

# From Oral Lecture to Written Commentaries: John Buridan's Commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

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*Summary:* This paper focuses on John Buridan's reported commentaries, especially on the oldest manuscripts, with the aim of finding new evidence regarding the process from oral lecture to written commentary. Six among the more than 250 manuscripts containing authentic works by Buridan were written in Paris during the philosopher's lifetime, and at least two of them show how the oral teaching of the Parisian master was converted into a written form. The *Expositiones*, i.e. the literal commentaries, play an important role in these oldest manuscripts. These were understood as the foundation of the subsequently treated *Quaestiones*, and they had a fixed place in university teaching. The Parisian manuscript BN, lat. 16131 probably contains an original reportation (the original student's copy book) of both exposition of, and questions on, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The manuscript Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 561 contains a "compiled", i.e. revised, lecture on the same Aristotelian work, but not the final version as edited in 1518 by Josse Bade. The present study will examine the formal character of these different versions and their relation to one another.

The great majority of medieval commentaries on Aristotelian works have only been transmitted because students "reported" the classroom lectures. From a philological point of view, the tradition of such a text is a very complex one, because wherever several manuscript copies of the same lecture exist, these cannot be traced back to one single autograph written by the master himself. In the case of reported commentaries, the text we might be able to find that is closest to the original are the notes of a student attending the lecture. The manuscripts now extant were (usually)

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produced later on the basis of older copies, but were (probably) rarely ever copied directly from the original notes. In fact, it is quite probable that the original notes had to be revised and that the extant manuscripts are based on revised notes. Hence there is a huge gap in our knowledge of the way the original teaching eventually became the text in extant manuscripts. If we managed to fill this gap, we would grasp more clearly both the method of teaching Aristotle in the schools and the value of the extant manuscripts as a source for understanding both what was taught and the teaching method. An understanding of the process by which oral lectures became written commentaries would not only be helpful for the production of more reliable editions and for a better historical understanding of the teaching in the medieval university, but would constitute a basic tool for the interpretation of Aristotelian commentaries.

To fill this gap in our knowledge the best starting point would be to search for manuscripts containing original reportations written by the reportator himself in the classroom. Such manuscripts might tell us how such a reportator really worked. But even if we suspected that such notes were still in existence, how could we tell such direct classroom notes from other types?<sup>1</sup> To find such original reportations is all the more difficult because the secondary literature on Aristotelian commentaries has to date rarely concerned itself with such problems.<sup>2</sup> In the entire literature on the Aristotelian commentary tradition, I have been able to find only two references to such original reportations. As Grabmann first noted, several anonymous commentaries in the famous manuscript Munich, Bayerische SB, clm 9559 have to be considered a student's copy book.<sup>3</sup> The second reference is to a manuscript

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1 How difficult it is to distinguish original notes from a faithful copy is shown in the excellent edition of the *Lectura in librum de anima a quodam discipulo reportata* by René-Antoine Gauthier. See the introduction, p. 9\*.

2 Useful reflections on the reportation and the critical editing of a reportation can be found in Hamesse 1986, 1987, 1989; see also Meier 1954.

3 See Grabmann 1924a and 1924b. For later additions and corrections, see Duin 1954; [Siger of Brabant], *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum*, ed. Ph. Delhaye; Boethius de Dacia, *Quaestiones de generatione et corruptione*, ed. G. Sajó; Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. W. Dunphy. Fernand Van Steenberghen and other scholars, who have worked for many years on this manuscript tend to see it as an original copy book of notes taken by a student. They think, however, that they

that is not so well known. In his doctoral thesis, Bernd Michael asserts that a commentary by John Buridan on the *Metaphysics*, found in ms. lat. 16131 of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, is just such a reportation.<sup>4</sup>

### The reported commentaries of John Buridan

To the scholar wishing to explore reported commentaries, John Buridan makes for an excellent subject of study. The Picardian master taught for more than thirty years at the faculty of arts in Paris and lectured on almost all Aristotelian works. All or most of his works must be considered reportations of oral lectures. That this is the case is suggested by many titles and colophons:<sup>5</sup>

#### **‘reportatus’ in Buridan’s (literal) commentaries.** (all italics mine)

- (001) Expliciunt questiones cum expositione textus supra Artem Veterem a magistro Iohanne Buridan et fuit *reportata* ab Alano preposito etc. Et sic sit finis etc. (Expositio in *Artem Veterem*, Tortosa, Bibl. Capitol Catedral, cod. 108, f. 74 [XIV c.]).<sup>6</sup>
- (002) Expliciunt *dicta* Priorum data Parysius per venerabilem magistrum Johanne Biridanum anno Domini MCCCL6 (Expositio in duos libros *Analyticorum Priorum* Aristotelis, Praha, Knihova Metropolitni, cod. L.34 [1277], f. 136r [XIV c.]).
- (003) Explicit expositio libri Physicorum *lecta Parisius in vico straminis* a Reverendo doctore et Summo enim Philosopho Magistro Johanne Bridans, anno domini 1350, de ultimo opere, per me Antonium de Camareno (*seu Cammeno*) artium scholarem Bononie studentem. (Expositio libri *Physicorum*, Città del Vaticano, BAV, Urb. lat. 1489 [A.D. 1350], f. 69vA).
- (004) Expliciunt *dicta* Byridens super totum physicorum anno 1352 feria secunda post festum Iohannis baptiste (Expositio in octo libros *Physicorum* Aristotelis, Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, f. 87rA).

were not taken directly in the classroom but copied at home (Van Steenberghen 1977: 194; Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. W. Dunphy: 26). Hamesse 1987, on the contrary, agrees with Ph. Delhaye ([Siger of Brabant], *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum*: 6-7) that at least parts of some commentaries were written directly in school.

4 Michael 1985: 792-4, 800f., 811f.

5 Colophons of the same text in various manuscripts often contradict each other. Such discrepancies do not exclude the possibility that the terminology of titles and colophons is significant, but they demand that we be careful in our interpretations. See Flüeler 1994: 79-88.

6 Exposition and questions are distinct. The colophon refers to two separate though complementary texts.

- (005) Et sic finis istius libri etc. Expliciunt *dicta* magistri Johannis Birydensis. (Expositio in duos libros *De generatione et corruptione*, Erfurt, WAB, CA Q.325 [XIVc.], f. 105v).
- (006) Expliciunt *dicta* super librum Meteororum anno 1342 ascripta magistro Johanni Buridani. (Expositio libri *Meteororum*. [A.D. 1342], Erfurt, WAB, CA Q.342, [?Paris, c. 1370], f. 65vB).
- (007) Et in hoc explicit *lectura* tercii libri de anima *reportata parysius a magistro Johanne biriden*. Deo gracias. (Expositio in tertium librum *De anima*, Paris, BN, lat. 16130, f. 35vB).
- (008) Explicit expositio textus tercii libri de anima una cum aliis duobus primis, *lecta parisius*. Anno domini m<sup>o</sup>ccc<sup>o</sup> lxii. Deo gratias; f. Ir: Ista leccura libri de anima atque questiones ejusdem libri sunt compilate per Reverendum docctorem Magistrum Johannem de biridanis. (Expositio in tres libros *De anima*, Vendôme, BV, ms. 169, [A.D. 1362 ?], f. 44v, Ir).<sup>7</sup>
- (009) Explicit *dicta* super libellum de memoria et reminiscentia. (Expositio libri *De memoria et reminiscentia*, Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, [ca. A.D. 1352], f. 128vA).
- (010) Expliciunt *dicta* super librum De somno et vigilia. (Expositio libri *De somno et vigilia*, Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, [ca. A.D. 1352], f. 132rA).
- (011) Expliciunt *reportata* super librum de longitudine et brevitate vite (Expositio libri *De longitudine et brevitate vite*, Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, [ca. A.D. 1352], f. 136r-137r).
- (012) Expliciunt *dicta* super libellum de longitudine et brevitate vite (Expositio libri *De longitudine et brevitate vite*, Erfurt, WAB, CA Q.325, [XIV], f. 139r).
- (013) Expliciunt *reportata* super librum de iuventute et senectute a magistro Johanne Buriden. (Expositio libri *De iuventute et senectute, De morte et vita, De respiracione*, Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, [A.D. 1352], f. 135v).
- (014) Incipit expositio textus metaphisice *reportata sub byriden* venerabili doctore, (Expositio in duodecim libros *Metaphysicorum*, Paris, BN, lat. 16131, f. 124rA).
- (015) Expliciunt expositiones libri metaphisice super duodecim libros *lecte* a reverendo magistro *Iohanne buridan*. Finito libro sit laus et gloria Christo. Amen. Amen. (Expositio in duodecim libros *Metaphysicorum*, Carpentras, Bibl. Inguimbertaine, cod. 292 [L. 288], f. 42vA).

These colophons show sufficiently that most or all of Buridan's literal commentaries originated as lectures and that the extant manuscript copies go back to a reportation. In order to study the way reported commentaries were made, I propose to examine a few manuscripts containing commentaries attributed to John Buridan, including the above-mentioned manuscript Paris BN lat. 16131, to test Michael's claim.

<sup>7</sup> The manuscript contains first the exposition (f. 1r-44vb), then the questions (f. 48ra-115rb).

## The oldest manuscripts containing works attributable to John Buridan

Most of the manuscripts containing works attributable to Buridan were copied after his death in 1360. Seven out of approximately 250 manuscripts<sup>8</sup> were certainly written during Buridan's lifetime. Six of these contain Aristotelian commentaries:

- 1) Paris, BN, lat. 16131, (ca. 1340, Expositio et Questiones supra libros *Metaphysice*).<sup>9</sup>
- 2) Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Hs. 516, (1346 and 1347-ca. 1355, Expositio compilata et Questiones compilate supra libros *Metaphysice*, Expositio <reportata> et Questiones <reportate> supra libros *Metaphysice*).<sup>10</sup>
- 3) Paris, BN, lat. 16125, (XIV inc., f. 2rA-4vB: Capitula et conclusiones octo librorum *Physicorum*).<sup>11</sup>
- 4) Paris, BN, lat. 16130, (ante 1336, f. 25rA-35vB, Expositio tertii libri *De anima*).<sup>12</sup>
- 5) Erfurt, WAB, CA F.298, (ca. ante 1352, f. 51rA-87rA: Expositio I-VIII librorum *Physicorum*, f. 89rA-106vB: Buridan (?), Questiones super *De anima*, f. 109rA-120, Expositio supra *De anima*, f. 122rA-137rA, Expositio supra *Parva naturalia*, f. 137rB-145rB, Buridan (?), Questiones supra *De sensu et sensato et De memoria et reminiscentia*).<sup>13</sup>
- 6) Uppsala, UB, C. 615, (ca. 1350, f. 99r-99v, 104r-111v: Due questiones de universali).<sup>14</sup>
- 7) Basel, UB, F.V. 10 (ca. 1343), f. 161r-179v: Questiones in *Parva naturalia*).

The small number of extant manuscripts dating from Buridan's lifetime<sup>15</sup> indicates that his fame was established only after his

<sup>8</sup> The estimate made by Michael 1985: 307.

<sup>9</sup> I present a full description of this manuscript in Flüeler 1997.

<sup>10</sup> I present a full description of this manuscript in Flüeler 1997.

<sup>11</sup> The manuscript contains works of Jacobus Lombardus and Simon de Faversham, cf. Seňko1982: II, 16-18; Michael 1985: 566, 605. According to Michael, Buridan's text is only a *tabula* of the *Expositio*: "... die Zuordnung des Expositio-Fragments muß als ungelöst gelten." (605).

<sup>12</sup> This seems to be the oldest ms. containing a commentary by Buridan. It belonged to Thomas Le Myésier, who died in 1336; cf. Hillgarth 1971: 327f. Nr. 13 and 190ff.; Michael 1985: 677f.; Seňko1982: II, 27-29.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Michael 1985: 564, 575, 680, 687, 736f., 745f., 753, 760, 767, 778; Schum: 204f.; Markowski 1987, passim; Patar 1991: 48\*f.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Michael 1985: 434f. (including secondary literature).

<sup>15</sup> The attribution to Buridan of a fragment in ms. Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 2197 is uncertain. This manuscript was copied during Buridan's lifetime at the

death. But if these few manuscripts allow for any conclusions, one of them will have to be that during his lifetime, his expositions,<sup>16</sup> i.e. the literal commentaries, were as important as his questions, and that these two types of works were understood to be complementary, although they were never mixed and never formed a unity in the strict sense. They were never transmitted as a *lectura cum questionibus*, even if some colophons do pretend just this.<sup>17</sup>

### The historical importance of literal commentaries

Buridan has become famous for his highly influential commentaries in question form, while his expositions have been pushed into the background. Most of the literal commentaries are known only in a single manuscript. Some of them, in particular those on natural philosophy, are extant in only two or three copies. Only an

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place he taught. It contains on f. 128r-135 eleven questions on *Physics* I, written by the scribe Johannes Margan de Yvia in about 1346. The questions are the following: 1. *Utrum totum sit sue partes.* (cf. Buridan, Qq. *Physicorum*, ed. 1509, I, q. 9); 2. *Utrum infinitum sit ignotum.* (cf. I, q. 11); 3. *Utrum omnes ens naturale sit determinatum ad maximum.* (cf. I, q. 12); 4. *Utrum ex nihilo possit aliquid fieri.* (cf. I, q. 15); 5. *Utrum privatio sit sive dicatur aliquid esse in rerum natura.* (cf. I, q. 23?); 6. *Utrum entia naturalia sint determinata ad minimum.* (cf. I, q. 13); 7. *Utrum cuiuslibet transmutationis principia intrinseca sint contraria.* (cf. I, q. 14); 8. *Utrum materia sit ens, videlicet prima materia.* (cf. I, q. 20); 9. *Utrum cuiuslibet transmutationis naturalis materia prima sit principium intrinsecum.*; 10. *Utrum sint tria principia rerum naturalium et non plura tribus.* (cf. I, q. 16); 11. *Utrum cuiuslibet transmutationis forma sit principium intrinsecum.* The questions are related to Buridan's last lecture on the *Physics* (ed. Johannes Dullaert, Paris 1509), but differ sufficiently from them that it is difficult to determine whether the commentary is a different redaction by Buridan himself or is merely influenced by Buridan. The fragment is anonymous. When the manuscript was bought in 1407 by Philippus de Otheye, prior of Saint Jacob in Liège, he wrote at the top: *Questiones primi libri Physicorum et non est nisi unus quaternus. Nescio quis composuit.* And later he added: *Buridanus composuit* (in the Index to the same volume, the same Philippus conjectures: *puto quod sunt a Buridan*). The attribution is thus conjectural.

**16** In the titles and colophons, Buridan's literal commentaries are most often called *expositio* (*expositio textus*, *expositiones*) or *dicta* and only occasionally *commentum*, *lectura*, or *reportata*, but never *sententia*, *lectiones* or *explanatio* (cf. colophons 001-015). The frequency of the terms *expositio* and *dicta* suggests those might be the most historically justifiable names for this type of commentary.

**17** See colophons 001, 008, and 020 presented in this paper.

exposition of the *Metaphysics* has four copies.<sup>18</sup> The busy editors of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries limited themselves to editing the questions, while ignoring the literal commentaries. By contrast, Buridan most certainly did not neglect them. In fact, almost all his question commentaries have a corresponding exposition, and where the exposition is missing, it may well have been written and is now lost.<sup>19</sup> Not only did expositions have a fixed place in the syllabus, but they have to be considered the foundation of the subsequent disputations.

In spite of their historical importance, the literal commentaries have been neglected by modern editors. The reason for this is simple: these commentaries are boring, most of them add little of value to the interpretation of the Aristotelian work, and they are rarely useful for determining the commentator's own philosophical doctrine. As a result, only two expositions attributed to Buridan have been edited to date. The commentary *On the soul* (*De anima*) edited by Benoît Patar<sup>20</sup> is anonymous in both extant manuscripts,<sup>21</sup> and the authorship cannot be determined beyond doubt,<sup>22</sup> although a very close dependency on Buridan cannot be denied. The second literal commentary is on *De motu animalium* and has been edited by Frederick Scott and Hermann Shapiro.<sup>23</sup> Although the attribution has never been called into question, it is not entirely firm. The text has been transmitted anonymously, and only the history of the manuscripts suggests Buridan as its au-

18 Lohr 1970: 166 refers to eight mss; Michael 1985: 795-99, 816-7 lists five. Erfurt, WAB, CA F.322, f. is attributed to Buridan by Amplonius Rattinck de Berka (1410/12) but probably contains a different text. See Markowski 1987: 111. Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516, contains a different redaction, as will be shown below. Lohr mentions also Firenze, BN, Centrale Conv. Soppr. C.5.262, (s. ?), 144ff., but Michael 1985, 926f. doubts the authorship.

19 Michael 1985: 243. In his repertory, Bernd Michael has identified 27 different expositions.

20 Patar 1991: 3-163.

21 Avignon, Musée Calvet, ms. 1093 (85 suppl.) (XVinc.), f. 219r-245v and Brugge, StB, 477, f. 238vB-263vB. (Cf. Michael 1985: 715 n. 44 and 719 n. 49 and 734; Patar 1991: 31\*, 52\*-64\*, 67\*-110\* passim). Description of Brugge SB 477 in Pattin 1978: 13-16.

22 See review of Patar 1991 by Ch. Flüeler (*Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 36 [1989]: 512-519). Zénon Kaluza is of the same opinion in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 79 (1995): 136-139; also S. Ebbesen, *Dialogue* 33/4 (1994): 758-761.

23 John Buridan, *In De motibus animalium*.

thor.<sup>24</sup> Recently, Bernd Michael has tried to attribute to Buridan a fragmentary literal commentary on the *Ethics*.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately this attribution is far from certain. The fragment has been edited by Jerzy Korolec,<sup>26</sup> on the basis of ms. Paris, BN, lat. 17831.<sup>27</sup> If it is indeed Buridan's work, it is a very derivative piece, for it is based completely on Albert of Saxony's literal commentary on the *Ethics* as lectured sometime in 1356-58<sup>28</sup> and on Thomas Aquinas' commentary on the same book. In fact, it seems more likely to me that the work is a later addition to Buridan's questions by an unknown artist.<sup>29</sup>

24 The Erfurt ms. (WAB, CA Q.325, f. 132rA-137rA) is attributed to John Buridan by Amplonius Rattinck de Berka in his library catalogue of 1410/12 (*Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz* 1928 [Rpt. 1969]: II, 36.17: "commenta Buryden de motibus animalium"; cf. Michael 1985: 628, 760 and 781). Ms. Vat. lat. 2162 contains a collection of Buridan's literal commentaries on Aristotle's natural philosophy. The commentary on *De motu animalium* (f. 164vB-167rA) is the last text of this collection, and the attribution is probably missing because the last folio has been lost.

Ms. Vat. lat. 2162 contains: *Physica* (f. 1rA-56rB, f. 56rA: Et sic dictum est de totius libri physicorum expositione *Edita* a magistro Iohanne Buridani (!) cuius anima requiescat in pace. Amen. Qui scripsit scripta sua dextera sit benedicta. Amen.), *De celo et mundo* (f. 57rA-79rB; f. 65rA: Explicit expositio primi libri de celo et mundo a magistro iohanne buridan *edita*; f. 79rB: Expliciunt expositiones quatuor librorum de celo et mundo *compilate* a reuerendo magistro buridan deo gratias.); *Meteora* (f. 80rA-108vB; f. 108vB: Expliciunt expositiones libri metheteororum magistri iohannis buridaen (!). scripte anno domini. M°.ccc°lxxvi°. ultima die mensis februarj. deo gracias.); *De anima* (f. 110rA-127vA; f. 127vA: Expliciunt expositiones supra totum librum De anima *compilate* a magistro reuerendo Io buridam); *De generatione et corruptione* (f. 127vA-141vA; f. 141vA: Explicit expositio tocius libri de generatione. Anonymous but attributed in a late XV-century hand); *Parva naturalia* (f. 141vB-167rA; no titles and colophons. The last text [*De motu animalium*!] is incomplete).

25 Michael 1985: 877-78.

26 Anonymi *In Ethicam*, ed. J. B. Korolec: 71.

27 Carefully described in Seňko 1982: II, 94-98.

28 Albert lectured on the *Ethics* between 1356 and 1358 (cf. *Auct. Univ. Par.* I, 199 and 255). For the dating of Albert's lectures on moral philosophy, see Flüeler 1992: I, 153. The fragmentary literal commentary in Paris BN lat. 17831 was composed later. If Buridan were the author, then the text would have been composed between 1358 and October 11, 1360, the latter being the most probable date of Buridan's death (see Michael 1985: 399-402).

29 See Flüeler 1998.



## The relation between the exposition and the questions

A very basic problem for our investigation is the connection between the literal commentary and the questions. In the commentaries of the early 13th century, the expositions form the principal part and the questions are usually inserted in the literal commentary in such a manner that together they add up to some sort of *lectura cum questionibus*.<sup>30</sup> This interweaving, while very common in the early 13th century, became increasingly rare in the second part of that century.<sup>31</sup> In Buridan's time, the two modes of commenting on Aristotle were (almost) always separated.<sup>32</sup> Buridan's questions can be read as an independent work, although references to the complementary literal part are quite frequent, as can be easily shown in his exposition on *De celo*, which I had the chance to consult in ms. Brugge, StB, 477 (14th century), f. 210vB-238vB. In the literal commentary, Buridan refers to the corresponding questions (f. 164vB-210vB) when he says (f. 211vB): *Motus circularis est alicuius corporis simplicis ... et in hac ratione cadit una dubitatio que indigebit speciali questione.* (reference to I, q. 6); (f. 214rA): *... sed videbitur in questionibus*; (f. 216vA): *... de hoc dicetur in questione ...*; (f. 219rA): *... de hoc dicetur in questionibus ...*; (f. 219rB): *... Verum est quod contra istam suppositionem sunt pluries*

**30** The best edition of this type is still: Anonymus, *Lectura in librum de anima a quodam discipulo reportata*, ed. R.-A. Gauthier. See the interesting case of Siger's Commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, which are extant in four versions (Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. W. Dunphy, Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. A. Maurer). Here, the literal commentaries (*commenta*) are still mixed with the questions, but plainly secondary.

**31** Late examples are, for instance, the anonymous commentary on the Economics in Lilienfeld, StB, 155, f. 253vA-261rB or the *Lectura Politicorum cum questionibus* in Basel, UB, F.VI.25, f. 162r-201v.

**32** The commentary in Paris BN lat. 17831 contains Buridan's famous questions on the *Ethics* (f. 1ra-250vb), attributed to him by the scribe (f. 52vb, 94va), and a fragmentary literal commentary inserted in between, and connected with, the questions. The literal commentary starts after the 13th question of the second book on f. 45ra and ends at the beginning of the third book on f. 54vb. The fragmentary literal commentary has been edited by J. Korolec (*Anonymi In Ethicam*, ed. Korolec). Michael 1985: 877 attributes it to Buridan. If he is right, it is the only commentary attributed to Buridan which has such a mixed form. It is, however, rather uncertain whether the fragment is by the same author as the questions. See on this Flüeler 1998.

*magne difficultates que indigent seorsum tractari in questionibus;* (f. 221vB): ... *Et iste conclusiones sicut ponuntur sunt false et rationes sophistice, sicut videbitur in questionibus;* (f. 222rA): ... *et verum est quod circa ista dicta sunt multe difficultates, quas oportet tractare in questionibus;* (f. 233rA): ... *et hoc est difficile dicere et tractabitur in questionibus ...;* (f. 233rA): ... *et de hoc oportet videre in questionibus ...* In short, in the manuscripts the exposition and the questions represent two separate but complementary genres. What exactly is their connection? Could it be that these two modes of commenting formed a unity in the oral lecture and that their separation is the work of the reportator?

### The first redactions of Buridan's commentaries:

#### The commentaries on the *Metaphysics*

Manuscripts copied during Buridan's academic activity at the place he taught are not necessarily closer to the original form, since they could already contain contaminations. Two manuscripts, however, were copied during or shortly after Buridan's lecture. Both contain commentaries on the *Metaphysics*. The following investigation will focus on these two manuscripts, namely Paris, BN, lat. 16131, and Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516. The Darmstadt ms. in fact contains two different versions of Buridan's commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, and each manuscript includes both the literal commentaries and the questions. These three literal commentaries and three commentaries in question form have to be distinguished from the so-called "last lecture" on the *Metaphysics*, extant in several manuscripts.<sup>33</sup> Thus, we possess all in all four versions of commentaries on the *Metaphysics* attributable to John Buridan. The complex and extensive tradition of Buridan's commentaries on this Aristotelian work provides clear evidence for the great esteem in which he held it.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Michael 1985: 795-799, 802-813.

<sup>34</sup> Buridan lectured several times on the most important Aristotelian works, like the *Ars vetus*, the *Physics* or the *De anima*, but it remains very difficult to distinguish the various lectures.

## The reported lecture on the *Metaphysics* in Paris, BN, lat. 16131: An original reportation?

According to Bernd Michael, the Parisian manuscript lat. 16131 is an original reportation.<sup>35</sup> The hurried handwriting, the occasional blank spaces, and the titles are three characteristics that confirm this claim.<sup>36</sup> A sceptical reader might easily doubt this. At what point does a hasty hand qualify as a sign of a directly reported lecture? Are breaks not also common in many commentaries which are nevertheless copies? The titles provide the least convincing argument, because they could have been copied by a later scribe. Certainly, the manuscript has to be studied more carefully. Finally, Michael's claim seems weakened by the colophon at the end of the questions,<sup>37</sup> where the same hand writes with the same ink, probably at the same time: *Non audivisti plus, quia non legit amplius. Et illud propter magnum frigus, quod tunc fuit in hieme, de quo adhuc doleo* (f. 122vB). The questions are in fact – as the literal commentary is also – a mere fragment. This enigmatic phrase suggests that the scribe wrote this manuscript for a reader who heard Buridan's lecture (*non audivisti plus*) and not for his teacher Buridan. We do not know which winter it was when the cold was so severe that Buridan had to interrupt his lecture, but it must have been in the early forties.<sup>38</sup> When the scribe wrote: *tunc fuit in hieme*, he did not necessarily mean that this event happened in the past. It was standard that the word *tunc* (with the perfect tense) in a colophon refer to the time at which the scribe finished his task.<sup>39</sup> It there-

35 Michael 1985: 793f. and 811f.

36 "Der Duktus der Schrift, die gelegentlichen Lücken im Text und die Überschriften zu den beiden überlieferten Texten legen es nahe, daß es sich bei den hier überlieferten Texten um direkte Nachschriften des gesprochenen Wortes, also um Reportationen im strengen Sinne handelt ..." (Michael 1985: 793).

37 The questions in Paris lat. 16131 are certainly a work of Buridan. The original title is: *etiam questiones supra primum librum metaphisice aristotelis reportate a byrid...* The questions are written in the same hand as the following exposition, while the *etiam* is a hint that the questions are related to the exposition, which should come first. I suppose that the order has been changed by a bookbinder.

38 For the history of manuscript, see Flüeler 1997.

39 Examples: Albertus de Saxonia, *Qq. de celo et mundo*, Bamberg, SB, Astr. 2 (HJ V,2), f. 77: *Et sunt questiones Magistri Alberti de Saxonia; Explicium dicta alberti super 4 libros de celo et mundo per me Michaellem de Krain- (?) artis baccalarium tunc temporis studentem wienne. Anno 1444. In die S. laurencij; Blasius Pelacanus de Parma, Sententia*

fore seems probable that the sentence was written during the very winter. Our colophon is, however, in this case more complex, because the scribe seems to make a temporal difference between: *tunc fuit* and *adhuc doleo*. The meaning is not plain. The difference between *tunc* and *adhuc* suggests that *tunc* really refers in this context to a past event. The sentence – and the whole manuscript – would then have been written down later, that is after the passing of the cold winter. But this is not the only possible interpretation. What does “*de quo adhuc doleo*” mean? The sentence can be understood in completely different ways depending on whether *de quo* is referring to ‘*frigus*’ or to ‘*quia non legit amplius*’. In the first case, it means that the scribe is still suffering from the cold, because the cold spell (‘*frigus*’) has not passed, or that he is (still) suffering from the pain caused by it. In this case, the colophon and therefore the entire manuscript would have been written a certain time after the lecture, and thus could not be considered an original reportation. But *de quo doleo* could also mean that the scribe regrets that Buridan has not finished his lecture (“*quia non legit amplius*”). If the sentence should be read in this latter sense, it does not necessarily mean that some interval passed between the lecture and the present manuscript copy. An admiring and thankful student would never have written: *de quo dolui* (!), as if his regret ceased with the last sentence he wrote. The colophon remains ambiguous, and several readings are possible. In order to prove Michael’s claim, we have to go beyond the colophon and look at the manuscript itself.

Our manuscript, Paris, BN lat. 16131 is written in a hasty hand. Such a hand is indicative of a personal copy. Pamélon Glorieux has called this kind of handwriting a “*littera inintelligibilis*”. The breaks between the lectures are visible by the change of ink, the changing speed of the hand (which is more hasty at the end of the

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*super libro De celo et mundo*, Wien, ÖNB, cod. 2402 (A.D. 1451), f.1rA-64rA. *Explicit Sententia super librum De celo et mundo, compilata per famosissimum arcium doctorem magistrum Blasium de Parma de Pelacanis in Bononia, recolecta anno Domini M<sup>o</sup>CCCLXXX<sup>o</sup> in scolis reverendi doctoris P.Ar., scripta per me Nicolaum Artucz tunc studentem, M<sup>o</sup>CCCCLI die primo Martii, amen etc. in felicissimo Studio Paduano etc.*); Johannes Canonicus, *Questiones super VIII libros Physicorum*, Fribourg, Bibliothèque des Cordeliers, cod. 14, f. 166v: *Explicit tabula super Canonici super libros Physicorum scripta per reverendum patrem fratrem Johannem Joly tunc temporis guardiani A.D. 1478 in die XL martyrum.*

lecture), and by a typical initial letter or labelled *lemma*. The end of a lecture is finally confirmed by notes like: *et hoc dicit; lectio bona placet; hoc est quod dicit. lectio; lectio bona*. At the beginning of a lecture, the handwriting of the scribe is more careful than at its end. This pattern is even more evident in the questions: at the beginning of a question the handwriting is clearer, more regular, and more controlled, getting more hurried and wider towards the end. Obviously, the scribe got tired at the end of a session. On this basis, we can conclude that a lecture had an average length of three to four columns. The division of the text into treatises and chapters had a didactic goal, because a single lecture usually had the length of a chapter. If we study the manuscript carefully, there seems no doubt that there was a break between every lecture. Now, it is very improbable that a scribe would stop writing after every question and every single lecture of the literal commentary when copying an ordinary manuscript.

That our manuscript must be very close to the oral teaching is further confirmed by the relation between literal commentary and questions: the exposition of the text and the questions are separated. The first part of the manuscript contains the questions (f. 2-122), the second the literal commentary (f. 124-214). Although incomplete, both are certainly Buridan's work.<sup>40</sup> The literal commentary ends in the middle of the 12th book, the questions in the middle of the 9th book. The colophon (*Non audivisti plus...*, f. 122vB) is attached at the end of the questions. What does this prove with regard to the relation between lecture and questions? The literal commentary and the questions were obviously not written one after the other, but simultaneously. This can be confirmed by the composition of the fascicles. The student used four different kinds of paper with different watermarks. The sequence of the watermarks is the same in both parts of the manuscript. This means that the scribe started with one particular kind of paper, and when it was consumed, he bought a different kind and used it both for the literal commentary and for the questions. Given that this change of paper and its corresponding watermarks occurs four times, we must conclude that the commentaries were written down in an alternating fashion, but in the same time period and in two different fascicles. The change of both hand and

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40 See my description of the manuscript in Flüeler 1997.

ink between one lecture and the other and the composition of the fascicles can easily be explained on the assumption that the writer changed the fascicles after each lecture, writing first a lecture of the exposition in one fascicle and then the question in the other fascicle, and so on.

In our case, the two connected ways of commenting on the Aristotelian text were not carried out synchronously, since they did not follow the same rhythm. That Buridan took longer with the questions than with the literal commentary can be inferred from the fact that, when the cold forced him to interrupt his lectures, the commentary had arrived at book 12 while the disputations had only reached the 9th book. If in our manuscript the questions precede the exposition, this reversal is due to the ignorance of the bookbinder. The greater accuracy of the title at the beginning of the exposition and the colophon at the end of the questions equally indicate that the literal commentary should have come first.

We may now return to the initial question: is our manuscript really an original reportation made in the classroom? The answer must be in the affirmative. The codicological analysis shows that the manuscript cannot have been a simple copy but was made when Buridan lectured on the *Metaphysics*. The scribe was most probably the reportator. The characteristics of our manuscript have to be a sign that the commentaries were written either (a) directly during each lecture or (b) shortly afterwards, but before the subsequent lecture. Neither the ambiguous colophon nor the external description of the codex permit us to resolve this residual problem. In order to achieve even greater clarity, one would have to compare the language, the structure and the context of the commentaries on the *Metaphysics* in Paris, BN, lat. 16131 with other presumed original reportations.<sup>41</sup> I tend to favor the view

41 I know only five other manuscripts that might contain such original reportations. 1) parts of ms. München, Bayerische SB, clm 9559 were probably written either directly in the classroom (f. 18r-22rB, maybe even f. 18ra-39vb, [(Siger of Brabant), *Quaestiones in Physicam*] and 47ra-82va [Anonymi *Quaestiones in De somno et vigilia, Meteora, De iuventute et senectute, De anima*]) or copied shortly after the lecture by the reportator himself (as Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. W. Dunphy) Cf. n. 3, above. 2) A commentary on *De anima* taught at Erfurt (Vat. Pal. lat. 1056, f. 235rA-272rB). 3) The second commentary on the *Metaphysics* in ms. Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516 (f. 105rA-167rB) might also be such a reportation (see my description of this ms. in Flüeler 1997). 4) Some of the commentaries in ms. Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 2197, like Oresme's (?) *Sententia*

that the manuscript is an original reportation, because the hand gets visibly tired and more hurried at the end of a lecture. This phenomenon is explicable on the reasonable assumption that the teacher tended to speak faster at the end of a lecture at the same time as the reportator's hand got weary and sloppy.

The lecture on the *Metaphysics* in Darmstadt,  
Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516: An original  
“compiled” lecture.

As mentioned earlier, we have to distinguish four different versions of Buridan's commentaries on the *Metaphysics*. All of them consist of a literal commentary and corresponding questions. Does this mean that Buridan lectured four times on the *Metaphysics*? Not necessarily. It could be that the different versions are nothing more than different redactions of the same lecture. That Buridan did revise his reported lectures can be shown on the basis of the manuscript Darmstadt Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516, which contains two (i.e. two literal and two question) commentaries on the *Metaphysics*.

The first commentary in the Darmstadt manuscript<sup>42</sup> is attributed to Buridan several times in the colophons. It is not mentioned in older catalogues, but has been taken by Benoît Patar to have been inspired by Buridan and to be but a work of a pupil, possibly Johannes de Vesalia.<sup>43</sup> This turns out to be incorrect. In this case,

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*libri Metheororum* (f. 100r-123r) may have been written directly during the lecture by the student Johannes Margan de Yvia. Finally, we have to mention ms. Paris BN, lat. 16297 which contains reportations of Siger's lectures taken by Godfrey of Fontaines. Armand Maurer claims that these commentaries were not written directly in the classroom, but copied by the reportator at home (Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. A. Maurer: 10-11).

The present study is limited to commentaries on Aristotelian works. In other reported works (Commentaries on the *Sentences*, sermons, etc.), original reportations also seem to be very rare. An original reportation of a sermon is indicated by Meier 1954: n. 55. Very close to oral language are the sermons of Vincent Ferrer reported by Fridericus de Amberg in Fribourg in 1404 (Fribourg, Bibliothèque des Cordeliers, cod. 62, f. 45r: *reportavi omnes sermones, quos tunc predicavit de ore suo meliori modo, quo potui et in sexternis sequentibus propria manu conscripsi*). Christoph Jörg has shown that the manuscript in Fribourg are not the original notes but a revised copy. (Jörg 1975: 82).

42 See my description of the ms. in Flüeler 1997.

43 Patar 1995: 52\*-63\*. It is certainly not a work by Johannes de Vesalia, because Philippus de Othey mentions in the table of contents that “magister Johannes

we should trust the colophons written by the scribe Henricus Johannis de Dandrediche<sup>44</sup> in 1346 telling that he “compiled” these commentaries in front of his master, John Buridan:

- (016) (f. 8vB) Et in hoc terminatur sententia tocius quarti libri methafisice que fuit completa in nocte sancti martini anno domini M° ccc° xlvj° per manum Henrici Iohannis de danrediche ante magistrum iohannem bridam nacionis picardie. (*bigger letters, but same scribe.*) Explicit sententia quarti methafisice compilata ante reverendum doctorem et magistrum magistrum Iohannem Bridam scripta per manum Henrici Iohannis de Danrediche etc. Incipit sententia quinti eiusdem compilata a magistro eodem, etc.

or:

Vesalia” lectured in the same year (1346), and he refers to Johannes’ commentary on *De anima*, reported by Johannes Margan de Yvia in 1346 and extant in ms. Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 2197, f. 136r-192v (*Sententia* and Questions). This codex contains in the first part (f. 1-192) works by Nicole Oresme, *Questiones super libros De generatione* (f. 27v-51v), id., *Questiones primi libri Meteororum* (f. 58r-98r, 125r-127v, different redaction!), id., *Sententia Meteororum* (f. 100r-123r, hitherto unknown!) and Johannes’ de Vesalia *Sententia libri De anima* (f. 136r-157v) and the corresponding questions (f. 158r-192r). The second part contains commentaries on the Logic, all copied by the scribe Henricus Johannis de Dandrediche. The last commentary, on the *Sophistical Refutations* (f. 219r-231r), is again attributed to Johannes de Vesalia, and it is probable – as its owner Philippus de Otheye conjectured in 1407 – that the rest of the second part is also by the same master.

This codex is like a “twin” of Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 516 and has a very similar history. The colophons and composition of the commentaries indicate that they were reported and compiled by students at the university of Paris. The colophons written by the scribes are the following (all other titles and colophons were added by Philippus): f. 81rb: Expliciunt questiones primi *Meteororum compilate ante venerabilem magistrum* Nicholaum de Oresme Normannum Deo gratias. Incipiunt questiones secundi eiusdem ab eodem; f. 106ra: Explicit sententia primi *Meteororum reportata ante magistrum* Nicholaum Oresme nationis Normannorum. Incipit sententia secundi eiusdem reportata ab eodem; f. 176rb: Expliciunt questiones supra primum et secundum *De anima* in numero 37 *reportate ante magistrum* Johannem; f. 192vb: Expliciunt questiones supra librum *De anima reportate ante magistrum* Johannem de Vesalia in vico straminum parisiis per manus Johannis Margan de Yvia anno domini m° ccc° 46° Deo gratias; f. 231rb: Expliciunt questiones libri *Elencorum scripte coram reverendo magistro* Johanne de Vesalia.). I thank Dr. Kurt H. Staub (Darmstadt) who informed me about the relation between Hs. 516 and Hs. 2197 and Prof. St. Caroti (Parma/Firenze), the editor of Oresme’s questiones on *De generatione*, who sent me the final proofs of his introduction.

<sup>44</sup> Denifle & Châtelain 1889-97: II, 644: Magister Henricus de Daurediche, Leod. dioc. [de can. S. Pauli Leodien.] member of the Picardian nation in 1349.



- (017) (f. 21vA) (*bigger letters, but same scribe.*) Explicit sententia sexti Methafisice compilata ante reverendum magistrum et doctorem magistrum Iohannem Buridam que fuit scripta per manum Henrici Iohannis de Danrediche.

That Henricus is in fact the scribe of the manuscript is confirmed by another manuscript (Darmstadt, Hessische LuHB, Hs. 2197), which was written by the same scribe. But what exactly does *compilata ante magistrum* mean?

The technical term ‘*compilatus*’ is very common in the language of colophons. A “compiled” commentary was never a compilation in the sense of a compound of materials from several sources.<sup>45</sup> Compiled commentaries were, especially in Paris, revised versions of reported works. Many of Buridan’s commentaries are called compiled versions in this sense of the word. Usually, it was the master himself who compiled his lectures. In the case at hand, however, his pupil Henricus sat in front of Buridan, writing down his master’s revision. Generally, the master used a reported text as the basis of his compiled version. Frequently, but not always – as our case proves – the compiled version was accepted as an edited text and used for further copies.<sup>46</sup>

‘*compilare*’ in Buridan’s commentaries (all italics mine):

- (018) Explicunt questiones super octo libros phisicorum aristotelis Reverendi magistri Iohannis Burydani *compilate parisius* conscripte et finite Wyenne feria tertia ante festum sancti Michahelis archangeli hora 9na Anno dominice incarnationis 1413 (Questiones super libros *Physicorum* [ultima lectura], Wien, ÖNB, cod. 5332, f. 218rB).
- (019) Explicunt expositiones quatuor librorum de celo et mundo *compilate* a reverendo magistro buridan. deo gratias (Expositio super *De celo et mundo*, Città del Vaticano, BAV, Vat. lat. 2162, f. 79rB).
- (020) Ista lectura libri de anima atque questiones eiusdem libri sunt *compilate* per Reverendum doctorem Magistrum Iohannem de buridanis ... Explicit expositio textus tercii libri de anima una cum aliis duobus primis, lecta parisius. Anno domini m° ccc° Lxii. Deo gracias. (Expositio libri *De anima*, Vendôme, BV, ms. 169, f. 1rA and 44vB).

<sup>45</sup> See for instance the *Summa* of Nicolaus de Argentina O.P. (Imbach and Lindblad 1985: 155-233). A typical compilation is e.g. the *Libellus de zelo christiane religionis veterum principum Germanorum* by Lupoldus de Bebenburg (edition in preparation by J. Miethke and Chr. Flüeler, MGH Staatsschriften). The meaning of *Compilatio* is discussed in Rouse and Rouse 1992.

<sup>46</sup> We very often find the following remark in the colophons: *editus et compilatus a magistro*. To our knowledge the Darmstadt ms. was not used for other copies.

- (021<sup>a</sup>) Expliciunt expositiones supra totum librum de anima *compilate* a magistro reverendo Io(hanne) buridam. (Expositio libri *De anima*, Città del Vaticano, BAV Vat. lat. 2162, f. 127vA).
- (021<sup>b</sup>) Expliciunt Questiones super librum De anima per reverendum magistrum Buridanum *Parisius compilate* Prage reportate. (Questiones super librum *De anima*, Basel, UB, F.I.11, f. 118r).
- (022) Et sic per dei gratiam et auxillium finite sunt questiones peroptime super Tribus libris De anima Aristotelis *compilate* per excellentissimum doctorem arcium Magistrum Johannem Byridam *parisius*. Et scripture per me ffredericum de meysenam sub anno domini M° C°C°C° octuagesimo 2° indicione quarta quarta die mensis mayj etc. (Questiones super tres libros *De anima*, ultima lectura, Berlin, SB Preuss. Kulturbesitz, lat. fol. 566, f. 65rA).
- (023) Expliciunt questiones super Tertium Librum de Anima Aristotelis edite disposite et ordinate per Rev.dum et eximium Artium Doctorem et Magistrum Iohannem Bridani *Parisius compilate*. (Questiones super libros *De anima*, ultima lectura, Sarnano, BC, cod. E.14, f. 46).
- (024) Expliciunt questiones super libris de anima edite et *compilate parisius* per reverendum doctorem artium et in sacra theologia bachalarium Magistrum Johannem buridanj de Atrabato Necnon scripture per Wijlhelmum Hamer de Keyserwerde Anno domini M°cccciiij duodecimo die mensis octobris. (Questiones super libros *De anima*, ultima lectura, Città del Vaticano, BAV, Reg. lat. 1959, f. 69r).
- (025) Expliciunt questiones libri de anima *Compilate* per reverendum magistrum Johannem biridanum per manus Nicolai de farchas hida (?) reportate wienne in studio generali. Sub anno domini millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo septimo. lauda scriptorem ... (Questiones libri *De anima*, ultima lectura, Wien, ÖNB, cod. 5454, f. 56vB).
- (026) Expliciunt questiones parvorum librorum naturalium a magistro glorioso, magistro Johanne Buredaen *compilate* nec non finite anno domini M CCC septuagesimo quarto in festo sancti Augustini doctoris. (Questiones super *De morte et vita, De respiratione, De iuventute et senectute*, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibl., cod. 775, p. 253).
- (027) Expliciunt questiones super novem libros Ethicorum, tractate et *compilate* a bone et reverende memorie ac recolende magistro Johanne Burida (!) nationis Picardie, cuius anima in Christo Jhesu in perpetuum requiescat. Amen. Amen. (Questiones super *Ethica Nicomachea*, Douai, BM, cod. 692, f. 225r).
- (028) Incipiunt questiones libri ethycorum Aristotilis *compilate* per reverendissimum magistrum Johannem Biridan Parisius ... (Questiones libri *Ethica Nicomachea*, Stuttgart, Württemberg. LB, cod. HB X 16, f. 1rA).
- (029) Et sic est finis questionum primi libri posteriorum a magistro Johanne burydano reverendo *Compilate parysius* cuius anima requiescat in pace. Amen. Amen. (f. 224vA): Et sic est finis 19 questionis et per consequens omnium questionum primi libri posteriorumque secundi a magistro burydano bone quam valentes multum *parysius compilate*. (Questiones librorum *Posteriorum*, Liège, BU, cod. 44C, f. ? and 224vA).
- (030) Explicit expositio totius libri methaphisice a magistro Johanne buridani

*compilata*. (Expositio libri *Metaphysice*, Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, ms. 3516, f. 79rB).

- (031) Explicunt questiones *edite et compilate* necnon ad pennam date Parisius per acutissimum doctorem cognomine Buriden cuius anima ... Anno domini Millesimo CCC° nonagesimo primo in die conceptionis b. Maria virginis. (Buridan (?), *Questiones in libros Physicorum*, Città del Vaticano, BAV, Vat. lat. 3019, f. 121v).

The compiled commentary on the *Metaphysics* in the Darmstadt manuscript is an original compiled commentary. Buridan compiled both his literal commentaries (017, 019, 020, 021) and his questions together with his pupil Henricus de Dandrediche and this compilation is extant in the Darmstadt ms. Although where Buridan lectured several times on the same book, it would be important to know which lecture he compiled, in this case we do not know on which lecture Buridan and Henricus Iohannis de Dandrediche based their compiled version. In order to get closer to the solution of this question, we should first try to fix the order of the extant versions of Buridan's commentaries on the *Metaphysics*. But since the present study is only preliminary, we shall limit ourselves to a few observations.

### A tentative order of the different versions of Buridan's commentaries on the *Metaphysics*

That the text in the Parisian manuscript BN lat. 16131 is probably Buridan's earliest commentary on the *Metaphysics* is suggested both by the age of the manuscript<sup>47</sup> and by a comparison of the questions in this reported lecture with other attributable versions on the same Aristotelian work. We can easily identify the last lecture (*ultima lectura*) on the *Metaphysics*, which is extant in several copies<sup>48</sup> (e.g. in Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine cod.

<sup>47</sup> See the description in Flüeler 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Paris, BN, lat. 14716: f. 165vB: Explicunt questiones septimi libri methaphysice *de ultima lectura* magistri Iohannis buridani; f. 191vB: Et sic finiuntur omnes questiones tocius libri methaphysice a reuerendo philosopho magistro Iohanne Buridam, cuius anima requiescat in pace. Amen. Finis ultimatus. Explicunt questiones tocius libri methaphysice a magistro Iohanne buridani *de ultima lectura*. Deo gracias. Amen. See also ed. Paris, J. Badius 1518: In *Metaphysicen* Aristotelis. Questiones argutissimae Magistri Iohannis Buridani *in ultima praelectione ab ipso recognitae & emissae*: ac ad archetypon diligenter repositae ... (f. III, AA ij): Ioannis

292).<sup>49</sup> The commentaries in the Darmstadt manuscript must, then, lie in between the first and the last of Buridan's lectures. The exact relation between the two Darmstadt commentaries, and hence their relation to the first and the last version, is more difficult to determine. A cursory comparison of the table of questions shows that the Darmstadt compiled commentary (f. 1rA-102r) is closer to the first, reported commentary of the Parisian manuscript and could be a compilation of the first reportation or a compilation of a hitherto unknown middle lecture. The second commentary of the Darmstadt manuscript (f. 105rA-167vB) is very similar to the last version and could be a different reportation of the same lecture. Several things point to the possibility that the second commentary in the Darmstadt Codex is very close to the oral lecture and was written by the reportator.<sup>50</sup>

### Preliminary conclusions

1. Ms. Paris, BN lat. 16131 contains a reportation of the exposition and questions on the *Metaphysics* by John Buridan. They were given as lectures probably in the early forties and written by the reportator either directly in the classroom or shortly afterwards on the basis of notes jotted down in the classroom.

2. There exist various versions of commentaries on the *Metaphysics* attributable to Buridan. The one edited by Josse Bade in 1518<sup>51</sup> is so different from that in Paris BN lat. 16131 that it must

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Buridani Artium doctoris subtilissimi peritiles questiones in *ultima eius lectione edita super duodecim libros Metaphysice*; (f. xxvi, EE ij) ... *edita a Magistro Ioanne Buridano in ultima eius lectione & recognitione facta in schola parrhisiensi*; (f. lxxvii) Hic terminantur Metaphysicales questiones breues & vtilis super libros Metaphysice Aristotelis que ab excellentissimo magistro Iohanne Buridano diligentissima cura & correctione ac emendatione in formam redacte fuerunt in *ultima prelectione ipsius Recognitione* rursus accurate & impensis ...

<sup>49</sup> Michael 1985: 795-799 and 802-807.

<sup>50</sup> The handwriting changes at the beginning of the subsequent lecture and the following question. The handwriting is more careful at the beginning than at the end, and sometimes even the type of ink changes. All over the second part of the manuscript we encounter the same hasty scrawl which is very difficult to read. Both for the exposition and the questions the watermarks show the identical fruit (see the description in Flüeler 1997). In this case we might have as many as two original reportations on the same book by the same author!

<sup>51</sup> John Buridan, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Questiones*, ed. J. Badius.

be based on another lecture. But not every different redaction implies a different lecture course. The case of the first commentary on the *Metaphysics* in the manuscript Darmstadt Hessische LuHB Hs. 516 shows that Buridan revised his lectures and called these revised reportations “compiled commentaries”. A compilation was made either by the master himself or under his direction (*ante ipsum*).

3. The literal commentary and the question commentary are complementary. In the Parisian and the Darmstadt manuscripts, they were written by the same scribe in much the same way. The oldest extant manuscripts of Buridan’s commentaries demonstrate that the literal commentaries are, from a historical point of view, as important as the questions. Buridanism after Buridan’s death was especially interested in the questions, which resulted in the neglect of the literal commentaries.

4. The literal commentary and the questions were written by the reportator in two different fascicles. Arguments from internal evidence show that until the middle of the 14th century the literal commentary was considered the foundation of the questions, which followed temporally and logically. But since the questions were reported in a separate fascicle, they could easily be circulated separately. In other words, the questions were not extracted from the literal commentary, but existed separately from the very beginning.

5. The literal commentary is shorter than the questions and was not lectured synchronously with the latter. From our Parisian ms., it becomes evident that Buridan was expounding the 12th book and had just started to discuss questions dealing with the 9th book when the cold winter forced him to interrupt his lecture.

6. In the literal commentary, Buridan subdivided each book of the *Metaphysics* into treatises (*tractatus*) and chapters (*capitula*). A chapter corresponded usually to one lecture. The average length of a lecture in the Parisian ms. is about 3-4 columns (of 40-45 lines each) for the literal commentary, and (usually) one question of 4-7 columns on average for the question commentary.

7. According to the Parisian ms., Buridan discussed 93 questions during (about) 96 sessions and probably dedicated the same number of lectures to the exposition of the text.<sup>52</sup> When he broke

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52 See the description of the manuscript in Flüeler 1997.

off the lecture the exposition was almost finished, since the 13th and 14th books were usually not lectured on in Paris.<sup>53</sup> We may conjecture that Buridan planned to add several questions on the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th books.<sup>54</sup> According to the “final lecture” edited by Josse Badius, this corresponds to 27 missing questions. The complete commentary on the *Metaphysics* would have had approximately 100 sessions for the literal commentary and about 130 sessions for the questions.

8. The following two problems in particular need to be resolved:

First, if the scribe of Paris, BN, lat. 16131 did in fact write the manuscript in the classroom, he must have tried to report the lecture as faithfully as possible. A comparison with the other versions of Buridan’s commentaries on the *Metaphysics* suggests that the Parisian manuscript contains a “complete” commentary and not just a report of the most essential points covered. It is even probable that Buridan was lecturing ‘*ad pennam*’ so that the reportator was able to write down what the teacher said word for word.

Secondly, the different versions of Buridan’s commentaries on the *Metaphysics* are dependent on one another. A comparison of the various versions will show how Buridan used older materials to produce new redactions or even new lectures. Since the changes are especially significant in the questions, it will help us to understand how Buridan’s metaphysical doctrine developed.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Concerning the omission of the 13th and 14th books, see Carpentras, *Bibl. Inguimbertaine*, cod. 292, f. 39va (Expositiones libri Metaphysicorum): “Et sic finitur tercius liber methaphisice et per consequens omnes duodecim. Alii duo communiter non leguntur, ideo pro presenti dimittuntur”; f. 119rb (Questiones in libros *Metaphysicorum*, ultima lectura): “Super alios duos libros magister Johannes Buridanus nichil fecit, quia non solent legi.”

<sup>54</sup> See John Buridan, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Questiones*, ed. J. Badius, which is a complete commentary.

<sup>55</sup> De Rijk 1997, an interesting study devoted exclusively to the various versions of Buridan’s commentaries on the *Metaphysics*, unfortunately reached me too late to incorporate a discussion of it here. It should be noted, however, that de Rijk has identified another version of this work and considers ms. Erfurt WAB CA F.322, f. 1r-39ra (upon books I-II and IV-VI) to be the oldest version, even older than ms. Paris, BN, lat. 16131.

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