Sten Ebbesen is undoubtedly one of the scholars who has contributed the most to the little we know about Radulphus Brito’s thought. He followed in the footsteps of his teacher and friend Jan Pinborg, who did the pioneer research on modism and notably on Radulphus Brito. Both Sten and Jan Pinborg produced editions of some of the questions that are essential to the article that I am contributing to this volume in Sten’s honour. The results of this article would not have been possible without Sten’s valuable work and advice.

In what follows I intend to reconstruct what would have been Radulphus Brito’s account of signification of common names, had he written one. My reconstruction aims at highlighting two main features of his account: first, the elements of pragmatics that Brito’s account of signification involves; second, the way he articulates those elements of pragmatics

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1 A first draft of this article was part of my PhD dissertation from Paris 1 University, but a major part of the work was carried out in Copenhagen thanks to a personal grant from the Carlsberg Foundation. I owe thanks to Claude Panaccio for inviting me to the Workshop on Nominalism in Montreal (May 2012) where I had the opportunity to discuss an earlier draft of this article. I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Centre for the Aristotelian Tradition (SAXO institute, University of Copenhagen) for their valuable remarks and suggestions.

with his logic of intentions and with his modistic semiotics. This will offer a highly sophisticated account of signification of common names, one that articulates these different tools, when dealing with the well-known problem of how the predicability of many things of common names, the universality of concepts and the ontological status of external essences relate to each other.

I shall proceed in four steps. In part 1, I give a short account of the modistic semiotics that Brito develops; in part 2, I introduce the pragmatic account of signification, which results from Brito's interpretation of the Aristotelian passage *Perihermeneias* 1.16a3–8. After having shown in part 2 that concepts are not a semantic condition for the signification of external things by names, in part 3 I reconstruct Brito's account of concept formation. This in order to introduce, in part 4, the sort of role that concepts play in his account of signification of common names. I conclude by showing that in this account both the predicability of many things of common names and the universality of concepts are ultimately grounded in a moderate realism of common natures.

*Radulphus Brito’s Semiotics*

Costantino Marmo places Radulphus Brito within the third generation of modists, together with Siger of Courtrai and Thomas of Erfurt. The difference between this generation and the ones that came before is their definition of a sign. The initial difference lies in the fact that for the third generation the sign is something essentially relational. That is, the sign is a composition of matter and form, where the form, the *ratio significandi*, is a relation that is in the sign as in a subject, and not in the thing signified, and it is given to an utterance (the matter of the sign) by means of an arbitrary act of imposition by the intellect. This establishes a gap between

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5 Radulphus Brito, *Super Priscianum minorem*, p. 161: ‘Unde iber est operatio intellectus speculativi requisita, quia illa est qui primo cognoscit rem et eius proprietatem et postea