

# Scotism in the Reformation Era: Historical and Historiographical Questions

Call for Papers for the final conference of the project  
“A Disregarded Past. Medieval Scholasticism and Reformed Thought”

Geneva, 9 to 11 september 2024

Recent decades have seen great progress in our understanding of the tradition of Scotism. Thanks to the work of historians of late medieval and early modern philosophy and theology, the importance, but also the doctrinal complexity, of Scotus' legacy have been brought to light.<sup>1</sup> Historians of the Reformation, however, have remained cautious regarding the broad impact of this intellectual legacy. While it has been argued that there are Scotist traits in the thought of such important Reformers as Zwingli and Calvin,<sup>2</sup> the recent discussions – provoked in particular by Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation* (2012) – have focused almost exclusively on the doctrines of analogy and univocity of being, and have emphasised from there the Protestant affinities with Thomism, as if modern intellectual history had not abandoned the historiographical concept of a *Zentraldogma* to describe an intellectual tradition. But there is obviously more to Scotism, than univocity of being, just as there is more to Calvinism than predestination or more to Thomism than analogy. In order to do justice to the diversity of early modern Scotism, it is therefore time to have a fresh look at Scotus' legacy in the Reformation era and to bring together historians of philosophy, of late medieval theology, and of the Reformed traditions to discuss the import of Scotism in the 16th and 17th centuries. This is the aim of our conference.

The conference is the final event of the project “A Disregarded Past: Medieval Scholasticism and Reformed Thought”, funded by the *Swiss National Science Foundation*. In this project, which has been running since August 2020, we have sought, among other things, to improve our knowledge of Scotus and Scotism in the Reformation era. In particular, we have demonstrated the existence of Scotist patterns among the early Reformers, as well as the use of Scotist concepts and doctrines among Post-Reformation thinkers. This has allowed us to

- 1 See, in particular, the four volumes of *'The Quadruple Congress' on John Duns Scotus*, ed. M.B. Ingham, R. Cross, M. Dreyer et al. (Münster 2010–2013); F. Fiorentino (ed.), *Lo scotismo nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (Turnhout 2010); W.O. Duba, *The Forge of Doctrine. The Academic Year 1330-31 and the Rise of Scotism at the University of Paris* (Turnhout 2017); J. Schmutz, “L'héritage des Subtils: cartographie du scotisme de l'âge classique”, *Les études philosophiques* 60 (2002): 51–81; D. Heider and C.A. Andersen (eds.), *Cognitive Issues in the Long Scotist Tradition* (Basel 2023). For a complete overview, see the ever growing bibliography of T. Hoffmann, “Duns Scotus Bibliography from 1950 to the Present”, 10th edition, August 2022, available at <https://abelard.hypotheses.org/scotus-bibliography>.
- 2 B. Hamm, *Zwingli's Reformation der Freiheit* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988); H.A. Oberman, “Initia Calvini. The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation,” in: W. Neuser (ed.), *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor. Calvin as Confessor of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids 1994), 113-154; D. Bolliger, *Infiniti Contemplatio. Grundzüge der Scotus- und Scotismusrezeption im Werk Huldrych Zwingli's* (Leiden 2003).

argue that Scotus and Scotism *are* important cultural and conceptual references in the mind of Reformed theologians and philosophers alike, even if they did not identify as Scotists - just as they would not identify as Thomists.<sup>3</sup>

In order to further clarify the early modern legacy of Scotus, we invite the scholarly community to share their research on Scotism and participate in the discussion from the historical, philosophical, theological, and historiographical perspectives. We welcome contributions on topics and questions such as the following:

- What uses of Scotus and Scotism can be identified in the Reformation era, in a particular intellectual tradition, or in a particular thinker?
- Are there specific differences between his uses among philosophers and theologians, or among the different confessional and intellectual traditions?
- How was Scotus read, circulated, transmitted? How was he cited or passed under silence?
- Are there distinctive differences between Scotus, and the late medieval and early modern Scotism(s)?
- What does it mean to identify some historical thinker as a Scotist? Is it to trace a core set of views or to uncover a 'family resemblance'?
- What does it mean to look for Scotism in the Reformation Era, and why do we need - *isms*?

The conference will be held at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, on September 9-11, 2024 (noon to noon). Confirmed speakers are Simon Burton (John Laing Senior Lecturer in Reformation History, University of Edinburgh) and Richard Cross (Rev. John A. O'Brien Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame).

We welcome proposals for individual papers (45 minutes per speaker). Proposals should include a provisional title and an abstract (200 words) and should be sent to [ueli.zahnd@unige.ch](mailto:ueli.zahnd@unige.ch) by February 29, 2024.

The conference language is English. The accepted papers will be published.

We look forward to welcoming you in Geneva.

3 For more information about our project, see <https://unige.ch/adp>.