Radulphus Brito stands out more and more clearly as a central figure of early 14th century epistemology. The earliest certain date of his academical life is 1296, when one copy of his Quaestiones super Topica Aristotelis is dated. 1308/9 he read the Sentences, 1311/12 he incepted as master of theology. 1315-20 he was procurator of the Sorbonne. Most of his logical courses, accordingly, must have been read—probably in several versions—during the years 1295-1305, though there is some probability that he also as a master of theology contributed to logical discussions.

In this paper I want to present a shorter work by Radulphus, the Sophisma "Aliquis homo est species" on the problem of the ontological status of second intentions. That this problem engaged Radulphus and his contemporaries is manifest from the frequent discussions in various genres of philosophical and theological literature.

The Sophisma is the redacted form of a vivid dispute under the presidency of Radulphus Brito, perhaps from the later part of his career as a master of arts, since he (below section 43) refers to earlier views of his own. Generally, however, the doctrine of the Sophisma is unmistakenly the same as that of the logical commentaries of Radulphus.


2 According to the document quoted above (= Glorieux 1966:210) the masters of the Sorbonne were allowed the status of "actu regentes in artibus" when they taught at the faculty of arts. The exact import of this is difficult to assess (cp. Glorieux 1966:134-5).

Even in the redacted form the Sophisma has kept many of the confusing aspects of an actual dispute. The arguments pass to and fro from the respondens to his opponents, and one respondens succeeds the other. Finally we find the determinatio magistralis of Radulphus himself, which develops three different ways of solving the question. Often it is difficult to see, exactly which argument is being refuted and in which form, since the same arguments tend to return at different stages of the discussion in slightly revised or expanded versions. I have tried to make the structure somewhat clearer by numbering each argument and by giving frequent cross-references. It might perhaps be useful to illustrate the main structure of the sophisma schematically:

Sections

I. Position of the sophisma and principal arguments 1-2
   First respondens: All intentions are in praedicamento 3-4
   Counter-arguments and discussion 5-25

II. Second respondens: No intention is in praedicamento 26-27
   Counter-arguments and discussion 28-42

III-VI. Determinatio magistralis

III. First solution: No intention is in praedicamento 43-45
   Replies to the arguments against this solution 46-48

IV. Second solution: Some intentions are in praedicamento 49-55
   Presuppositions: Definitions and causes of intentions 56-59

V. Third solution: All intentions are in praedicamento 60-63
   Presuppositions to make when replying against the arguments against the third solution 64

VI. Conclusion which favours the second solution 65
   Replies to the arguments against the second solution 66-71

Elsewhere I have tried to interpret Radulphus' doctrine of the intentions in more details. So I can here restrict myself to the outlines of the debate.

The second intentions had made an impressing career as the formal object of logic since they first appeared, roughly around the middle of the 13th century in connection with the strong Avicennean influence. The first extended and very interesting discussion on their nature so far known to me is due to Robert Kilwardby in his De ortu scientiarum. Many of the elements of later discussions are already present there. In

5 The relevant passages of Avicenna are Metaph. I 2 (Venetiis 1508 f. 70va); Logica, I (ibd. f. 5v). — Robert Kilwardby, De ortu scientiarum, MS: Oxford Digby 204 f. 33r-v.