositions no human would be able to know all of them' is false. If a proposition exists *de possibili*, then it is false to predicate of it that man does not know it. Therefore, the argument holds only if it is presupposed that God reveals an *actually* infinite number of future contingents.

The blessed souls, as well as God, know all future contingents, even those ones which are about their own salvation, contingently, that is, without definite truth-value. According to Holcot, a blessed soul cannot know with certainty that he is predestined. To be predestined means that God has already given someone eternal life. To know something determinately means that it cannot be otherwise, thus to know determinately that someone is predestined or not means that God is not able to bring about it happening otherwise. Holcot, however, argues that it is always within God's power to annihilate one of his creatures or simply decide not to keep someone in eternal happiness.

Since it is always within God's power to cease sustaining "beatific vision," the blessed souls cannot know that they are predestined, that they have received *eternal* life, since their "eternal life" can cease.<sup>191</sup> God, however, causes a sort of certitude in the blessed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Dico quod demonstrata tota ista beatitudine, haec est contingens: 'ista beatitudo fuit' quia ista cognitio vel visio quae est securitas de aeternitate beatitudinis potest non esse securitas, quia potest fieri, si Deus voluerit, quod essentia divina numquam repraesentavit istam beatitudinem esse aeternam vel fore aeternam, faciendo istam non semper fore. Ideo, sicut Deus potest facere quodista beatitudo non <in> essentia divina semper erit, scilicet corrumpendo istam cum sit sua creatura, ergo Deus potest facere quod sua essentia numquam

souls that they will always be blessed, and the blesseds adhere to this claim so strongly, as if it would be impossible for it to happen otherwise.<sup>192</sup>

However, if their 'beatific vision' ceases, then it never was true to say that they had eternal life, but it always was and will be true to say that those things which were believed to be eternal life existed.<sup>193</sup> Therefore, future contingents about eternal happiness always remain contingent:

some true propositions, those which are about God's foreknowledge about happiness which will be eternal or about the future damnation which also will be eternal, always will be true and always will be about the future, like these: 'Christ's soul will be happy,' 'Judas' soul will be reprobated<sup>194</sup>

This theory fits Holcot's concept of temporal eternity. For him beatific vision; i.e.; eternal happiness, is an everlasting state. It can be considered as an event lasting infinitely in time and thus some of its parts always remain future. Moreover, Holcot argues that this contingency does not reduce the joy of the blessed souls, but it is possible that those who are certain (about their salvation) and those who are not certain will be equally happy; and similarly it is possible that certainty does not increase happiness at all.<sup>195</sup>

Ockham does not discuss the possibility of knowing the future by beatific vision, therefore in this respect I cannot make a direct comparison, but it is still possible to draw some conclusions. On the one hand while, as it is clear from the above quoted pasage, Holcot claims that propositions about eternal happiness and eternal damnation are future contingents forever, Ockham says that such propositions as 'Socrates is not predestined' were always

repraesentavit istam beatitudinem fore aeternam; et per consequens, quod ista visio beatifica non fuit de aeternitate beatitudinis totius, Holcot, Sent II q.2. a.10. 1594-1603.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Sed <Deus> causat in eis talem certitudinem quod semper erunt beati, et illi adhaerent ita fortiter et tanto assensu, ac si aliter esse non posset, Holcot Quodl III. q.8. a.1. 77-79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Sic ergo patet quod haec sit contingens: 'haec beatitudo fuit,' et tamen haec est necessaria: 'haec res fuit,' Holcot, Sent II q.2. a.10. 1608-1609.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> Aliae vero propositiones quae sunt de praescientia Dei respectu beatitudinis quae erit aeterna, vel damnationis futurae quae similiter erit aeterna, erunt semper verae et erunt semperde futuro, sicut tales: 'anima Christi erit beata,' 'anima Iudae erit damnata, Holcot, Sent II q.2. a.7. 788-791.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Possibile est quod securus et non securus aequaliter gaudeant; et similiter est possibile quod securitas in nullo augeat gaudium, Holcot, Sent II q.2. a.2. 1627-1629.

false before Socrates' beatitude but after it, this proposition always will be true<sup>196</sup>. Their diverse conclusions are in accordance with their diverse concept of divine eternity; Holcot's temporal eternity requires an infinite duration of time, while in Ockham's atemporal eternity there is no point in supposing future or time.

On the other hand since Ockham also maintains that a contingent event remains contingent after the revelation, however, it is possible to conclude that although he assigns more certain knowledge about the future to God, perhaps his doctrine of seeing future things in the beatific vision is not so far from Holcot's view. Ockham mentions, for example, that it is impossible for man to know everything which is seen by God because in this case the knowledge of a creature would be equal to that of God. In this case, argues Ockham, the possibility of further revelation would cease and the blessed souls would be certain about when the last judgement will take place; for Ockham both these possibilities seem to be false.<sup>197</sup> These remarks clearly indcate that Ockham reserves some sort of contingency for the state of beatific vision. Based on these ideas it is possible to establish that Holcot's conclusions do not contradict Ockham's theories, however, Ockham's conclusions seems to contradict his own theories. If God's eternity is atemporal at least in some sense (an idea which Ockham's theory of foreknowledge seems to presuppose) how is it possible to speak about contingency and future in the state of beatific vision?

Ockham also agrees with Holcot in some other questions; the Franciscan friar maintains for example, that humans cannot know all creatures. Ockham calls attention to the fact that seeing a creature through God's essence does not mean to see something through a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> See: *Et talis est ista 'Sortes non est praedestinatus,' quia ante beatitudinem fuit falsa et postea semper erit vera*, Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 162-163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> See: Hoc probo, quia scientia creaturae nen potest aequari scientiae Dei nec intensive nec extensive; tum quia tunc periret revelatio, quia tali scienti omnia non posset fieri revelatio; tum quia talis et quilibet beatus esset certus quando foret iudicium; [...] quod videtur falsum, Ockham, Quodl IV. q.5. 12-17. This passage cleary shows that Ockham presupposes that beatific vision takes place immediately after the death, before the general judgement.

simple mirror, but God is a 'voluntary mirror.'<sup>198</sup> In this case, creatures, "are said to be seen in the divine essence since the intellect receives the vision from the divine essence as by an efficient cause."<sup>199</sup> That is, God deliberately reveals this or that created thing to a man, but from the fact that God sees all things does not follow, that blessed souls seeing God see everything.

Ockham also agrees that "the certainty <of being in the state of the beatific vision -> is nothing else but an evident and certain cognition of the divine order by which it is ordained that the beatific act always must be continuous"<sup>200</sup> and that for the most perfect happiness it is not needed that the blessed will be certain about his blessedness.<sup>201</sup> This standpoint allows the possibility to accept the Holcotian idea that future contingents referring to someone's own eternal happiness always remain future contingent, but while Holcot argues that these propositions *necessarily must* remain contingent, Ockham says only that they *can* remain.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> Deus est speculum voluntarium, Ockham, Sent IV. q.15. (OTh VII. 326, 20.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> Talia <sc. creaturae> dicuntur videri in essentia divina quia intellectus recipit visionem ab essentia divina sicut a causa efficiente, Ockham, Sent IV. q.15. (OTh VII. 327, 7-9.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Securitas nihil aliud est, nisi evidens et certa cognitio de divina ordinatione qua ordinavit actum beatificum semper esse continuandum, Ockham, Sent IV. q.15. (OTh VII. 330. 5-7.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Dico quod aliquis potest esse perfecte beatus beatitudine essentiali, licet nesciat se esse beatum, Ockham, Sent IV. q.15. (OTh VII. 329, 22-24.)

# 4. Changing Facts, Changing Truths, Changing Knowledge – Changing God?

Temporally changing events naturally entail that in different times different propositions might be true about a state of affairs, therefore, in different times different knowledge is possible. While now I know that: 'The sun is shining brightly,' a few hours later I will know that: 'The stars are shining brightly' because the day will turn into night. While this characteristic of knowledge does not cause any problems regarding the changeability of human knowledge it can give rise to troubles regarding the unchangeability of divine knowledge.

According to Christian tradition, God is considered immutable and, since his knowledge is not distinct from Him, his knowledge is also immutable. If God knows different states of affairs, however, it is possible to argue that in some instances he begins to know something which was not known by him or, provided that there are more facts now, than previously; he even may know more now than previously.

Both Ockham and Holcot maintain, and justify, the immutability of divine foreknowledge. They assume that:

**31**) A future contingent cannot successively change its truth value before the event to which it refers happen.

This assumption helps to exclude the possibility of a kind of conjectural foreknowledge changing sequentially prior to the future event. Nevertheless, a future-tensed proposition necessarily changes its truth value if the event it refers to happens. If  $p^n$  is true at  $t_1$ , then every time prior to  $t_1 p^f$  was true and at every time after  $t_1$  it is necessarily false. Since the two theologians maintain that God is in a temporal relation with the created realm, therefore, even

if they can argue that God's foreknowledge does not change prior to the event, they have to face the problem that his knowledge necessarily changes when the event referred to by the future contingent becomes present. This problem, however, is not restricted to future contingents and foreknowledge but it applies equally to the case of past- and present-tensed propositions since they also change their truth values according to the passing of time.

For an entirely atemporal God this situation would not present a problem because an atemporal God knows everything as present; thus, he knows which propositions are true and which false at any given time atemporally. It means that he may know only necessary propositions and those contingent ones which have a dated tensed operator; for example, he knows that: 'at  $t_1$  it is (is taken here atemporally) true that (p&q)' and that: 'at  $t_2$  it is true that (p&~q)', but as was mentioned earlier,<sup>202</sup> an atemporal God cannot differentiate between times, whether the present 'now' is  $t_1$  or  $t_2$ . Therefore it is possible to argue that an entirely immutable God cannot know significantly tensed propositions and thus he cannot have real omniscience.

If God, however, is in a temporal relation with the created world it means that he knows the actual 'now' and all the significantly tensed propositions. For example on 30 April 2012 God knows that: 'It is cloudy today,' while yesterday he did not know it, but he knew that: 'It is not cloudy today' and 'It will be cloudy tomorrow,' and that: 'It is bright today.' The consequence of this temporal change is that God has different knowledge as the state of affairs changes. Therefore, if he has temporal foreknowledge his knowledge must be changeable.

This conclusion, in general, was accepted both by Ockham and Holcot, but they have a serious disagreement about the extent to which change is permitted in God's knowledge. While Ockham tries to steer a middle course and maintain both that there is a kind of change

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> See: page 33 above.

in God's knowledge and that in some sense it remains the same, Holcot treats God's knowledge entirely in terms of temporality. Relating to this question there is a direct reference in Holcot where he mentions Ockham by name and criticizes his view on the issue.<sup>203</sup>

Ockham presents two arguments for defending God's immutability. First, he tries to prove that a change in the subject of knowledge does not necessarily imply a change in the knower. Ockham argues that a change in the creatures known by God (non-propositionally) does not imply any change in God. Thus, God is able to know something new which he did not know previously.

What is more, Ockham claims that the human intellect is also able to remain changeless while there is a change in the subject of its knowledge.<sup>204</sup> He gives the example that if someone assents to the proposition that: 'Socrates is sitting' while Socrates in reality is standing and keeps this mental state for a while and in the meantime Socrates really sits down, then the state of affairs has changed without causing any change in the cognitive mind.<sup>205</sup>

This line of reasoning is problematic, however, or at least leaves the main question unanswered because in this case it is clear that the analogy between human and divine cognition does not work. Even if the state of mind of the knower is not affected by changing events the situation has the disappointing consequence that since the proposition: 'Socrates is sitting' changes its truth value therefore it is hardly possible to speak about the same knowledge. Or more appropriately, it is hardly possible to speak about knowledge at all since

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Holcot, UDPS, "A Revised Text of Robert Holcot's Quodlibetal Dispute on Whether God Is Able to Know More Than He Knows" ed. William J. Courtenay, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 5, no. 1 (1971), 1-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> See: Ita potest Deus ... scire aliquam propositionem quam prius non scivit, sine omni mutatione sui, propter solam mutationem in creatura vel in propositionibus talibus scitis, sicut dicitur primo'non creans' et postea 'creans' propter mutationem et positionem creaturae, quia potest intellectus noster sine omni mutatione sui, Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 122-128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Probatio: ponatur quod ego opiner istam propositionem esse veram 'Sortes sedet,' quae tamen est falsa, quia Sortes stat. Remanente illo actu in intellectu meo fiat illa propositio vera; iam scio eam quam prius nescivi, sine omni mutatione in intellectu meo sed tantum in re, Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 128-132.

the argument presupposes that at the beginning of the situation there was no knowledge (*prius nescivi*), because a false proposition was held (*opiner*) to be true. To argue for the immutability of God's knowledge by including the possibility of error does not seem to be a tidy solution. Ockham, however, came up with a better answer.

According to his second, better, argument, Ockham maintains that although it is possible that God begins to know something which he did not know earlier, or that he does not know something which he knew previously, these do not mean that he would know more at one time and less at another. The reason for this is that every state of affairs can be described by a pair of contradictory statements. That is, for every state of affairs either it is the case as it is described by p or as it is described by  $\sim p.^{206}$  An omniscient God can know all propositions (whether there are a finite or an infinite number of them; Ockham remains silent about this) by which every state of affairs can be described. The only change is that sometimes he knows the affirmative and sometimes the negative pair of the contradiction to be true. Since:

if something that was true before becomes false, something that was false becomes true. Thus this does not follow: 'God can know many things that He does not know, and not know many things that He does know; therefore He can know more, or less, than He does know.'<sup>207</sup>

That is, a proposition cannot become true without its contradictory pair becoming false and vice versa, therefore, the number of possible objects of knowledge does not increase or decrease; thus, God's knowledge can remain numerically constant. This is a consequence of the LEM that:

6) If one of a contradictory pair is true, the other is necessarily false; and vice versa. (Another explication of the LEM.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> For example, either it is the case that 'The birds are singing outside my window' or that 'The birds are not singing outside my window.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Si aliquid fiat falsum quod prius erat verum, aliquid fit verum quod prius fuit falsum. Et ita non sequitur 'Deus potest scire plura quae non scit et non scire plura quae scit, ergo potest scire plura vel pauciora quam scit' Ockham, Tract q.2. a.3. 183-186. (Adams' translation.)

and since it is not possible that both of them might be true, therefore:

**46)** At each time there is as much truth is as at another time.<sup>208</sup>

Ockham's doctrine of the changeability and immutability of divine knowledge is in accordance with his doctrine of the temporality and atemporality of God's eternity.<sup>209</sup> Regarding God's atemporality he knows everything by one single divine notitia. This divine notitia can be explicated at different times by different significantly tensed propositions and in this way it is possible to say that God knows each significantly tensed proposition at every time by knowing which part of the contradiction is true and which is false. In this way there is no real change in His divine knowledge, only that the propositions which constitute divine knowledge change temporally. By this solution, I think Ockham can successfully attribute both atemporal and immutable, and temporal and changeable, knowledge to God. Even if, however, someone judges Ockham's argument to be inadequate it is necessary to reject the critique that "Aquinas, Ockham, and others have recognized that God's knowledge cannot be variable if God is to remain immutable. What has not been seen is that God's knowledge cannot be altogether invariable if it is so perfect, if it is to be genuine omniscience."<sup>210</sup> I think that Ockham's arguments discussed above adequately testify that he was aware of the problem that an all-knowing God ought to have temporally variable knowledge.

Holcot agrees with Ockham that, considering the theological principle that God's knowledge as his essence, his knowledge has to be immutable.<sup>211</sup> Considering it as the ability by which things are known, it can be argued that that knowledge can not only change, but what is more "that knowledge knows sometimes more and sometimes less, inasmuch as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> See: Non est possibile quod sint plura vera in uno tempore quam in alio, quia semper altera pars contradictionis est vera, et nihil est verum nisi sit altera pars contradictionis; nec est possibile quod utraque pars contradictionis sit vera, et per consequens tot sunt vera in uno tempore sicut in alio et nec plura nec *pauciora.* Ockham, Tract, q.2. a.3. 176-181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> Norman Kretzmann, "Omniscience and Immutability," The Journal of Philosophy 63, no. 14 (1966): 415. Kretzmann's italics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> See: Quando accipitur quod scientia Dei non potest augeri nec minui, concedo, quia sua scientia est sua essentia Holcot, UDPS, 388-390.

sometimes there are more true things and consequently more knowable things, and sometimes there are fewer."<sup>212</sup> As it is distinct in this quotation, the key concept of Holcot's argument is the presupposition that it is possible that there is no equal number of true things at every time.

The framework in which the changeability of divine knowledge is discussed is not divine foreknowledge, but the more basic and general issue about the object of knowledge. For one thing (against contemporary alternatives) Ockham and Holcot agree that the object of any piece of knowledge is a (mental) proposition. Both theologians have interesting and ingenious arguments for their standpoints, but I will not discuss these now because they are not relevant to my topic and because the same conclusion can be achieved in an equally efficient, even if less sophisticated, way:

2) Only a proposition can be true.

7) Only the truth is knowable.

Therefore:

8) Only propositions can be known.

Although each of these was held by Aristotle, 8) was considered as a philosophical novelty introduced by Ockham; he was the first who argued that scire in the strictest sense can be only about propositions.<sup>213</sup> While Holcot takes **8**) literally, Ockham seems to follow Aristotle in not adhering too strictly to this principle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Holcot, "Can God Know More Than He Knows?" In *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts III*. Trans. Robert Pasnau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 317. *Tamen illa scientia scit aliquando plura, aliquando pauciora, secundum quod aliquando plura sunt vera et per consequens scibilia, aliquando pauciora*, Holcot, UDPS 390-392.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> See: Ernest A. Moody, "A Quodlibetal Question of Robert Holkot, O.P. on the Problemof the Objets of Knowlege and of Belief," *Speculum* 39, no. 1 (1964), 54. Moody argues "that Ockham's view was regarded as novel and even dangerous to orthodoxy is indicated by the fact that this statement was singled out for inclusion in the list of suspect doctrines by the Avignon commission appointed to censor Ockham's teachings." Ibidem.

Holcot argues that: "'to know' in the strict sense means 'to cognize something as true;' in this way nothing is known except what is true;"<sup>214</sup> that is, nothing except propositions. If one says that God knows a true thing, then it follows that God knows a true proposition. Since God's knowledge, contrary to humans', is not propositional, Holcot interprets the proposition that 'God knows a true proposition' as equivalent with: 'God knows a true proposition assented (i.e., uttered, written, or cognized) by a man.' With this presupposition in mind he is able to argue that:

whenever I want to, I can make God not know many things that he knows, and know many things that he does not know. For if I say or think many true things, or put down in a book many true things, then it is certain that God knows all those things. Suppose then that I burn my book and fall asleep. All these truths will perish, and if they cease to exist, they cease to be true, and consequently they cease to be known by God.<sup>215</sup>

That is, whenever a man writes, utters or thinks a proposition, even if he just simply repeats the same written, vocal, or mental sequence of words, he is able to cause that God knows more than he knew previously. Similarly, if someone destroys a written proposition, he can decrease the number of things known by God. Based on this consideration it is also possible to conclude that if there were no propositions at all, there would not be any true things to know and therefore in this case God could know nothing.

Behind this argument there is an interesting semantic assumption:

3) There are only single token propositions but no type sentences

As I have already mentioned, this idea was commonly accepted in the Middle Ages. Holcot interprets **3**) in its strictest sense, with a so-called radical nominalist attitude, and in this way he can argue against Ockham.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> Pasnau's translation. Accipitur 'scire' stricte, et sic est idem quod 'cognoscere verum', et sic nihil scitur nisi verum, Holcot, UDPS 108-109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Pasnau's translation. Ego possum facere quando ego volo Deum nescire multa quae scit, et scire multa quae nescit; quia si loquar multa vera vel cogitem multa vera, vel habeam in libro multa vera, certum est quod omnia illa scit Deus. Dato ergo quod comburam librum meum, et vadam dormitum, omia ista vera peribunt; et si desinent esse, desinent esse vera, et per consequens desinet esse scita a Deo, Holcot, UDPS 226-232.

If both 3), 2), and 7) are accepted; and 2) is taken together with 36), then it follows that 6) does not hold, and therefore neither does 46). For example, from the fact that I truly assent that: 'Now, the sun is shining' it does not follow that its opposite is false. For its opposite to be false something else is needed; namely: 'Now, the sun is not shining;' that is, the contradictory part has to exist; it must be written, uttered or formed in the mind.<sup>216</sup> In this way:

it is possible for a thousand true propositions to contradict one false proposition. Say I order this to be written in a thousand places: 'Socrates runs' and so it is in actual fact. Say I likewise order this to be written in just one place alone: 'Socrates does not run' which is false. Then the thousand true propositions contradict this one.<sup>217</sup>

Holcot's semantic theory, however, makes it almost impossible to speak truly and meaningfully about anything. Based on an Ockhamian  $\operatorname{argument}^{218}$  it is possible to turn Holcot's argument against himself. A possible exemplification of Holcot's argument is this: a) **36**) and **8**) are accepted, b) there is a proposition: 'today is Monday' written in a book, c) I burn that book, d) therefore, God does not know the proposition: 'today is Monday.' The consequent; i.e., d) does not hold, however, because by maintaining **36**) the proposition "God does not know the proposition: 'today is subject ('today is Monday') does not exist.

The point on which the debate between Ockham and Holcot turns is a logical one. Ockham accepts 8), and although he denied the universal validity of 36), regarding propositions he accepts it, too. The idea can be found in many of his works that if a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> See: Haec est contingens et non necessaria, 'Tantum verum opponitur falso,' et multae tales regulae. Nam possibile est aliquam propositionem esse veram, quae nullam habeat contradictoriam; quia possibile est quod nulla propositio sit nisi ista: 'Tu curris'; et tunc nun sequitur, 'Ista est vera, ergo sua contradictoria est falsa', quia sua contradictoria non est falsa, Holcot, UDPS 390-392.
<sup>217</sup> Pasnau's translation.Possibile est mille propositiones veras contradicere uni propositioni falsae, quia volo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> Pasnau's translation. *Possibile est mille propositiones veras contradicere uni propositioni falsae, quia volo quod haec sit scripta in mille locis, 'Sortes currit', et sit ita in rei veritate; volo similiter quod haec non sit scripta nisi in uni loco tantum, 'Sortes non currit', quae sit falsa. Tunc isti uni contradicunt mille propositiones verae,* Holcot, UDPS 166-171.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> The argument is in the 24th question of Ockham's 6th quodlibet; here Ockham writes: *Respondeo quod haec* veritas potest interire'veritas interiit', sed haec est neganda 'ergo haec veritas interiit', quia haec [propositio] non est et per consequens nec est vera nec falsa, quia intae passiones non praedicantur de propositione nisi quando existit, OTh IX. 577.

proposition does not exist it cannot be either true or false.<sup>219</sup> But at the same time he insists on the importance of the fact that the state of affairs does not depend at all on the propositions referring to it; on the contrary, the state of affairs renders propositions true or false.

Aristotle himself calls the attention to this feature of reality; he argues that it is not

possible to avert the fatalist argument by supposing that there are future events to which no

formed proposition belongs, because:

Nor, of course, does it make any difference whether any people made the contradictory statements or not. For clearly this is how the actual things are even if someone did not affirm it and another deny it. For it is not because of the affirming or denying that it will be or will not be the case.<sup>220</sup>

Ockham comments on this Aristotelian paragraph in the following way:

Nor does it hold good to say that one or the other of those who say either 'this will be' or 'this will not be' says what is false because of the fact that he says it. For an expression (oratio) is not true or false because of someone's affirming or denying it but because the state of affairs is in reality as it is signified <br/>by the expression> or is not as it is signified.<sup>221</sup>

That is, although the truth or falsity of a proposition does not differ from the proposition itself

(an idea accepted both by Ockham and Holcot), a proposition is true or false not because it is

formed, but because of the state of affairs. Based on these considerations Ockham argues that

even if there is no formed proposition about a given state of affairs it does not alter the state

of affairs:

If there were no intellect, still man would not be a stone, and yet this would not be true then: 'Man is an animal', because there was no proposition at that time. And the reason for this is that since the truth of a proposition depends from the thing, although not conversely, nay to this <fact> that whether a man is a donkey or not a donkey the intellect adds nothing. And therefore that this proposition 'Man is not a donkey' is true or not true adds nothing to that that man is not a donkey.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> See, for example, SL II. 9. and Quodl V. q.24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> Aristotle, *Herm* 18b33-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Adams' translation, in *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge...* 101. Nec valet dicere quod alter dicentium 'hoc erit' vel 'hoc non erit' dicit falsum propter hoc quod dicit, quia propter affirmare alicuius vel negare non est oratio vera vel falsa, sed ex eo quod sic est a parte rei sicut significatur vel non sic est sicut significatur, Ockham, I. c.6. 11. 13-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Si nullus intellectus esset, adhuc homo non esset lapis, et tamen haec non esset vera tunc 'homo non est lapis', quia nulla propositio esset tunc. Et huius ratio est quia ex re dependet veritas propositionis, quamvis non e converso, immo ad hoc quod homo sit asinus vel non sit asinus, nihil facit intellectus. Et ita quod haec

This doctrine makes it possible for Ockham to speak about a 'true thing' in the sense of a 'true fact' or a 'true event' or the 'true state of affairs.' According to these considerations I think Ockham's argument must be interpreted in this way: God eternally knows all the states of events and temporally knows which the actual 'now' is. As I have already mentioned above, these two Oxford schoolmen agree that God knows everything by one single and eternal act of knowing (*notitia*) and that this knowledge is identical with his essence and therefore it cannot change. The problem is that this knowledge is outside the realm reachable by human mind and whenever man wants to understand this knowledge of God or express anything about it, he can only do it in terms of human thoughts, which are quasi-physical, temporal (not eternal), and linguistic. Ockham argues, however, that if all the facts known by God's divine *notitia* were explicated in terms of human thought; i.e., temporally and linguistically, then man could form an equal number of propositions in each time. Thus, Ockham's unexpressed presupposition is that while **8**) is valid about human knowledge, it does not hold for divine knowldedge, therefore, when he wants to describe God's knowledge he has to disregard **8**) and thus commit a so-called "necessary logical failure."

Holcot, of course, does not deny that everything said about God's knowledge is according to human understanding<sup>223</sup> and God, as he is, is inaccessible for us nor does he deny that in some sense God is true.<sup>224</sup> He insists, however, that if we speak about God's knowledge according to human understanding, we have to take into consideration all the features of human understanding and keep them all, otherwise our talk will end in a sequence of meaningless voices. In this way, if we want to talk about true things we are bound to speak about true propositions; if we want to speak about the divine foreknowledge of future

propositio 'homo non est asinus' sit vera vel non sit vera, nihil facit ad hoc quod homo non sit asinus, Sent I. d. 24.q.1. (OTh IV 88. 17-23.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Haec omnia intelligo de scientia nostra, Holcot, UDPS 87-88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> See: Holcot, UDPS 88-90.

contingents, we are bound to speak about the knowledge of contingent propositions without truth value.

In contrast, Ockham allows a kind of *excessus* for human knowledge, saying that although we are not able to express divine *notitia* as it is, (improperly and inadequately) we can go beyond the limits of human thought and we can form meaningful expressions even if we disregard some logical principle. Similarly, as was discussed, he thinks that although we cannot explain how God knows future things, he insists that our expression of God's foreknowledge of future events is at least meaningful, a conclusion which was denied by Holcot.

Thus, although both of these theologians agree that we are imprisoned in the cells of our human understanding, Holcot is more consistent. The consequence of his consistency is the fact that in some sense he is engaged in a more skeptical viewpoint than Ockham, who maintains that at least there are windows in the wall of our cells making it possible to see dimly some features of divine reality.

## Conclusions

During the reconstruction of Ockham's and Holcot's arguments for defending divine foreknowledge and human free will, I have mainly concentrated on the interrelations between theological analysis and logical presuppositions. A possible way for a comparative evaluation of the arguments given to the same problem by different philosophers is to estimate the validity of the arguments within their own framework and then decide whether one or another is more coherent than the other. In this analysis I have followed this method.

In the cases of both Ockham and Holcot I have tried to discover the logical premises which made it possible to maintain a given theological doctrine. My hypothesis that the difference between the solutions offered by these fourteenth-century schoolmen is the effect of different premises originating from their different semantic theories. Due to these diverse semantic theories the two authors employed different premises in their arguments; and taking these different premises into consideration it must be concluded that within their own universe of discourse both theologians were able to construe a coherent and defendable viewpoint regarding foreknowledge and free will.

Due to the historical situation, Ockham made no reflection on the arguments of his Dominican contemporary, who in turn commented on and criticized Ockham's doctrines. Holcot's criticisms, however, do not seem to have reflected on the Venerabilis Inceptor's different starting points. I did not find any text where Holcot called attention to the differences between their semantic theories or where he criticized Ockham for being too "indulgent" regarding signification. Without calculating with these differences in Ockham's premises, Holcot's critique is not able to reach Ockham's theories but remains within Holcot's own logical system. The only thing which Holcot can prove is that Ockham's conclusions cannot be maintained together with Holcot's premises.

The main difference between their semantic theories is that while Holcot allows a predicate term to be significative only if the subject term of which it is predicated refers to a presently existing thing, Ockham claims that the predicate term does not lose its signification even if the "thing" to which the subject term (of which it is predicated) refers to something which existed in the past or will exist in the future. Ockham's theory opens a wider horizon for him to discuss divine foreknowledge. Ockham concludes that although it is impossible to explain *how* divine foreknowledge is possible, he thinks it is possible to truly affirm that divine foreknowledge about future things is possible. Holcot, however, concludes that since the thing to which the term 'future contingent' refers does not exist presently, therefore it is impossible to say any true proposition about it; thus, it is impossible to truly predicate of future things that God knows them. This is the first main difference between Ockham's and Holcot's theories of foreknowledge.

The consequence of his semantics is that for Holcot the only logically possible foreknowledge is the foreknowledge of future-tensed propositions. Ockham also admits that God knows future contingent propositions, but while he argues that God knows them definitely; that is, he knows which future contingents will be true and which ones will be false, Holcot claims that God knows them contingently; that is, he knows them as propositions which are true, but are able to never have been true. The difference between the two ideas is that while for Ockham it is possible that a knower enabled with greater abilities can know the same things on a higher plane than humans know, for Holcot the active capacity of the knower does not necessarily result in a higher form of knowledge.

Knowledge is a two-term relation since for knowledge to be possible two things are necessary: the capacity of the knower (the passive and the active intellect) by which the thing

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is cognized, and the so-called passive signification of the conceptualized thing; that is, that the thing might be able to be conceptualized by the intellect.<sup>225</sup> Holcot's theory of foreknowledge seems to presuppose that the passive signification of the subject of knowledge is as important as the passive understanding of the intellect. If the passive signification of something makes it possible that that thing can be known only contingently or uncertainly, even God's highest intellect is not able to know it in a higher way than humans.

The final conclusion seems to be that while Ockham thought that logic can be used in theological inquiry only within limits and at certain points reason simply stops, Holcot claimed that where logic stops the whole inquiry must stop. However, to put the issue into a broader perspective, this conclusion does not hold. Discussing the relation between faith and reason, Holcot himself also was led to the conclusion that Aristotelian logic is not universal because there are many cases when logical inferences are not valid in answer to theological questions.<sup>226</sup>

Ockham argues that since men do not know theological premises evidently, therefore neither can they create evident conclusions. The limit on logic in Ockham is the consequence of defending God's freedom. If creation and salvation are really the free act of God they cannot be bounded by certain necessary (logical or natural) laws.

Holcot claims that strict theological propositions are about God and that these propostions have a subject term the *suppositum* of which is a *metasuppositum*. We have no clear idea what the term 'God' supposit for, because although God exists in a sense he exists quite differently from other beings. We cannot point at God, therefore all theological

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> This was a generally accepted idea in the Middle Ages. It goes back to Aristotle, who argues that every existing thing can be conceptualized either through sensation or through thinking. See: "the soul is in a way all existing thing" Aristotle, *De Anima* 431b20-431b21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> See: In materia tali <de credibilibus> deficit logica naturalis, nam aliquando in syllogismo expositiorio oportet concedere utramque praemissam et tamen negare conclusionem, et tamen secundum logicam naturalem ille discursus est universalis, etiam optimus, nec habet instantiam ... Contra ista: si ista sint vera, sequitur quod non sit utile theologo addiscere logicam. Dico quod sic. Holcot, UHSC 106-119.

propositions about him are weak; and therefore it is not possible to form a real contradictory pair of statements about him.<sup>227</sup>

Therefore, on the one hand, a theologian cannot prove scientifically that his beliefs are not contradictory, (although according to Holcot the Church never approved contradictory statements), but, on the other hand, a theologian is not obliged to maintain the rules of school logic because they are valid only within the realm of the created order. The articles of the faith are to believe in, not to prove. Since theological truths are beyond logic, to believe is not only an entirely free act, but free *interpretative*;<sup>228</sup> that is, man cannot believe in Christian doctrines solely by the command of his free will, but he is able to seek after other causes and justifications as for example, miracles or testimonies of the saints.<sup>229</sup> The question which remains unanswered after my analysis is why Holcot felt it necessary to be committed to school logic, to stay within the limits set by it.

While on the level of the words Holcot's theory seems to be in accordance with the Christian doctrine of divine foreknowledge, its meaning seems to be much less than what is presupposed either by Biblical theology or by the teaching of the Church. From a Christian point of view, the concept of an omniscient God whose foreknowledge is confined to know future-tensed propositions indefinitely seems somewhat inadequate. But is this really what Holcot means? If one wants Holcot to be in greater harmony with the teaching of the Church,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup>See: Dico etiam quod quia nonhabeo claram notitiam illius rei pro qua subiecta supponunt, ideo nescio quod sunt contradictoria, eo qoud non habeo claram et veidentem notitiam de re quae est Deus pro qua subiecta supponunt talium propositionum. Et sic assentire possum ad redendum quod non sunt contradictoria, Holcot, UHSC a.2. 188-192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> For the distinction between *credere vere libere* and *credere libere interpretative* see: Holcot, *Sex articuli* a.2. 92-93. In *Die "Conferentiae" des Robert Holcot O.P. und die akademischen Auseinandersetzungen an der Universität Oxford 1330-1332*, ed. Fritz Hoffmann, (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> See: Ego ... declaravi quod sic est in potestate nostra credere articulos fidei sicut scire quod triangulus habet tres angulos ... quia videlicet est in potestate nostra addiscere causas et demonstrationes ad illas. Sed sicut proposita ista 'Triangulus habet tres angulos,' haec est mihi neutra, si numquam didici geometriam et vellem illi assentire, quia vellem eam scire, et tamen manet neutra, sic gratia exempli proposiya ista: 'Christus natus est de virgine,' alicui homini forte erit sibi neutra vel forte credet aem esse falsam. Et dico quod talis homo non potest per imperium voluntatis facere quod illa appareat sibi vera. Sed cum a multis fide dignis audierit quod homines, qui praecesserunt, sunt iam beatificati, quia crediderunt hoc esse verum, et multa mirabilia fecerunt vel magis deus per eos, qui talia crediderunt, possibile est quod talia sibi sufficiant ad faciendum fidem de veritate istius: 'Christus natus est de virgine.' Holcot, Sex articuli a.2. 90-91.

he can argue that in reality Holcot says nothing about God's foreknowledge (which is totally unapproachable for us), but speaks only about human knowledge about God's foreknowledge. According to this possible argument, God's foreknowledge about future things can be whatever, but our human speech about it can be only in accordance with human mental language. One can argue in this way, however, only if he is an Ockhamist. For Holcot the proposition: 'God's foreknowledge about future things can be whatever' has meaning only if it is interpreted in terms of human thoughts, if it is equivalent with: 'God's indefinite foreknowledge about future-tensed propositions can be whatever which is possible within the framework of Scholastic logic.' As for me, regarding this special issue I am rather on the side of Ockham than of Holcot. I think it is possible to form at least one true proposition about the future: 'Although the future does not exist, it can still cause serious difficulties.'

### APPENDIX

## **Modern Interpretations of Ockham's Argument**

The reconstruction of Ockham's argument given in the second chapter of this thesis is probably the simplest possible one for the working of the argument; however, I am aware that my interpretation differs basically from other contemporary ones on three main points. Modern interpretations accept neither **33**) nor **25**) while they make **34**) broader, arguing that not only are our propositions about God's foreknowledge future contingents, but God's foreknowledge is itself a future contingent.

In the following paragraphs I will examine the modern interpretations of Ockham's solution restricted to the question of their historical correctness; that is, whether they an rightly be ascribed to Ockham. Thus, I do not intend to give an evaluation of their possible philosophical validity independently of Ockham's view. I will argue that: a) (contrary to other reconstructions) my interpretation has textual evidence; b) my interpretation has many fewer problematic consequences than others, therefore the principle of charity requires opting for this interpretation; c) in order to make the argument sound, other interpretations require more auxiliary hypotheses than mine, therefore, according to the principle of economy my interpretation should be the preferred one.

The first main difference is that modern reconstructions do not accept **33**) but try to give a valid interpretation of Ockham's argument, maintaining that

**32**) God knows which part of the contradictory pair of a future contingent *is* true and which one *is* false.

It is hard to answer the question why scholars adopt 32) instead of 33), because in their writings there are no reflections about this choice.<sup>230</sup> Therefore, it does not seem to be a real choice, but rather the lack of identifying a possible alternative. Supposedly it can be a consequence of a loose reading of the text or a reading based on the English translation, which is the only place where I found a remark connecting to this issue. The sentence which is one of the most relevant in this problem is the following: quod indubitanter est tenendum quod Deus certitudinaliter scit omnia futura contingentia, ita quod certitudinaliter scit quae pars contradictionis erit vera et quae falsa,<sup>231</sup> is translated by Marilyn McCord Adams not according to its grammatical form, but according to her explanatory claim as:"... he knows with certainty which part of the contradiction is true and which false."<sup>232</sup> Adams tries to justify her translation in a footnote:

Reading 'est' for 'erit'. Suppose that the contradiction in question is that between the future contingents 'Peter will be saved' and 'Peter will not be saved'. One or the other of these is true now and hence is known by God to be true now. This reading is confirmed by the wording of the example in the next sentence: "Deus scit hanc partem contradictionis esse [rather than fore] veram vel illam."233

I cannot adopt this translation for several reasons; one of them is that when Ockham intends

to express his idea on this issue he always uses the future tense, and what is surprising,

Adams also translates them in the future tense except in the above quotation.<sup>234</sup> No edition or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> Although **33**) is not a common solution in medieval philosophy, to interpret Ockham in this way would not be historically specific because his Oxford fellow, Walter Chatton (c. 1290-1343) held the same view on this particular question: istae sunt distinctae propositiones "haec est vera 'Sortes sedebit'" et "haec erit vera 'Sortes sedet'". Et de prima dicerem quod non, quia tunc, ex quo iam vera est, non eset necessarium consiliari nec negotari circa hoc quod foret. Secundam concedo, ubi demonstratur propositio de praesenti "haec erit vera 'Sortes sedet,'" (Chatton, Reportatio, d.38. q.1. quoted by: Hester G. Gelber, It Could Have Been Otherwise, 233).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Ockham, Tract q.1. 239-241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> Marilyn McCord Adams, William Ockham: Predestination, God's Foreknowledge and Future Contingents, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), 48. In his German translation Dominik Perler kept the original verb and translated the sentence as: "Man muß unanzweifelbar daran festhalten, daß Gott alles zukünftig Kontingente mit Gewißheit weiß, so daß er mit Gewißheit weiß, welcher Teil des Widerspruchs wahr und welcher falsch sein wird" (Dominik Perlel, Prädestination, Zeit und Kontingenz, Philosophisch-historische Untersuchungen zu Wilhelm von Ockhams Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei respectu *futurorum contingentium* (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner, 1988), 27. <sup>233</sup> Adams, *Predestination*, ... 48. Emphasis is in the original.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> See Tract q.2. 21-23: Deus habet notitiam determinatam respectu futurorum contingentium, quia determinate scit quae pars contradictionis erit vera et quae falsa. According to Adams' translation: "God has determinate

version of these texts is known which is worded in present tense.<sup>235</sup> Moreover, the translation is based on the presupposition that future contingents can be true; however, as I noted above, there are several passages where Ockham explicitly states that future contingents are neither true nor false. Evidently, some time later Adams herself recognized this slight problem and in order to make her claims tenable created a brand new and far-reaching interpretation of Ockham's argument which is so new that it is questionable whether it has anything to do with Ockham.

In the first edition of her "Introduction" to her translation of *Tractatus* Adams thinks that Ockham does not ascribe future contingents as having definite truth value and she talks about a certain type of 'gap'. Later, she writes in her two volume work about Ockham, and also the second edition of *Tractatus*, that with a certain modification of an Aristotelian concept Ockham closes this gap and restores the LEM or/ and/or as the same the principle of bivalence (PB).<sup>236</sup>

cognition in respect of future contingents since He knows determinately which part of the contradiction *will be* true and which false." (Adams, *William Ockham: Predestination...* 55.), while *Deus determinate scit quae pars contradictionis erit vera et quae falsa* (Ord dist. 38.) is translated as God "knows determinately which part of the contradiction *will be* true and which false." (Adams, *William Ockham: Predestination...* 91) Italics in the English are my emphases.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> I would like to mention here that perhaps the most serious ideological background of Ockham's whole theological and philosophical investigations is his recognition that by correct grammatical and logical uses of terms and propositions it is possible to avoid many theoretical misunderstandings. "In Ockham's view, Scripture informs us what must be believed about the divine, and the analysis of language enables us to discourse about God and to draw the correct conclusions about the divine" (André Goddu, "William of Ockham," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed K. B. Osborne [St Bonaventure: University of St Bonaventure, 1994] 246.). According to his program the wording of his writings is rather clear, accurate and close. Therefore even if he himself emphasizes the possible difference between a sentence's grammatical and logical structure, I suggest taking him seriously and granting that he wrote what he thought, especially in this case when grammatical tenses seem to be crucial to understanding the argument.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Cf Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham* II. 1141. and Adams, "Introduction" in *William Ockham: Predestination, God's Foreknowledge and Future Contingents,*  $2^{nd}$  ed (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983) 10. In her previous book she talks about restoring the LEM, while in the later one about restoring PB. She does not mention whether it is because she identifies the LEM with the PB or because she changed her mind. The confusion reaches it apex with this, since previously she did not claimed that the "gap" would destroy either the LEM or the PB; on the contrary, she writes that according to Ockham "to deny both that a singular future contingent proposition ... is determinately true or that it is determinately false is not to deny that it is either-true-or-false" (that is, the LEM – and therefore the PB – holds for it) (Adams, "Introduction," 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 9.).

According to Adams it "can be reconstructed from his [Ockham's] many remarks (in the *Treatise* and elsewhere)"<sup>237</sup> that future contingents are determinately true and determinately known by God; unfortunately, Adams keeps it secret which paragraphs are in her mind. Assuredly there are passages which can be believed to be able to make possible to interpret Ockham's solution as one which implies a certain distribution of truth value to future contingents. However, according to my interpretation, when Ockham talks about some kind of truth regarding future contingents he does not intend to assign truth value for them, but rather it is a struggle against some possible logical consequences. For example, at one point Ockham says that one part of a future-contingent pair is determinately true now, but this affirmation cannot be interpreted as an endowment of future contingents with truth value, since as Ockham himself states, this means only that the proposition is not false<sup>238</sup> because "God wants to apply LEM" to future contingents.<sup>239</sup> At another point Ockham claims that future contingents are true, however, just contingently, in the sense that they are not false but are able to be false.<sup>240</sup>

Although I cannot see any textual evidence supporting Adams' interpretation, even if one is willing to accept the preconception that future contingents have (definite)<sup>241</sup> truth value it remains a problem how future contingents can be contingent. In order to get a coherent argument Adams claims that Ockham does not accept the definition of the Aristotelian truth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Adams, "Introduction," 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> This remark explicitly makes it impossible to interpret Ockham's argument in following Arthur Prior who argues that every future contingent has truth value in the present and each of them is false. (Arthur N. Prior, Past, Present and, Future (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) see especially 129.) Prior argues that - according to the LNP – if we would say that it is true now that 'x will be A tomorrow', then tomorrow x will be necessarily A, but on the other hand, if we would say that it is true now that 'x will be non-A tomorrow', then tomorrow x will be necessarily non-A. Therefore we can rightly assert that 'it is false now that "x will be A tomorrow" and that 'it is false now that "x will be non-A tomorrow".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> Una pars nunc determinate est vera, ita quod non falsa, quia Deus vult unam partem esse veram et aliam esse falsam. Tamen contingenter vult, et ideo potest non velle illam partem, et partem aliam potest velle, sicut pars alia potest evenire, Tract q.1. 295-296. <sup>240</sup> Dico quod <futurum contingens> est vera, ita quod non falsa, tamen est contingenter vera, quia potest esse

falsa Tract q.1. 289-290.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> Adams constantly talks about *definite* truth value, however, it does not mean more than truth value. The source of this distinction is a double usage in Ockham. See: footnote: 56.

in its original form, but during the development of his own solution to the problem of God's foreknowledge Ockham changed the Aristotelian principle<sup>242</sup>:

**47)** x's being A at  $t_m$  is determinate<sup>243</sup> at  $t_n$ , if and only if there is no potency in things at  $t_n$  for x's not being (having been, being going to be) A at  $t_m$  (and  $t_m$  is future relative to  $t_n$ )

to this:

48) x's being A at t<sub>m</sub> is determinate at t<sub>n</sub>, if and only if at some time or other there is (was, will be) no potency in things for x's not being (having been, being going to be) A at t<sub>m</sub>.

From principle **47**) it follows that future contingents are not determined and Adams reckons that to provide divine foreknowledge Ockham must transform **47**) to **48**). The main difference between these two is that according to **47**) a proposition is definitely true (or false) if, at the time of its being definite, there is no possibility to be false (or true). Contrary to this **48**) makes opportunities broader and lets a proposition having definite truth value if it is definitely true or false not at the same time, but at any other, say, other future instance. By this change Adams seems to create such hybrid propositions which, although determinately true or false, are not casually dependent on a past or present event (just on a future one) and therefore they are contingent.

There are several objections against Adams' theory. The first is that principle **48**) cannot be found explicitly anywhere in Ockham's texts and I was not able to discover even a single paragraph in Ockham where he maintains that he wants to change the Aristotelian principle. Moreover, there is no concrete reference in Adams, she writes quite simply that "Ockham's solution is, in effect, to replace **47**) with **48**),"<sup>244</sup> but for me, Adams' attempt to preserve the coherence of this interpretation seems to be the cause of promoting this alleged

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> For the argument see: Adams, William Ockham II. 1138-1142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> In this context "determinate" supposedly means having a definite truth value.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Adams, William Ockham II. 1140

replacement. But the strongest objection is that Ockham explicitly says that future contingents are neither true nor  $false^{245}$  and that one of the main problems of God's foreknowledge arises from this fact, namely, in Ockham divine foreknowledge is supposed *together* with the fact that future contingents have no truth value.<sup>246</sup>

Secondly by her replacement Adams denies the traditionally accepted and (at least seemingly) evident inference between **22**) and **23**) without any argument. Another problem with Adams idea is that it divides the condition of being known (i.e., having truth value in the present) and being determined (i.e., causally dependent on a present or past fact) and therefore it opens the door to arguing for the possibility of human foreknowledge.<sup>247</sup> However, the most serious problem with Adams' solution is that it released an incontrollable philosophical avalanche which seems to cover up Ockham.

Based on this argument she created the concept of "soft facts,"<sup>248</sup> that is, such events which although are fixed (i.e., have definite truth value), but are not under the effect of LNP (i.e., they are "soft") since they are about something future relative to themselves.<sup>249</sup> This specification differs from Ockham's and is the source many misunderstandings and pseudo-problems with Ockham's view. One of the problems with Adams' argument is that it proves too much; if one takes Adams definition seriously it turns out that every fact is a soft fact.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> In illis <i.e., in future contingents> non est veritas determinata (Tract q.1. 234-235) and una pars non plus determinetur ad veritatem ad alia (Tract q.1. 244-245).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> See: Tract q.1. 244-245, and 272-278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> Indeed in modern literature the two topics are often discussed together.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> The concepts of 'soft' and 'hard' facts were introduced into the discussion by Nelson Pike ("Of God and Freedom: A Rejoinder") as an answer to Saunders' critique of his ideas (John Turk Saunders, "Of God and Freedom," *The Philosophical Review* 75, no. 2 [1966] ], 219-225.). Pike claims that facts about the past are 'hard' which were "fully accomplished," which do not change whatever happens after the relative past for which they are, and those are 'soft' which are not fully accomplished and can change. As I have already noted this definition of soft facts does not create a distinction between fixity and determinacy; see footnote 5155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> See Marilyn McCord Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *The Philosophical Review* 76, no. 4. (1967): 494.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> Paul Helm argues that since every completed action entails that it is not completed any time later relative to the time of its completion therefore each completed action is a soft fact, see Paul Helm, "Divine Foreknowledge and Facts," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 4, No. 2 (1974) 312. Fischer has the same idea: "Adams claims that her account shows why 'Caesar died 2009 years before Saunders wrote his paper' does not express a hard fact about 44 B.C. But her account does not explain this unless it is interpreted to imply that no sentence expresses a hard fact" ("Freedom and Foreknowledge," 73).

I think John Martin Fischer's definition is in greater accordance with Ockham's. He writes that "a soft fact is a fact *in virtue* of events which occur in the future."<sup>251</sup> Fischer adopts this definition correctly to some cases,<sup>252</sup> but I think he made a mistake when he tried to prove that divine foreknowledge is impossible (at least in its Ockhamian way). His mistake derives from Adams' mistake, namely, from the presuppositions that the Ockhamist solution maintains that God's foreknowledge is a soft fact and that this soft fact is similar to other soft facts in the world.<sup>253</sup> Since Adams assumes these ideas, I can agree with Fischer that "Adams' formulation of Ockhamism is inadequate,"<sup>254</sup> but while Fischer judges that one of the main challenges to the Ockhamist is formulating a precise hard fact/soft fact distinction,<sup>255</sup> I consider it more essential to make it clear that an Ockhamist solution does not entail asserting that there is a difference between fixity and hardness neither that divine foreknowledge is a soft fact in any sense. This idea can be found nowhere in Ockham; he writes that our propositions and our knowledge about God's foreknowledge is a future contingent,<sup>256</sup> but never writes that God's foreknowledge is itself a future contingent. I think William Lane Craig is right in accusing Fischer that many of the notions which he attacks, "only remotely resemble Ockham's view, thereby promoting misunderstanding of Ockham's important insights on this question."<sup>257</sup> Nonetheless, I think, this critical remark concerns not only Fischer but other scholars

Contrary to the pure fact that neither the soft-hard distinction nor the claim that God's foreknowledge is a soft fact in any sense is present in Ockham's writings, many scholars try to defend or attack the "Ockhamist" solution based on these features. For example, David

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> John Martin Fischer, "Freedom and Foreknowledge," 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> For example to the proposition that "Caesar died 2009 years before Saunders wrote his paper" (see: ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> Cf Fischer, "Freedom and Foreknowledge," 77-78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> See for example, omnes tales propositiones 'Deus scit hanc partem contradictionis esse veram' vel 'illam' sunt contingentesnet non necessariae, Tract q.1. 242-243.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> William Lane Craig, "'Nice Soft Facts': Fischer on Foreknowledge," 235.

Widerker argues, with good reason, that "the mere fact that a past fact entails a fact about future does not render it immune to PFP<sup>258</sup> (i.e., principle of the fixity of the past, i.e., LNP), however, his critique has nothing to do with Ockham.

I think the basic problem with the definition of softness is that it treats temporal relations in terms of the relative temporal sequence of events to each other; that is, a proposition is soft iff it is about something *future relative to itself*. Contrary to this, Ockham treats temporality in terms of the relation of events to the actual 'now'; that is, a proposition is indeterminate, unfixed (soft, if you like) iff it is about something *future relative to the* actual 'now'. Therefore, I agree with Freddoso that the main reason why modern interpretations of Ockham have failed is that "they have not articulated precisely the central Ockhamistic thesis of the primacy of the pure present."<sup>259</sup>

The primacy of the pure present is an immediate consequence of the Aristotelian concept of time. According to it, time has two parts, past and future, bound together by the 'now'.<sup>260</sup> The 'now' itself is not a part of time but the contact point of them; the only "thing" by which it is possible to make a distinction between the past and the future; they "exist" only in relation to the 'now'. Therefore in the strict sense it is not possible to speak about past or future unless it is relative to the actual 'now'.<sup>261</sup>

A consequence of this consideration is that it is impossible to classify soft (unfixed) and hard (fixed) facts forever because their softness/hardness depends on their temporal relation to the actual 'now'. Therefore, each proposition changes its softness to hardness

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> David Widerker, "Troubles with Ockhamism," The Journal of Philosophy 87, no. 9 (1990): 465-466. His example is that the proposition: "Jack raises his arm at  $t_1$ " entails that he will not raise his arm at first time at  $t_3$ , and therefore, according to Adams' (or William Rowe, who is the main target of Widerker's critique) interpretation of 'softness', it is not a 'hard' fact. If this proposition is true, however, then after t<sub>1</sub> it is not within Jones' power not to raise his arm at  $t_1$ , and therefore it is a 'hard' fact – which is a contradiction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> Alfred J. Freddoso, "Accidental Necessity and Logical Determinism," The Journal of Philosophy 80 no. 5 (1983): 258. <sup>260</sup> See: Aristotle, *Physics* IV. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> According to the relation between two 'nows' it is possible to talk about "relative past" or "relative future,"however, in this case they only signify "past" or "future" figuratively; their proper signification is "earlier" or "later".

when the present-tensed case of the proposition becomes true (or false); that is, "there is a certain time at which they 'hardened'. Soft facts are facts which have not, so to speak, become hard yet."<sup>262</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986): 102. Although this interpretation of softness can solve many problems raised by scholars during the debate about the definition of soft facts, I do not know any philosopher except Kvanvig who would take this possibility into account at all.

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