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## Peter Abelard. Bibliography on His theology and the doctrine of the Trinity

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Reprinted as Essay VI in: M. L. Colish, *Studies in Scholasticism*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.  
"This paper supports the claim that what "nominalism" meant to twelfth-century thinkers was the doctrine of the univocal signification of nouns and verbs, with their oblique or tensed forms conveying consignification of the things or actions they signify in the nominative case or present tense, respectively. The paper shows that both Peter Abelard and Peter Lombard called upon this doctrine in their argument over whether God can do better than He does, indicating that nominalism so defined has a perceived utility for exponents of differing logical and theological persuasions at the time."

- "With respect to the Lombard's contribution to the history of nominalism in the twelfth century, then, we may offer three conclusions. First, from our consideration of Abelard's case, it is clear that the *opinio Nominalium* could be, and was, yoked to a post-Aristotelian kind of logic. From our consideration of the Lombard's case, it is equally clear that the *opinio Nominalium* could just as easily be yoked to a mode of reasoning deemed capable of yielding cogent ontological conclusions. In this respect, the fact that a twelfth-century thinker espouses the *opinio Nominalium* does not mean that he is automatically or necessarily required to embrace one rather than the other of these different conceptions of logic. Second, it was not just the fact that the Lombard was a theologian but his particular agenda as a theologian who sought to affirm God's omnipotence and God's essence as the transcendent metaphysical reality that accounts for both his borrowings from Abelard and his more fundamental hostility to Abelard in this area. And, finally, thanks to the rapid and enduring success of the Lombard's *Sentences*' as a textbook, he was able to place both his position on divine transcendence, the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power, and the *opinio Nominalium* with which he bolstered these teachings squarely before the eyes of his scholastic contemporaries and successors." (pp. 155-156.)
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Reprinted as Essay VII in: M. L. Colish, *Studies in Scholasticism*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.  
Abstract: "As a theologian no less than as a logician, Peter Abelard has been hailed as the father of scholasticism. Both in the rules for critiquing authorities laid out at the beginning of his *Sic et non* and in his challenge in the *Dialogus*, that believers need to bolster their creeds with rational arguments, he takes to the field as the emblematic opponent of Bernard of Clairvaux, their standoff representing the last ditch effort of monastic obscurantism to halt the advance of scholastic enlightenment. In this essay, I wish to question this standard picture of Abelard the theologian. Despite his insistence on the need to apply reason and critical analysis to the Christian tradition, his project turns out to be better stated in theory than it was worked out in actual practice. And, in some of the substantive areas where he is deemed the most radical, he emerges as closer to the theological mainstream than is often appreciated."
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Abstract: "Like many of his medieval successors, Peter Abelard offers principles for ranking sins. Moral self-knowledge, after all, requires that we recognize not just our sinfulness, but also the extent of our offense. The most important distinction among sins is that between venial and mortal sins: venial sinners show less contempt and may also be victims of bad moral luck, and so they are far less blameworthy. However, the subjective principle which Abelard uses to protect the venial sinner from blame appears to have absurd consequences: some agents whom we intuitively find saintly turn out to be mortal sinners, while other agents whom we intuitively judge wicked turn out to be mere venial sinners. I argue that Abelard suggests promising replies to these objections, but these replies themselves depend on controversial views about moral psychology."

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Dans cet article, je démontre que la brève digression sur le Cantique des Cantiques dans la deuxième lettre d'Abélard à Héloïse (la cinquième dans la Correspondance) contient une exégèse de quelques phrases de ce livre biblique s'écartant tellement de l'ordinaire, que l'on ne peut pas la prendre au sérieux et que telle n'en fut pas l'intention. Cette affirmation se base sur les observations suivantes: les phrases présentées comme provenant du Cantique des Cantiques ne sont pas réellement des versets de la Bible; il n'existe pas la moindre exégèse de ces phrases comparable dans l'exégèse antérieure et contemporaine; l'interprétation littérale à laquelle Abélard se prête de pair avec une lecture allégorique, était formellement interdite par les autorités tant anciennes que nouvelles; et, enfin, la soi-disant exégèse d'Abélard est en opposition absolue avec sa propre exégèse des mêmes éléments dans des œuvres reconnues comme authentiques."
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