

THE THEOLOGIAN'S TOOLKIT

JOHANNES MACCOVIUS (1588-1644) AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFORMED THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIONS

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What the angelic doctor, the subtle
mystic, the profound poet and the
chief master or all the other
scholastics have ever said: the one
and only Makowsky now at last
has bequeathed it to posterity.¹

The present state of Maccovius research

In ecclesial historiography the Polish aristocrat and theologian Jan Makowsky (1588-1644) — who latinized his name as Johannes Maccovius — does not rank among the most popular theologians of the seventeenth century.² Many textbooks on the history of theology include references to him as a *super-scholastic* whose defense of scholastic method and logical distinctions in theology was qualified as an excessive form of “rationalism” resulting in an extreme emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination, which was seen as a perversion of the “biblical theology” of the reformers. Authors such as W.B.S Boeles, Paul Althaus, Otto Ritschl and Otto Weber, G.C. Berkouwer and Keith L. Sprunger, to name just a few, time and again used Maccovius as a kind of “whipping boy” in order to express their own aversion of scholastic method and logic in Post-Reformation Reformed theology. Maccovius. According to these authors, the introduction of scholastic method by authors like Maccovius implied a

¹ Part of a poem on Maccovius by his pupil Andreas Petri, in: *Loci Communes* (1650): ‘Angelicus ille doctor, subtilis ille mysta; profundus ille vates; magister ille primus, Scholastici vel omnes dixere quicquid unquam: id unus hic Makowsky iam posteris relinquit’

² According to the custom of his days there is a great variety in spelling his name. In Polish: Makkowski, Makowsky, Makowski, Makowsky, Makouski. In the Album of the university of Franeker he was matriculated as Johannes Makowsky. His Latin name is also spelled differently: Makkovius, Mackovius, Makovius, Maccovius, Maccowius etc. He himself always used the Latin name Maccovius.

substantial modification of the theological framework, which the Reformation theologians had set forth in their works.³

/24/ Apart from such incidental remarks, and several entries in dictionaries of historical theology, very few substantial works on the life and work of Maccovius have been published.⁴ The first and most important source of biographical information on Maccovius is the funeral oration given by his colleague at Franeker University, the federal theologian Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669), delivered on July 2, 1644, about a week after Maccovius' death.⁵ In this *oratio* Cocceius presented a rather congenial overview of Maccovius' life and works, calling him an expert in philosophy, a good historian and well versed in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, although he pronounced his Latin with a strange accent. He was a brilliant teacher and attracted many students. Unlike his colleagues he did not read his lectures from a textbook, but extemporized when lecturing without the help of any books. Cocceius stressed the fact that Maccovius studied under Bartholomaeus Keckermann and that he, although a late starter, quickly developed into a prominent Reformed theologian who during his whole lifetime defended the *veritas gratiae* (the truth of grace) against its opponents.

It is worth noting that even the influential thinker of the Early Enlightenment Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) used Cocceius' *oratio* for a fascinating lemma on Maccovius in his *Dictionnaire historique and critique* (1697). Apparently, Bayle was aware of Maccovius' influence and called him a fearsome opponent of Jesuit and Socinian doctrines on God and grace, and a man of 'grand zèle contre les Arminiens'. Like Cocceius, he excused the rather flamboyant temperament of the Polish aristocrat by referring to the Arminian crisis that was threatening

³ W.B.S. Boeles, *Frieslands Hoogeschool en het Rijks Athenaeum te Franeker*, vol. 2 (H. Kuipers: Leeuwarden 1879), pp. 90-94 refers to Maccovius as *Calvinista tam rigidus et paradoxus, ut aliis rigidis displiceret*; P. Althaus, *Die Prinzipien der deutschen reformierten Dogmatik im Zeitalter der aristotelischen Scholastik* (Leipzig 1914), 262-265; Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, III, Orthodoxie und Synkretismus in der altprotestantische Theologie: die reformierte Theologie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts in ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung* (Göttingen 1926), 306-310; Otto Weber, *Grundlagen der Dogmatik, I*, Neukirchen 1955, p. 141. G.C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election* (ET by Hugo Bekker, Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1960), 18-20; Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames. Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, Chicago, London, 1972), p. 76 called predestination 'Maccovius' favorite topic.'

⁴ See for example: F. Postma and J. Veenhof, 'Disputen omtrent de predestinatie. Het logisch denken van Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644) en de doorwerking daarvan', in G.Th. Jensma et. al. (ed.), *Universiteit te Franeker 1585-1811. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Friese hogeschool* (Leeuwarden, 1985), pp. 249-285; Donald K. McKim (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 230-231.

⁵ J. Cocceius, "Oratio habita in funere nobilis, reverendi & clarissimi viri Johannis Maccovii SS. Theologiae Doctoris & Professoris p.m. Die 2. Julii A.C. 1644", in: Johannes Cocceius, *Opera Omnia*, VI, Amsterdam 1673-1675, *Orationes*, 52-54. A short biographical sketch "Eulogium Joannis Maccovii was also included in E.L. Vriemoet, *Athenarum Frisicarum libri duo*, Leeuwarden 1758, vol. I, 151-160. For other biographical details, see: W.B. S. Boeles, *Frieslands hoogeschool en het Rijks-Athenaeum te Franeker*, 2 vols., (Leeuwarden, 1878-1889), II, 90-94; A. Kuyper jr., *Johannes Maccovius. Academisch proefschrift*, (Leiden 1899), 3-100. See

the cause of Dutch and even European Calvinism. In this context he compared Maccovius with a watchdog that guarded the house of its master by barking against intruders and with a sailor shouting to his colleagues in order to try to save the ship of the Reformed Church that was torned by the Arminian storm.⁶

/25/ The first modern historian who produced a detailed study on Maccovius was Jodocus Heringa (1765-1840), theology professor at the University of Utrecht in the first half of the nineteenth century. He wrote extensively on Maccovius' trial at the synod of Dordrecht based upon manuscripts and archival evidence.⁷ More than sixty years later, in 1899, Abraham Kuyper Jr. produced a doctoral dissertation on Maccovius, discussing the biographical details of Maccovius' life in the first part, whereas the second part was devoted to Maccovius' methodology. In the third part of his dissertation Kuyper offered a historical description of some of the Franeker polemics that occurred between Maccovius and Sibrandus Lubbertus (professor, 1585-1625), and between Maccovius and William Ames (professor, 1622-1633). According to Kuyper Maccovius' problems at Franeker with Lubbertus and Ames grew out of theological and philosophical differences: Lubbertus' infralapsarism versus Maccovius' supralapsarism and Ames' Ramism versus Maccovius' Aristotelianism.⁸ Moreover, Maccovius' Bohemian way of life fell clearly short of Ames' standards, who, according to Keith Sprunger, was a 'Puritan of the rigidist sort.'⁹ Kuyper called Maccovius 'the pioneer of Reformed scholasticism in the Netherlands'¹⁰ and argued in favor of a kind of Maccovius "renaissance" in Neo-Calvinist circles.¹¹ He saw Maccovius as 'a herald announcing the times to come', i.e. the theology developed by his father, whom he saw as the "regenerator of Calvinism and the father of a reborn Calvinism according to the awareness of this century."¹²

Maccovius had to wait another century for a second monograph. In 1986 Michael Daniel Bell wrote a dissertation, in which he examined and evaluated the teaching of Maccovius on

also the *Biografisch Lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, vol. 2 (Kampen, 1983), 311-314.

⁶ P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, III, 291-293 (291).

⁷ J. Heringa, 'De twistzaak van den hoogleeraar Johannes Maccovius, door de Dordrechtsche synode, ten jare 1619 beslecht', in *Archief voor Kerkelijke Geschiedenis, inzonderheid van Nederland* 3 (1831), 503-664.

⁸ See for the different opinions on these controversies: A. Kuyper Jr, *Johannes Maccovius*, Academisch proefschrift (Leiden, 1899), pp. 44-45 (pro Maccovius); C. van der Woude, *Sibrandus Lubberus. Leven en werken, in het bijzonder naar zijn correspondentie* (Kampen, 1963), pp. 338-370 (via media); Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames*, pp. 87-88 (contra Maccovius).

⁹ Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames*, pp. 96-101.

¹⁰ Kuyper Jr, *Johannes Maccovius*, p. 131: Kuyper Sr. is 'de vader van een herboren Calvinisme naar het bewustzijn dezer eeuw,'

¹¹ For this qualification, see C. Veenhof, *Prediking en uitverkiezing* (Kampen, 1959), pp. 288-290. For the rest, Veenhof deploras this development by saying that the reintroduction of the 'miserable theology of Maccovius' in 1900 by Abraham Kuyper Jr. 'was a radical misinterpretation and deformation of the theology of the Reformers and the reformed confessions' (p. 289).

the specific question of the object of predestination. Bell offers a very helpful description of Maccovius' views and refers to the medieval sources of Maccovius' teaching on predestination. Moreover, Bell very clearly demonstrated that Maccovius was not willing to speak of sin as a necessary effect of reprobation. On the contrary: Maccovius was attempting to break any link that might make God appear as the author of sin, for he denied it the role of cause and desired to speak only of reprobation as the antecedent of sin.¹³ At the same time Bell emphasized the fact that reformed scholasticism /26/ should not be viewed as a monolithic system of theology in which every theologian followed exactly the same principles and methodologies.

Two recent authors have investigated further the nature of Maccovius' thought. First, we refer to the work by Donald Sinnema on the issue of reprobation at the Synod of Dordrecht, in which he argues for an essential continuity between the first generation reformers and Dordrecht on this point, although the synod accepted a more moderate position on this issue than either Calvin or his successor Beza had held. According to Sinnema, Maccovius used 'the late medieval solution' that defined reprobation as twofold — negative and positive — and identified God's will as the cause of its negative side (*non esse electum*) and human sin as the cause of its positive side (*ordinatio ad poenas*). Sinnema's conclusion is that Maccovius' formulation concisely captured a balance of divine and human factors in reprobation.¹⁴

Another recent article by Martin I. Klauber focuses on Maccovius' use of philosophy in theology.¹⁵ His conclusion is that Maccovius' positive use of philosophy within his theological system does not represent the development of a rational system that was a marked deviation from the early Reformers. In no way Maccovius did raise reason to an equal status with theology as the Armstrong thesis suggests.¹⁶

Maccovius' influence

In order to estimate the importance and influence of Maccovius it should be noted that he spent more than thirty years of his life teaching theology in the Netherlands. This long period

¹² Kuyper, *Maccovius*, Introduction, p. 5 ('Aan mijne ouders') and p. 399.

¹³ M. D. Bell, *Propter Potestatem, Scientiam, ac Beneplacitum Dei: The Doctrine of the Object of Predestination in the Theology of Johannes Maccovius* (theol. diss. Westminster Theological Seminary), 1986, p. 127-128.

¹⁴ Donald W. Sinnema, *The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dordt (1618-1619) in the Light of the History of this Doctrine*, (Ph. D. diss. University of Toronto, Toronto 1985), 177-181, 292-295 (quotation from p. 5).

¹⁵ Martin I. Klauber, 'The Use of Philosophy in the Theology of Johannes Maccovius (1578-1644)', *Calvin Theological Journal* 30/2 (1995), 376-391.

¹⁶ So B. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy. Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France*, Madison/London 1969, p. 32.

of teaching seems to have had a deep effect not only on Dutch students but also influenced many Eastern European students who had come to the Low Countries from Poland, Lithuania, Transylvania, Prussia, and Hungary.¹⁷ H. De Ridder-Symoens wrote that the ranks of foreign students at Franeker swelled notably during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). The attraction of Franeker to eastern Europeans — after the Poles, the Hungarians and the Germans were the largest groups — was probably due to Maccovius.¹⁸ Accordingly, the extent of Maccovius' influence as a scholastic author is well attested by several editions of his writings, during his lifetime and long after his death.

In scholarly research on Maccovius, however, little attention has been paid to one of his most popular writings. It was a short treatise called *Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae* that was edited at least five times in the Latin original /27/ and at least three times in a Dutch translation. The Latin editions were published at Franeker 1653, Amsterdam 1656, Oxford 1656 and Amsterdam 1663.¹⁹ The Oxford edition, published by Henry Hall, printer to the University (1642-1680) and Robert Belgrave, bookseller at Oxford (1652-1662), shows that Maccovius' influence extended beyond the European continent. Copies of the Oxford edition cannot only be found in British and Scottish libraries (British Library, Bodleian Library, Christ Church in Oxford, Caius College in Cambridge, Eton College, New Castle Library, Aberdeen and Glasgow University), but also in American libraries.²⁰

The *Distinctiones* was not published during Maccovius' lifetime. It was Nicolaus Arnoldus²¹, a fellow countryman, pupil and admirer of Maccovius, who gathered Maccovius' unpublished theological works into a work called *Johannes Maccovius Redivivus, seu manuscripta eius typis exscripta* (Franeker 1647) that saw several editions including the *Distinctiones*.²² Before the publication of the *Redivivus*, however, Arnoldus had already

¹⁷ For more information, see Kuyper, *Johannes Maccovius*, pp. 3-100; Bell, *Propter potestatem*, 5-29.

¹⁸ H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Buitenlandse studenten aan de Franeker universiteit 1585-1811', in G.Th. Jansma *et al.* (ed.), *Universiteit te Franeker 1585-1811*, pp. 73-89.

¹⁹ The 1663 Amsterdam edition was entitled: *Johannis Maccovii ... Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae, auctae et illustratae studio Francisci Cnutii, Neomagensis Gelri*, Amsterdam 1663. Cf. E.L. Vriemoet, *Athenarum Frisiacarum libri duo (...)*, Leeuwarden 1758, p. 158 ff.

²⁰ Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (The Biographical Society : Oxford, 1907, 1968 (reprint), p. 88. Cf. D. Wing, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641-1700*, Vol. II, E2927; *The Modern Language Association of America* (New York, 1982), p. 502.

²¹ After his study in Gdansk 1635-39 and at Franeker University (1641), Arnoldus became a reformed minister in Beetgum (Friesland). From 1651- 1680 he was professor of threology at Franeker. See for more biographical details: *Biografisch Lexicon van de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse protestantisme*, vol. 2 (Kok: Kampen, 1983), pp. 37-38.

²² The initial edition of the *Redivivus* appeared in 1647 containing the funeral edition delivered by Johannes Cocceius, and four polemical works: the *Theologia polemica* (169 pages), the ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΠΣΕΥΔΟΣ or *Prima falsa adversarium* (141 pages); the *Casus conscientiae de norma doctrinae sociniana compositi per dialogum*

published in 1653 a separate edition of the *Distinctiones* in small duodecimo format. In doing so, Arnoldus clearly meant to present Maccovius' work to a broader public and, especially recommended it to the Reformed ministers in Little Poland, the Polish center of Reformed strength, Great Poland and Lithuania. It is written in a style, which is very readable through its illustrations taken from daily life, and, at the same time, it provided a good overview of his thinking. In 1658 a Dutch translation of his *Distinctiones* appeared, written by the Dutch minister Theodorus van der Meer²³ that /28/ was reprinted in 1666 and 1681.²⁴ Two hundred years later Maccovius' *Distinctions* must still have been popular, for an unaltered edition of this translation was published in 1875 at Leeuwarden.

Maccovius' *Distinctiones*: genre and content

The *Distinctiones* were probably meant for the benefit of students trained in the *artes* faculty and starting with their theological education. It was a classroom book, gathered by Arnoldus from Maccovius' manuscripts. In the preface Arnoldus wrote that he had compared various current manuscripts with his own copy and that he had mended the *errata* that had crept in, probably due to the neglect of copiers. In addition, he wrote that he considered the publication of the *Distinctiones* as a forerunner of the *Maccovius Redivivus*.

Since the Middle Ages and later on writing on distinctions was not an unknown genre. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Roman Catholic authors like Francesco Suárez and Reformed theologians like Johann Heinrich Alsted had published on this subject. No wonder, for making clear distinctions (*distinguere*) was the heart of the scholastic tradition. It consisted of disentangling of senses of ambiguous words and terms used in theological discourse. The best of these works profited by the results of the historical and philological research that had been undertaken by Renaissance humanists in the preceding century. They

(27 pages). A Dutch translation was published in 1666²²; and, finally, the *Anti-Socinus* (170 pages). The second edition of the *Maccovius Redivivus* was published in 1654 at Franeker and contained besides the works of the first edition the following treatises: *Distinctiones et regulae theologicae ac philosophicae*, and an expanded version of the *Theologia polemica*, fragments of his lectures on Arminius' polemic with William Perkins (*Fragmenta praelectionum contra Arminium pro Perkinsio*), his *Theologia quaestionum*, and some fragments of his lectures against the writings of Socinus and, finally, an appendix on Atheists (*Appendix de Atheis*).

²³ Theodorus van der Meer, born in Wormer (1621) was a Dutch reformed minister in Wijdenes (1650). In 1657 he was dismissed and became rector of the Latijnse school in Amsterdam. See F. A. van Lieburg, *Repertorium van Nederlandse hervormde predikanten tot 1816* (Dordrecht 1996), p. 161.

²⁴ The Dutch translation, entitled: *De Gods-geleerde onderscheydingen en De Godts-geleerde, en wijs-geerige regulen* was published at Amsterdam in 1658 by Servaes Witteling(h), boekverkooper by de hoek van de Paapenbrug-steeg aan de Warmoesstraat. The 1666 Amsterdam edition was also printed by Servaes Witteling, but then he had apparently moved to 't Gravestraatje in a house called 't Gestrikt Schrijf-Boek. The 1681 edition was printed in Rotterdam.

were based on familiarity with the original text of the Bible and that of the classical writings on theology.²⁵

The *Distinctiones* edited by Arnoldus belongs to the same genre of *Distinctiones*. It consists of 23 chapters comprising 198 pages and runs through all the *loci communes* of Reformed dogmatics. The genre of *loci communes theologiae*, commonplaces or, better, universal topics of theology, was the typical form of the scholastic Protestant system. They were originally doctrinal expositions written as portions of commentaries of Scripture, for the sake of grounding dogmatics. They pointed directly from an exegetically grounded formulation to the gathering of doctrinal topics into a theological compendium or system. As Muller has pointed out, these topics were elicited from Scripture and were given their content on the basis of rather painstaking reflection on Scripture and tradition, common to the theological systems of the medieval period and to the systems of Protestant theology, beginning with Melancthon and Hyperius.²⁶ In addition, Muller has /29/ indicated that the internal dynamics of the *locus* method reflected an interest a *historica series ordo*, which accounts for the arrangement of the *loci* which, for that reason, are not strictly deducible either from one another or from the doctrine of God.²⁷

In his *Distinctiones* Maccovius consciously followed the traditional order of the *loci* and the historical *series* of the biblical witness, as is clearly indicated by the movement of the *Distinctiones* from Scripture (Law and Gospel), to the triune God, his predestination, to creation and providence, human nature, free will and sin, redemption in Christ, the covenant, justification and generation, good works, the church and the sacraments, and the Last Things.

Finally, the last part of the *Distinctiones* presents a *centuria* or ten decades of the most important distinctions (*distinctiones generalissimae*) to be observed by theologians when doing systematic theology. Each decade he compared with a maniple of soldiers and just as soldiers are divided into certain ranks and under different banners, so here too the several distinctions should be placed under a common banner. In this manner Maccovius presents a ‘tool kit for theologians’ in the introductory section of which he pointed out why academic theologians should employ the best of philosophical methods and techniques of their time. It was for the purpose of gaining as much clarity as possible concerning the content of the major

²⁵ See for Roman Catholic theologians: Francis Suarez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (Salamanca, 1597), Disp. VII, in which he discusses the various kinds of distinctions. For the Reformed tradition, see J.H. Alsted *Distinctiones per universam theologiam, sumtae ex canone sacrarum literarum and classicis theologis*, Francofurti: typis Pauli Jacobi, sumptibus Coradi Eifridi, 1616.

²⁶ Muller, *PRRD*, II (sec. ed.), p. 514-515.

²⁷ See R.A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), pp. 57-60.

concepts, presuppositions, and tenets of their theological commitment, as well as the many connections that exist among them.

Each topic of the *Distinctiones* is divided in definitions, distinctions or divisions, and rules. They are also typographically visible in the *Distinctiones*. In each of the twenty-three chapters and the ten decades the distinctions are printed in large Roman type and most of the time they are followed by commentaries from Scripture and illustration taken from daily life in smaller print. They include answers to objections of opponents, especially Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Arminians, and, most of all, the Socinian position (C. Vorstius). At the same time they clarify unknown and ambiguous words and phrases, defend the truth of the definitions and distinctions, and confute the objections against it. Moreover, many distinctions used in metaphysics, logic and rethoric are classified into equivalent or equipollent, identical and coincidental pairs. Equipollent (*aequipollentia*) metaphysical distinctions are, for example: essence & existence, abstract & concrete, idea & subject, form & the thing formed. Identical logical distinctions (*idem*) are, for example, univocal & equivocal, truly & seemingly, synonym & homonym, proper & improper, really & nominally. Rhetorical distinctions that coincide (*coincidunt*) are, for example, broadly & strictly, loosely & concisely, general & special, popular & philosophical etc.

In this way Maccovius shows that conceptual analysis — making distinctions and looking at their implications — is a requisite for a sound and solid way of /30/ doing theology. Neat distinctions, moreover, are necessary, not only for the theologian, but they are also required for the coherence and consistency of the doctrine of the church (*ordo doctrinae*). The order of doctrine should not be like the Lesbian of ancient Greek, i.e. an inaccurate measuring rod used by ancient craftsman for measuring an irregular object. No, the order of doctrine has to be an accurate one, like the balance of Critolaus (2nd century BC), a Greek philosopher and pupil of Aristotle, who rejected rhetoric and did not consider it as a science: rhetoric was disastrous for finding philosophical truth.²⁸ Or the order of Christian doctrine, Maccovius insists, must conform to rules like those of the sculptor Polykleitos (450-420 BC), who wrote a treatise, now lost, on the harmony of ideal proportions.²⁹ Or still better: the distinctions can be compared with a Lydian Stone, which was the exact measure of alloys in ancient times.³⁰

Sources

²⁸ Larousse, *Dictionnaire Universel*, V, pp. 557-558.

²⁹ *Distinctiones*, *Decuria* 4: 'Ordo doctrinae est vel sapientia vel potentia. Ille est accuratus tanquam libra Critolai & regula Polycleiti; iste est popularis & veluti regula Lesbia.'

³⁰ *Distinctiones*, *Centuria distinctionum generalissimarum, praecognita*, p. 157.

When it comes to sources used in the *Distinctiones* one can easily see that Maccovius is deeply indebted to his predecessors. Of the Church fathers Augustine is quoted most frequently. Discussing in the first chapter of his *Distinctiones* the Holy Scripture as the cognitive foundation of theology and its authority, Maccovius defends against Roman Catholic authors the thesis that the famous dictum of Augustine (“I would not believe the Gospel if the authority of the Church did not move me”) cannot be used for claiming the authority of the church over and against Scripture.³¹ This Augustinian orientation is also visible in the three or four state-model by which the different situations in which man finds himself in relation to God and the good are described.³² It also comes to the fore in the chapters on predestination, justification and the sacraments (the distinction between *res significans* and *res significata*)³³, and in a long quotation from the *Causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute causarum libri tres* (third. ed., London 1618) of the late medieval Augustinian archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Bradwardine (ca 1290-1349), which deals with the story of the hermit and the angel. It is presented by Maccovius as being helpful to solve existential problems of human experience in the mysterious ways of divine providence.³⁴

From the medieval scholastic tradition Maccovius does not quote *expressis verbis* any particular author, but it is clear that many times he refers positively to the distinctions developed by the medieval scholastics, especially those of Thomas Aquinas regarding the doctrine of divine attributes. But the exposition and (sometimes) criticism of medieval distinctions are for Maccovius but a means to /31/ the formulation of his own judgment and the construction of Reformed doctrine. Therefore, his approach to medieval definitions and distinctions can be best qualified as eclectic. It is an eclecticism that critically tests all theories, whether ancient or contemporary, and assembles the conclusions reached into a synthesis marked by solidity and doctrinal coherence.

This eclecticism Maccovius undoubtedly inherited from his teacher Bartholomaeus Keckermann (1571-1609).³⁵ Although he was a late starter Maccovius received a solid education in the liberal arts at the famous gymnasium at Gdansk (Danzig) under the tutelage of its rector Keckermann (from at least 1604 until 1607 or 1608). Keckermann had studied at

³¹ *Distinctiones*, I. 8..

³² *Distinctiones*, VI (On Creation), 13, 14, 15, 17; IX, 1, 2 (On Free Choice).

³³ *Distinctiones*, XIII, 16 (On good works); XVII. 12 (On the nature of sacraments).

³⁴ *Distinctiones* VIII. 11 (the story of the hermit in Bradwardine’s *Causa Dei*)

³⁵ For Keckermann, see: W.H. Van Zuylen, *Bartholomäus Keckermann. Sein Leben und Wirken* (Inaugural-Dissertation (Borna-Leipzig, 1934); R.A. Muller, ‘Vera Philosophia cum sacra theologia nusquam pugnat:

Heidelberg where he was influenced by the work of the Thomist Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590) who played a key role in introducing the work of the leading Paduan Aristotelian, Giacomo Zabarella (1533-1589), into Reformed theology. In his philosophical teaching Keckermann tried to avoid the limitations of Peripatetic and the Ramist tradition. In this manner he attempted to organize and develop a complete protestant curriculum, a unified body of knowledge.³⁶ He defined theology as an operative discipline (*disciplina operatrix*) predominated by the analytical method. Whereas metaphysics discusses God as Being, theology presents God as the end (*finis*) of all things. According to Keckermann the end of theology is not the contemplation but the enjoyment of God, *the fruitio Dei*.³⁷ It was Keckermann who had a major influence on Maccovius' view on the relationship between theology and philosophy.³⁸ But although Maccovius owed much to his former teacher, he refuted the latter's view on predestination, because Keckermann excluded reprobation from predestination.³⁹

Of other Reformed theologians Petrus Martyr Vermigli is positively quoted several times in the *Distinctione*, for example, in the chapter on sin. Here Maccovius praises the exegetical work of Martyr on the first chapters of Genesis.⁴⁰ Calvin, however, is criticized because of his conception of God's absolute power. According to Maccovius, Calvin "seems to deny that there is /32/ absolute power in God, but — this is wrong. For in that case Luke 3: 8 ('God is able to raise up children of Abraham out of these stones') and Matthew 26: 53 ('Could I not pray to my Father and He would give me more than twelve legions of angels') cannot not be explained."⁴¹ Theodore Beza's *Annotationes Majores* to the New Testament on body and soul,⁴² the Heidelberg Catechism on the *satisfactio poenalis*⁴³ and Scharpius' exposition on the imputation of sin⁴⁴ are mentioned in full agreement. He appreciates Piscator's exposition

Keckermann on Philosophy, Theology, and the Problem of Double Truth', in: *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford 2003), 122-136.

³⁶ For a survey of Keckermann's philosophical method, see Howard Hotson, *Johann Heinrich Alsted 1588-1638. Between Renaissance, Reformation, and Universal Reform*, Oxford 2000, 29-34.

³⁷ Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *Systema s.s. Theologiae*, I, 1, in *Opera*, vol. 2, at end, second pagination, cols. 68-69: 'Finis theologiae est ipsa salus, de qua in sequentibus agitur. Salus sive felicitas, est fruitio Dei tanquam summi boni.'

³⁸ Cf. Maccovius' definition of theology: 'Theologia est disciplina bene ac beate vivendi in aeternum (...): nil enim revelatur, nil cognoscitur in religione Christiana, quod ad hunc finem non tendat, ut serio pietati studeamus. Itaque illi vehementer errant, qui theologia scientiis quarum finis praecipuus est contemplatio, analogon esse statuerunt, tota enim ad praxin tendit.' See Maccovius, *Theses Theologicae per locos communes in academia Franekerana disputatae. Pars altera*, Franeker 1641, Disp. I (p. 1).

³⁹ *Distinctiones*, VII. 16.

⁴⁰ *Distinctiones*, X (addition on Martyr's exegesis of Genesis 2: 17)

⁴¹ *Distinctiones* IV. 23 (the absolute power of God)

⁴² *Distinctiones* VI. 12 (rejection of tripartite distinction in anthropology between body, soul and spirit).

⁴³ *Distinctiones* XI. 23 (the state of man after the fall)

⁴⁴ *Distinctiones* X. 3 (on the imputation of sin of Eve to women)

of the analogy of faith — defined by The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, The Decalogue and the whole Catechism — as the first means of interpreting Scripture.⁴⁵ But on predestination he completely disagrees with the German-Reformed theologian from Herborn. In the eyes of Maccovius, Piscator made a terrible mistake by his willingness to speak of sin as a necessary effect of reprobation. We already saw that Maccovius ardently denied this position because, if reprobation were the cause of sin, then God would become the author of sin. Thus, God would no longer be permitting sin but actually making it occur.⁴⁶

From all this it might be clear that Maccovius did not limit himself to the mere repetition of the theories of others, nor did he accept any doctrine for the sole reason that it had been advocated by an authority such as Calvin. Maccovius carefully developed his thought by showing very clearly how one question relates to the other, what the core of the problem is and how the root of the difficulty can be uncovered. At the same time, however, after proposing his views, he always gave his opponents another chance to urge their arguments. By his method and his recourse to Scripture, he contributed substantially to the advancement of orthodox Reformed theology.

Clarification of some terms and concepts in the *Distinctiones*

The last section of the *Distinctiones* dealing with 'one hundred most general distinctions' is characteristic for Maccovius' way of doing theology. It is typical both of his method and of his theological thought; many of his characteristic doctrines are briefly treated in it, or at least are indicated. In this section we confine ourselves to a discussion of those concepts and terms that in earlier research gave rise to the misunderstanding that Maccovius was presenting a deterministic and a metaphysically controlled predestinarian system. The relevant concepts and terms to be discussed in the following sections can be roughly divided into **/33/** three groups: first ontological concepts; secondly anthropological terms, and thirdly logical distinctions. In addition to some terms and distinctions that occur in the *Distinctiones*, I use some terms that are common in modern philosophy of religion, since I find them useful in explaining Maccovius' thought. In fact, recent philosophy of religion largely draws on the tradition of medieval and post-reformation scholasticism. This procedure, however, does not exclude an interpretation of the same concepts within their own context in the *Distinctiones*.

⁴⁵ *Distinctiones* I. 32: VII. 21 (the importance of the analogy of faith for interpreting Scripture)

⁴⁶ *Distinctiones* VII. 21.

a. *Ontological Concepts.*

At Franeker Maccovius, following Keckermann, developed a course and manual on metaphysics (as well on logic and ethics) in which he rejected the approach of Suárez to metaphysics. For Suárez metaphysics included a rational doctrine of God on the ground that God is being.⁴⁷ In his textbook on metaphysics which he taught for some years at the philosophy department at Franeker University, Maccovius excluded the doctrine of God from the metaphysical discussion of being in general.⁴⁸ His theology, however, shows the active usage of philosophical categories in order to articulate distinctive Christian assumptions concerning reality⁴⁹ It concerns the fundamental insight in the relation between God as the Creator and the world as creation. In the *Distinctiones* this relation is framed in terms of God as the First Cause (*prima causa*) and creatures as the secondary causes (*causae secundae*). At the same time, Maccovius indicated that this causal terminology did not imply a “manipulative” relationship. God as the Creator, initiates, comprehends, sustains and governs all that exists, while leaving room for contingency and the own causal activity of his creatures. God does not only stand at the beginning, but is present to every moment of time in providing life, powers, and possibilities for action. At the same time Maccovius underscored the fact that in this relationship God is independent of creatures, while these are dependent of God.⁵⁰

In his *Distinctiones* Maccovius also uses what in terms of modern logic is called modal ontology. Modal ontology is a branch of philosophy that studies the /34/ aspects of reality: actuality, possibility, impossibility, necessity and contingency. It elaborates on important achievements from medieval scholasticism, notably on the thought of John Duns Scotus and similar thinkers. In this ontology, the distinction between necessity and contingency is very important. Maccovius distinguishes several forms of necessity: natural or absolute necessity,

⁴⁷ See Muller, *PRRD*, I, p. 390.

⁴⁸ Maccovius, *Meta physica ad usum quaestionum in philosophia ac theologia adornata & applicata: tertium edita, et explicata, vindicata, refutata per Adrianum Heereboord*, Lugduni-Batavorum, ex officina Francisci Hackii, 1658, pp. 2: ‘Metaphysica agit de Ente quatenus Ens est, specificative, sed non reduplicative; sc. quatenus Ens est idem, quod explicat rationem Entis in genere sive ut sic: hinc aperte convincitur, de Deo non esse agendum in Metaph. quia mera est contradictio, agere de Ente ut sic sive in genere, & tamen de Ente tali vel tali, uti Deo, &c.’ (annotation of Heereboord).

⁴⁹ *Distinctiones*, *Centuria*, praecognita, 10: ‘Duae sunt disciplinae modorum magistrae, Physica & Logica: illa modum essendi, cognoscendi; haec modos predicandi exponit, proponit.’

⁵⁰ *Distinctiones*, VIII, 1: ‘Providentia Dei occupatur in efficiendo, conservando, promovendo ad agendum, & cum agere concurrento.’ Cf. *Distinctiones*, VIII, 3: ‘Alia est necessitas immutabilitatis, alia coactionis. Fluit distinctio haec ex priori, utimur autem ea potissimum contra eos, qui negant aut contingentiam aut libertatem consistere posse cum necessitate.’

i.e. necessity inherent in the essential nature of a thing.⁵¹ Second, physical necessity, i.e. necessity deriving from an outward cause, which forces someone or something, which necessity is also called necessity of coercion (*necessitas coactionis*).⁵² Third, he also uses the concept of implicative necessity: for, example, if the intellect judges an act to be good, it is rationally necessary that the will follows and assents.⁵³ The fourth form of necessity is moral necessity: a good act cannot but be approved of, while a bad act cannot be but rejected. It is presupposed that, if, nevertheless, a bad act is performed, this happens under the pretext of its being seemingly good for some purpose.⁵⁴ The fifth form of necessity is the necessity of immutability: a necessity on supposition of God's decree that encompasses all that happens in the world. Maccovius, like the medieval scholastics, makes it clear that this kind of necessity is a necessity of the consequence, which does not impose an absolute necessity on the thing itself.⁵⁵

The basic distinction occurring in Maccovius *Distinctiones* is the distinction between absolute necessity (or *necessitas consequentis*) on the one hand, and hypothetical necessity (or *necessitas consequentiae*) on the other hand. On the basis of this distinction, Maccovius, following the medieval and Protestant scholastics, could point out how necessity and contingency are compatible instead of squarely contradictory:

There is a distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity of the divine will. Necessity is absolute in respect of God's internal works (*opera ad intra*). It is hypothetical regarding his external works (*opera ad extra*). This distinction occurs in almost all the scholastics. It can easily correct the error of those who think that freedom is not compatible with necessity. For all things God works outside of Him, He does with the hypothetical necessity of his decree, and yet He does them freely.⁵⁶

From this quotation it becomes clear that Maccovius did not accept the claim of his opponents that the divine decree destroyed contingency and freedom of human acts. The fact of God

⁵¹ *Distinctiones*, Decuria IX, 5.

⁵² *Distinctiones*, Decuria IX, 5.

⁵³ *Distinctiones*, IX, 8.

⁵⁴ *Distinctiones*, IX, 7.

⁵⁵ *Distinctiones*, VIII, 3.

⁵⁶ *Distinctiones*, VIII, 4: 'Necessitas alia est absoluta, alia ex hypothesi voluntatis divinae. Absoluta est ratione operum Dei ad intra. Ex hypothesi est ratione operum Dei ad extra. Distinctio haec occurrit apud omnes fere Scholasticos. Caeterum hic facile potest corrigi error eorum, qui putant libertatem non posse consistere cum necessitate; quoniam Deus omnia quae ad extra facit, facit necessario ex hypothesi decreti sui, & tamen libere.'

decreeing some action does not impose an absolute necessity upon it.⁵⁷ A neglect of this distinction would entail either a /35/ necessitarian, hard determinist worldview or an unstable, arbitrary ontology of mere contingency. Maccovius maintained a refined balance of necessity and contingency.

b. Anthropological Terms

Important for understanding the doctrine of free choice in Maccovius' oeuvre is the anthropological framework of Reformed scholasticism, explained in the *Distinctiones*. It consists of two basic perspectives, which together yield the relevant consequences for human freedom. In modern terms we can describe the first perspective as the *essential* level of anthropology, the second perspective as the *accidental* level. The first perspective regards man's essential make-up. Here, Maccovius uses the following terms. First of all, man is a mind-gifted nature (*creatura rationalis*), which term implies that man is basically viewed as a rational creature. This simply means that it belongs to man's essence to have the capacity of knowing, understanding, judging and willing. Although Maccovius acknowledges the distortion of man's intellect (and will) by sin⁵⁸, he does not endorse an irrationalist view of man. In this connection it is important to note that sometimes he uses the term 'nature' (*natura*) in different senses. Basically, he uses 'nature' to refer to the whole of essential properties of man; in a secondary sense, it can signify the accidental state of man after the fall in which man's nature is not destroyed but corrupted.⁵⁹ Further, Maccovius uses the term 'soul' (*anima*). In modern ears it may sound strange to describe the soul as the principle of action, but Maccovius did not intend to hypostasize the soul as a separate entity, but to indicate the relevant aspect of man's personality in the act of knowing and willing. Finally, attention must be paid to the terms 'potency', 'disposition' and 'act' (*facultas-habitus-act*). Herein, Maccovius, like the other Reformed scholastics, followed the traditional Aristotelian 'faculty psychology', according to which the term *facultas* refers to the capacity of knowing

⁵⁷ *Distinctiones*, VIII, 12: 'Cum providentia Dei efficaci consistit contingentia & libertas. Quia lapsus passeris contingens est & tamen non sine Dei providentia. Ita quod Rehoboam responsum dedit senioribus minus gratum contingens fuit & tamen ratione Dei provisum. 1 Reg. 12, 15.'

⁵⁸ *Distinctiones*, X, 14: 'Peccatum non tantum in voluntatum cadit, sed etiam in intellectum. Sunt aliqui ex Theologis, qui putant non cadere peccatum, nisi in voluntate. At inepte. Nam error mentis etiam peccatum est, ac hic est in intellectu.' efficienter ; priori modo peccata possunt dici voluntaria, ratione voluntatis, a qua determinantur ; posteriori, ratione intellectus, a qua prima dubitatio procedit.'

⁵⁹ *Distinctiones*, VI, 12: 'Hominis tantum duae partes essentialis. corpus scilicet & anima. Lique hoc ex Matth. 10.' See also *Distinctiones*, IX, 4: '[Libertas] a coactione cadit in omnem creaturam rationalem'

and willing, *actus* to the concrete act and *habitus* to the disposition, which is formed by repeated actions that result in a certain pattern of behavior.

In this context the term “free choice” (*liberum arbitrium*) used by Maccovius should be understood. It is of extreme import in order to understand Maccovius’ anthropology. By way of example we can point to chapter VI on creation (*De Creatione*) and chapter IX on free choice (*De Libero Arbitrio*) in the *Distinctiones*. Here the terms “choice”, “will” and “intellect” are in the center of the discussion in which Maccovius explicitly identifies the intellectual and volitional components /36/ in free choice. In free choice, he insists, the will always follows (*sequitur*) the intellect. The intellect apprehends the object and attaches to it the true or false qualifier and passes a judgment concerning the goodness or badness of the object or action. The will follows this judgment and makes its own choice. Here, it is important to note that Maccovius explicitly maintains that the will is not determined (*determinari*) by the intellect when it follows (*sequitur*) the intellect: the will always keeps its own task of choosing.⁶⁰

The second perspective or the *accidental* level is formed by the famous four-state model. It describes the different situations in which man finds himself in relation to God and the good. The basic components of the model occur in Augustine, while Bernard of Clairvaux gave it an influential elaboration. The model is not only based on the historical sequence (*series historica*) of the biblical narrative, but it also contains an indication of the structural differences in man’s situation. The first state is the state of integrity before the fall (*status integritatis*). In this state man was created good by God but had the possibility to choose and will the bad or not. The second state is the state of the fall or the state of corruption (*status lapsus* or *status corruptionis*). It is exemplified in sinners who have not been renewed by God’s grace. They can only sin and have no possibility in them selves to do the spiritual good. Still, they have not lost the essential freedom of will and choice: although they are bound to sin, they sin willingly and by their own choice.⁶¹ The third state, the state of grace or renewal (*status reparationis*) is structurally characterised by God’s grace, justification and regeneration. Hereby, man is no longer a slave of sin, but receives a new principle of life, the Holy Spirit, by which he can start to do the spiritual good willingly, although his obedience in this state is partial. In the fourth state, the state of glory (*status glorificationis*), the habit of

⁶⁰ *Distinctiones*, IX, 7: ‘Voluntas semper fertur in bonum sub ratione boni. Sed bonum duplex est, verum vel apparens, nam saepe videtur bonum intellectui quod malum alias est, & in illud fertur voluntas, sub specie veri.’

⁶¹ *Distinctiones* IX, 4.: ‘Dicimus voluntarium [peccatum] esse dupliciter dici, vel terminative, vel efficienter ; priori modo peccata possunt dici voluntaria, ratione voluntatis, a qua determinantur; posteriori, ratione intellectus, a quo prima dubitatio procedit.’

doing the spiritual good is so strong that human will has no longer the (actual) possibility of choosing the bad, but will be consistent in choosing the good.⁶²

In regard of Maccovius' doctrine of free choice this four-state model is of utmost importance for understanding the two basic concepts of freedom used by Maccovius. The first is called freedom of contrariety (*libertas contrarietatis*) and the freedom of contradiction (*libertas contradictionis*). The freedom of contrariety is used by Maccovius to indicate the possibility of the will to choose this or that object. The freedom of contradiction refers to the possibility of the will to either choose or reject /37/ a certain object.⁶³ The point Maccovius wants to make with this distinction is that at all levels of the four state-model the will acts out of itself not being driven by an inward or outward determining cause (*coactione*), and that the freedom of contradiction can never be lost. In other words: man is always free, but not always good. So, Maccovius does affirm that there is some basic freedom of the will after the fall. If this were not the case, the will and thus human being would cease to exist.⁶⁴

We can safely say that Maccovius helped to reintroduce the theme of the *liberum arbitrium* to the agenda of Reformed theology. Moreover, his foundational discussions concerning necessity and contingency make clear that much of Maccovius' work counters both the typical contemporary misunderstanding of him as a proponent of an excessively deterministic theology and the equally typical misconception of his thought as metaphysically controlled predestinarian system.⁶⁵

c. Logical Distinctions

Logic in the sense of a philosophical discipline that studies the structure of propositions and arguments by investigating their formal validity plays a major role in Maccovius' way of doing theology. All theologians were educated in the *artes* faculty first, including

⁶² *Distinctiones*, VI, 17: 'Aliter se habuit liberum arbitrium in statu integritatis, aliter in statu lapsus, aliter in statu reparationis, aliter in statu glorificationis. In statu integritatis potuit velle & non velle; erat enim natura sua ad utrumque habile, ac proinde liberum erat a miseratione & coactione. In statu lapsus ita se habet, ut non possit bonum spirituale velle, nec morale bene, potest tamen bonum spirituale rejicere & morale non facere, itaque liberum est a coactione, non autem a miseria. In statu reparationis habet se homo ad utrumque quidem, sed ex parte liberum, a miseria & coactione. In statu glorificationis non potest nisi bonum; liberum itaque erit omni modo a miseria & coactione.' Cf. *Distinctiones*, IX, 1.

⁶³ *Distinctiones*, IX, 3: 'Libertas est vel contradictionis, vel contrarietatis. Contrarietatis est, quae se habet ad bonum vel malum; contradictionis est, quae se habet ad unum idemque objectum vel acceptansum vel rejiciendum.'

⁶⁴ *Distinctiones*, IX, 6: 'Voluntas cogi non potest. Si enim cogitur, vel quod vellet nollet, vel quod nollet vellet. Et sic voluntas esset noluntas.'

philosophical disciplines like logic, before they were admitted to the study of theology. Naturally, this preparatory knowledge was utilized in theological education. Many concepts and terms discussed above contained or implied logical distinctions already. Maccovius' thought, therefore, cannot be understood without an awareness of their employment in logics.

First, we can point, by way of example, to the term *ratio* used in the *Distinctiones*. We might be tempted to interpret the Latin term *ratio* immediately as 'reason' in the sense of our rational capacity. The scholastic usage of *ratio*, however, is somewhat different. The most common nuances of meaning are: argument, aspect, concept, ground, reason or account. It is important to identify in all cases the relevant meaning of this term in its context.

A second example of a logical distinction used by Maccovius is that between first act (*in actu primo*) and second act (*in actu secundo*). It parallels the anthropological distinction between potency (*potentia*) and act (*actus*). Abstracted from a concrete volition, the will is capable of willing opposite acts. Involved in a concrete act, the will cannot simultaneously will opposite things.⁶⁶

A third example of Maccovius' use of logical distinctions is the distinction between the compounded and divided sense of a proposition (*sensus compostius*, /38/ *sensus divisus*). This distinction became a basic tool of propositional analysis, which is generally associated with medieval modal logic, i.e. the logic of necessity and possibility. From the fourteenth century on, it became standard when considering modal inferences, including modal syllogisms. Maccovius uses this distinction in the doctrine of providence in which he discusses the *quaestio* whether all things that happen, happen necessarily. According to Maccovius, the problem can only be solved if the language of divine providence is not taken in its compounded sense (including the divine decree), but in its divided sense in which two opposites are possible. A standard example used in medieval logic is: "Socrates sits and runs." In terms of the doctrine of free choice: "Adam chooses to sin and Adam does not choose to sin." As it stands, the proposition contains an apparent contradiction. This is the *sensus compostus*. In the *sensus divisus* the proposition runs: 'Socrates sits and it is possible that Socrates runs' or "Adam chooses to sin and it is possible that he does not choose to sin." Applied to the doctrine of providence it means that *in sensu composito* you have to say that all things happen necessary, but *in sensu diviso* you might say that all things outside God are

⁶⁵ See also R.A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics. The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*. Vol. I: *Prolegomena to Theology* (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 2003, sec. ed.), p. 346.

⁶⁶ *Distinctiones*, Decuria, 8: 'Actu primo & actu secundo, actu signato & exercito, scilicet potentia activa, forma & operatione, essentia & emanatione, proprietate essentiali & virtute actuali aequipollent.'

contingent.⁶⁷ Thus the distinction between divided and compounded sense is drawn into Christian doctrine in such a way as to render it distinct from the necessitarianism of ancient Aristotelianism and all forms of determinism that made God the cause of sin.

A last example of a logical distinction used by Maccovius is that between *categoremata* and *suncategoremata*, a distinction developed by medieval terminist logicians consisting in a contextual approach of propositions and the analysis of how terms signify in different propositional contexts.⁶⁸ Categoremata are words like nouns and verbs. They signify the things and actions they stand for by themselves. Suncategoremata are part of speech like prepositions, conjunctions and adjectives. They have no signification standing alone and acquire meaning only within propositions, where they modify categoremata or specify the relations between the other terms in the proposition. Maccovius illustrates this by discussing the term 'solus' that plays such an important role in the protestant doctrine of justification. When taken as a categorema 'solus' means 'separate', taken as a suncategorema it means 'only' or 'merely (*solum, dumtaxat*). Faith alone justifies in a suncategorematic sense, but in a categorematic sense faith does not justify, i.e. /39/ faith separated from works. Maccovius compares the difference between a categorematic and a suncategorematic use of words with eyes that see alone (*solus*) but not separated (*solum*) from the body.⁶⁹

Concluding remarks

These few examples make clear what Maccovius was doing in his *Distinctiones*. He presented to his students a broad technical apparatus by which they could go through all the topics of Reformed theology explaining all the basic concepts and building blocks of the Reformed system. He borrows a great number of them from the Aristotelian tradition, which can also be found in logical and metaphysical textbooks of the seventeenth century by authors as Keckermann, Alsted and Burgersdijk. But, as we saw, not all the terms and distinctions used were evidently Aristotelian. In the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance logic was not only far expanded beyond the boundaries at which Aristotle had left it, but also its inner

⁶⁷ Maccovius, *Distinctiones*, VIII, 2: 'Omnia sunt necessaria in sensu composito, non in sensu diviso.'

⁶⁸ See L.M. de Rijk, *Middeleeuwse wijsbegeerte. Traditie en vernieuwing*, Assen 1981 (2nd ed.), pp.

⁶⁹ Maccovius, *Distinctiones, Decuria IX*, 10: 'Solus accipitur categorematicè & syncategorematicè. Illo modo est ac separatus, hoc modo idem est ac solum, sive duntaxat; ut, oculus videt solus, hoc est, tantum, sed non solus, hoc est, separatus a corpore: sic sola fides justificat, ut excludantur opera, scilicet syncategorematicè; sed non sola, hoc est, separata ab operibus.' See also, *Distinctiones*, XIII, 8: 'Fides sola justificat, non solitaria.'

structure was transformed.⁷⁰ Maccovius used this modified ‘Christian Aristotelianism’ — a term recently reverified by Richard Muller⁷¹ — in a certain context and it was this context that not only supplied the meaning of the terms and distinctions but also Maccovius’ own intention in using them. It seems that Maccovius’ main intention in writing his *Distinctiones* was to endorse in an academic context the orthodox Reformed understanding of Scripture, especially in its soteriological meaning, the *veritas gratiae*, as Cocceius already observed. We should not forget that Maccovius had to face many opponents of the Reformed faith as he was growing up in Poland and attending the various universities of Europe: Socinians, Jesuits, Lutherans and Anabaptists. In Franeker he felt the need to teach theology in a way that was conducive to the contemporary situation and, at the same time, in continuity with the ongoing Augustinian tradition of the Christian church.

Perhaps this was one of the reasons that some of his more conservative Reformed contemporaries rejected his project as being highly innovative by developing such an elaborated set of distinctions and rules for theology. But in /40/ confrontation with the strategies and the highly developed terminological apparatus of the Catholic, Socinian and Arminian opponents, it was his deep conviction that Reformed theologians should also have definitional skills as a real practical help for doing theology on an academic level, as well as to help the reader of Scripture. In more than one place in his *Distinctiones*, Maccovius insisted that logical distinctions were not only needed for maintaining the defensibility of Reformed doctrine, and for refuting opponents but also that these distinctions were needed for the sake of a better understanding of the biblical witness. In the *Distinctiones*, this intention was illustrated by many references to the exegetical tradition of his days and by the fact that the topic dealing with Holy Scripture as the cognitive foundation of theology is the first and by far the largest chapter of this work, including 23 pages and 45 sections. True wisdom, he thinks, lies in the Christian revelation, given in Scripture, which he takes to govern all reflection on God and Christianity. Only ignorance Of Maccovius’ writings could lead to castigate him for thinking that philosophy is superior to revelation.

⁷⁰ Maccovius, *Centuria distinctionum*, praecognita, 13: ‘Neque Plato, neque Aristoteles possunt hic distinguere, ut habet proverbium, in quibus quae vera sunt secundum tres gradus ... nullum admittunt distinctionem.’ See also Willem van Asselt, ‘Scholasticism Protestant and Catholic: Medieval Sources and Methods in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought’, Judith Frishman, Willemien Otten and Gerard Rouwhorst (eds.), *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism*, Leiden-Boston 2004, pp. 457-470.

⁷¹ See R. A. Muller, ‘Reformation, Orthodoxy, “Christian Aristotelianism”, and the Electicism of Early Modern Philosophy’, *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 81/3 (2001), pp. 306-325.