It is a fact that from a textual point of view Robert Kilwardby's commentaries on Aristotle are the main source of Albert the Great's corresponding paraphrases. From a purely doctrinal point of view, however, it is another story. In general, even though both of them can be considered as moderate realists, Kilwardby and Albert developed two quite different philosophical and theological views. Albert was always far more aware of the philosophical entailments of the texts he was commenting on than Kilwardby was, and he was able to manage a more sophisticated logical and interpretative machinery. He was also open to influences from Arab philosophers. As far as theologically neutral philosophical subjects were concerned, Kilwardby tried to reconcile his reading of Aristotle with the teaching of Augustine, supporting Aristotle's opinions only where he judged that he could. Yet, he used all of his intellectual resources and ecclesiastical authority in fighting against the new Aristotelian trend. Paradoxically, as far as the doctrines on praedicabilia and praedicamenta are concerned, Kilwardby appears to be a bit more faithful to Aristotle and a bit less Neoplatonic than Albert.¹

In what follows, in order to support this evaluation I shall illustrate Kilwardby's and Albert the Great's different opinions on categories and universals as they appear in their commentaries on the Ars Vetus.² First,

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² In Kilwardby's Parisian course on the Logica Vetus we find a close familiarity with the texts of Aristotle, but the Augustinianism which is found in fully developed form in his
I shall summarize Kilwardby’s main ideas on *praedicamenta* and *praedicabilia*; then, I shall sketch Albert’s doctrines; and finally, I shall compare their two versions of moderate realism in order to show similarities and differences between them.

As is well known, in the fourth chapter of the *Categories*, Aristotle lists ten items (substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, affection, where, when, position, possession) that he describes as what is signified by simple expressions (as opposed to complex expressions). Since late antiquity the list of categories was considered both as a classification of things and as a classification of the signs signifying those things. As a consequence, during the Middle Ages, many disputes took place about it. Depending on their general evaluation of the division into categories, that is, whether it primarily concerns things in the world or signs of them, it is customary to classify medieval authors as either realists or nominalists. Nominalists additionally maintained that the division into ten categories is a partition of terms on the basis of semantic criteria, and that there are only two (or three) real categories of *things*: substance and quality (and quantity). By contrast, realists (1) considered the categorial table to be primarily a division of beings and only derivatively an homologous division of terms, and (2) held that the ten Aristotelian categories are the supreme genera of beings, irreducible to one another—even though there were some significant differences among them when it came to establishing the nature and ontological status of these genera.

Following Boethius, Kilwardby supports a sort of conciliatory solution, according to which (1) the partition into ten categories is a division of later writings, such as the questions on the *Sentences* and the *Responsio de 43 quaestionibus Iohannis Vercellensis*, is present only in germ. The core of his doctrine on *praedicabilia* and *praedicamenta* is, however, almost the same in his earlier and later works—even if there are some differences in his views on the problem of individuation and the ontological status of relations. For a brief comparison between Kilwardby’s semantic and ontological theories in the *Logica Vetus* and in his later writings, such as the *De ortu scientiarum* and the commentary on the *Sentences*, see A. D. Conti, ‘Semantics and Ontology in Robert Kilwardby’s Commentaries on the *Logica Vetus’*, in Lagerlund and Thom, *Companion*, forthcoming.

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