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How and Why Philosophy Was First Called a System: Casmann against Hoffmann on Christian Wisdom and Double Truth

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At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, German Protestant theologians and philosophers exhibited an intense interest in the notion of a system. In analysing these reflections, it is helpful to distinguish three dimensions of the discussion: (1) On the most general level, philosophers could look at the overall notion of a system of disciplines. (2) More specifically, they could turn their attention to whether there may be parts of a discipline that are not themselves a part of the system (e. g. its *praecognita*).¹ (3) Finally, it could be asked whether a particular discipline should be understood as a system.² This is the dimension which is at the centre of attention in this paper. The question before us is how and why philosophers became convinced that philosophy as a discipline could be understood as a system.

The first theoretical analysis of the notion of a system in general can already be found in Keckermann's 1599 *Praecognitorum Logicorum Tractatus III*; the third

¹ Cf. Howard HOTSON, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications, 1543–1630*, Oxford 2007, p. 148, on the role of this distinction in Keckermann.

² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 256, on how Alsted at times seems to identify disciplines with their system. This is probably due to the fact that Alsted contrasts *systemata* that lay out the full content of a discipline with *compendia* that provide an abridged version for beginners. See also *ibid.*, p. 201.

of these treatises discusses comprehensively the question of how to construct a logical *systema*.³ Interest in the notion of a system grew first within theology.⁴ Ritschl ascribes the first use of ‘system’ for a characterisation of the body of Christian doctrine to the Reformed Heidelberg theologian Zacharias Ursinus.⁵ The first publication using ‘systema’ in its title is apparently Keckermann’s *Systema logicae*, published in 1600.⁶ So in what follows, the question before us is not how to understand that philosophy is a system rather than e. g. a habit, as it was conceptualised in the Aristotelian tradition.⁷ The focus lies rather on a clarification of how philosophy fits into the chronology of disciplines being conceived as a system that had started with Ursinus for theology and Keckermann for logic.

In this context it has not yet been noted that with regard to the question whether or not philosophy as a discipline could be a system, Keckermann does not commit himself to a positive answer. In 1599, he had maintained that we can define philosophy only by enumerating its parts.⁸ The 1607 definition that Catana takes to be an expression of Keckermann’s intent to define “systematic philosophy”⁹ is in fact adapted from a 1587 text by Crellius and regards philoso-

³ Cf. Bartholomaeus KECKERMANN, *Praecognitorum Logicorum Tractatus III*, Hanau 1599, pp. 202–284, *De Logici Systematis Conformatione*. On this general notion of a system and its role in the history of logic cf. Wilhelm SCHMIDT-BIGGEMANN, *Topica universalis: Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft*, Hamburg 1983, pp. 82–100.

⁴ Cf. Otto RITSCHL, *System und systematische Methode in der Geschichte des wissenschaftlichen Sprachgebrauchs und der philosophischen Methodologie*, Bonn 1906, col. 22–23.

⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, col. 22f. Unfortunately, Ritschl does not provide detailed references. But we have been able to locate at least one such passage in which Ursinus praises Melanchthon for the creation of a ‘complete system of Christian doctrine’ (*totum Systema doctrinae Christianae*). Cf. Zacharias URSINUS, *De Libro Concordiae [...] Admonitio Christiana*, Neustadii in Palatinatu 1581, p. 191.

⁶ Cf. Bartholomaeus KECKERMANN, *Systema Logicae, tribus libris adornatum*, Hanau 1600. Christian STRUB, *System*, in: Joachim RITTER et al. (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 10, Basle 1998, col. 825–856, col. 831, silently corrects Ritschl’s mistaken determination of the publication date of the first edition. See also Joseph FREEDMAN, *The Career and Writings of Bartholomew Keckermann (d. 1609)*, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 141 (1997), pp. 305–336, p. 341. Previous scholarship has concluded that within philosophy it was Bartholomaeus Keckermann who presented the first comprehensive reflection of the notion of a system in general, i. e. of dimension (1). Cf. Leo CATANA, *The Historiographical Concept ‘System of Philosophy’: Its Origin, Nature, Influence and Legitimacy*, Leiden – Boston 2008, p. 177, who calls Keckermann “one of the key figures in seventeenth-century theories about ‘system’ and ‘systematic philosophy’.”

⁷ Cf. Stefan HESSBRÜGGEN-WALTER, *Die Begriffsbestimmung der Philosophie im spanischen Aristotelismus der Frühen Neuzeit*, Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte 54 (2012), pp. 73–83.

⁸ Cf. KECKERMANN, *Praecognitorum Logicorum*, p. 2.

⁹ CATANA, *Historiographical Concept*, pp. 182–183.

phy not as a system, but as an aggregate or union of two diverse habits, science and prudence.¹⁰ In other words, the question is still open as to where the idea that philosophy itself could be defined as a system did originate, and how these origins may colour our understanding of the concept in German philosophy at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

It is not Keckermann, but Otto Casmann who provides the first evidence in print of thinking about philosophy as a system.¹¹ But a closer look at his contribution to the development of ‘systematic philosophy’ is needed not only in order to take into account the historical record as it stands. We will also see that Casmann’s contribution belongs in the context of the bitter controversy about the proper relation between theology and philosophy that took place between the Lutheran theologian Daniel Hoffmann and philosophers at Casmann’s own university of Helmstedt and beyond. This is relevant for two reasons: first, the fact that Casmann had a role to play in this infamous dispute has to my knowledge not yet been noticed. More importantly, as will be shown in detail, Casmann is a link between the original participants of the dispute and the ‘next generation’ of Reformed philosophers and theologians (Keckermann and Timpler).¹²

While the record, as I have reconstructed it up to now, suggests that reflection on the notion of a system in general started in 1599 with Keckermann’s *Praecognitiones logicae*, we can safely assume that the notion of philosophy as a system was also current in Germany around or maybe even before 1600. Evidence for this claim is to be found in Otto Casmann’s *Philosophiae Et Christianae Et Verae [...] Modesta Assertio* (1601).¹³

Casmann was born in the small town of Warburg in the easternmost part of

¹⁰ Cf. Fortunatus CRELLIUS, *In octo acroamaticos Aristotelis libros commentarii*, Neustadii in Palatina-tu 1587, p. 2; Bartholomaeus KECKERMANN, *Praecognitorum Philosophicorum Libri Duo*, Hanau 1607, pp. 7–8.

¹¹ RITSCHL, *System*, col. 30–31, states that Casmann published a *Systema politicae* in 1603. But Casmann’s contribution to the debate on philosophy as a system has gone completely unnoticed. HOTSON, *Commonplace Learning*, p. 86, quotes Casmann with regard to the utility of learning and qualifies him as an ‘eclecticist’ (HOTSON, *Commonplace Learning*, p. 234). Wiep van BUNGE, *Early Modern Philosophical Systems*, in: Jan BLOEMENDAL – Philip FORD (eds.), *Brill’s Encyclopedia of the Neo-Latin World*, Leiden – Boston 2014, pp. 649–663, p. 653, refers to Keckermann and Timpler, but omits Casmann.

¹² On Keckermann’s 1607 *Praecognita* in the light of the Hoffmann controversy see Danilo FACCA, *Introduction*, in: Bartholomaeus KECKERMANN, *Praecognita Philosophica* (ed. Danilo FACCA), Warszawa 2016, pp. XXXVI–XXX.

¹³ OTTO CASMANN, *Philosophiae Et Christianae Et Verae Adversus Insanos Hostium eius, & nonnullorum Hierophantarum morsus & calumnias Modesta Assertio*, Frankfurt 1601.

Westphalia around 1562. He first studied in Kassel under Rudolph Goclenius and then followed his teacher to Marburg. He continued his studies in Helmstedt (1582) and Heidelberg (1587). In 1589 he moved to the north of Westphalia and taught first in Schüttorf, then in Steinfurt. In 1594 he left Steinfurt in order to become rector in Stade, near Hamburg, where he died in 1607.¹⁴ Casmann's opponent Daniel Hoffmann had been born one generation earlier, in 1540. From 1576 he had taught at the *Academia Julia* in Helmstedt where Casmann had immatriculated before going to Heidelberg.¹⁵ Casmann's biography intersects not only with Hoffmann, but also with those of three other philosophers relevant for our discussion: he was Goclenius's student, and Goclenius was one of the targets of Hoffmann's attacks. Timpler, who will propose a definition of philosophy that is close to Casmann's own, was his successor in Steinfurt.¹⁶ Keckermann in turn was Timpler's student.¹⁷ Timpler presided over a dissertation of Keckermann in 1593.¹⁸

This biographical information is necessary for understanding the context of Casmann's statement in *Modesta Assertio* that some "like-minded philosophers" (*nostrates*) have defined philosophy as a system, or, more precisely, as a "structured system of the liberal arts" (*ordinatum artium liberalium systema*).¹⁹ Casmann's own definition contains two slight differences: for him philosophy is a "structured unity of erudite wisdom" (*ordinata literatae sapientiae comprehensio*).²⁰ Casmann may have preferred 'comprehensio' to 'systema' because it is an original Latin term. His own definition agrees with the alternative one in that the unity must have a structure, it is *comprehensio ordinata*. It disagrees in that philosophy is regarded by Casmann not as a structured unity of the liberal arts, but as a structured unity or aggregate of 'literate wisdom' (*literata sapientia*). This second, seemingly minor

¹⁴ On Casmann's biography cf. HOTSON, *Commonplace Learning*, p. 130.

¹⁵ Cf. Markus FRIEDRICH, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft, Theologie, Philosophie und gelehrte Konflikte am Beispiel des Helmstedter Hofmannstreits und seiner Wirkungen auf das Luthertum um 1600*, Göttingen 2004, p. 22.

¹⁶ Cf. HOTSON, *Commonplace Learning*, p. 130: "Biographically, Casmann, Timpler, Keckermann, and Alsted form a tidy little group. Before becoming rector of the gymnasium in Stade which Alsted's great-uncle had helped to re-found, Casmann was professor of philosophy at Steinfurt. After failing to gain promotion in Heidelberg, Timpler succeeded him there in 1595."

¹⁷ Cf. FREEDMAN, *Life and Works*, p. 306.

¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 353.

¹⁹ CASMANN, *Modesta Assertio*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

detail will lead us right into the controversy between the Lutheran theologian Hoffmann and his philosophical adversaries.²¹ Casmann's analysis of both the nominal and the real definition of philosophy can be interpreted fruitfully as replies to Hoffmann's objections.²²

In 1596, Hoffmann published a book-length critique of Casmann's teacher Rudolph Goclenius in which he claimed that the analysis of the Divine belongs exclusively to theology, while philosophy is irrelevant and misleading in this domain. I focus here only on two points of his comprehensive argument: First, reformation is attempting to save philosophy. Second, in order to realise this goal, Protestants must abandon the misuse of abstract reasoning in theology and return to the simple truths of Scripture.

According to Hoffmann, philosophy as a discipline 'crashes under the weight' of its ambitions. Therefore, a proper reading of Scripture must start all over again (*de novo*) and build again what has failed in the first attempt (i. e. the explanation of theological questions by philosophers). This rebuilding is, of course, nothing else but the Reformation (in a Lutheran understanding): this new faith flourishes because of the strength of the Word (*robore verbi*) which in turn has been written by God Himself (*propter auctorem Deum*).²³

Philosophy does not simply fail to provide proper answers, it also obscures the knowledge that in principle would be available to a true believer: The more philosophers strive to achieve new and certain knowledge, the less they can reach certainty. Hoffmann uses the example of the creation in order to make his point. Philosophers proceed slowly, weighing arguments and deriving them from principles in order to achieve certainty. They could equally well consult the second letter of Paul to the Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 3: the Apostle clarifies

²¹ Cf. Maria Rosa ANTOGNAZZA, *Hofmann-Streit: Il dibattito sul rapporto tra filosofia e teologia all'università di Helmstedt*, *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 88 (1996), pp. 390–420; FRIEDRICH, *Grenzen*. Neither notes Casmann's involvement in the Hoffmann dispute.

²² Ann BLAIR, *Mosaic physics and the search for a pious natural philosophy in the late Renaissance*, *Isis* 91 (2000), pp. 32–58, p. 45, raises the question of who may be the target of *Modesta Assertio* without answering it. In spite of a discussion of the Hoffmann dispute (cf. BLAIR, *Mosaic physics*, p. 49), the biographical connections between Casmann and Hoffmann play no role in her account.

²³ Cf. Daniel HOFFMANN, *De usu et applicatione notionum logicarum [...] adversus Rudolphum Goclenium admonitio*, Frankfurt/Main 1596, pp. 16–17: "*Hoc tamen insuper observari oportuit, quod scientiam Philosophicam, tanquam sua mole corruentem in divinis, sacra Scriptura excipiat, et vanam factam de novo extruat, novis fundamentis substratis, novisque firmamentis adiectis, ut sic a sacro primordio exulta, evadat in fidem vigentem robore verbi, propter auctorem Deum.*"

that our knowledge that the world was created by the Word has its foundation in faith.²⁴

The 1596 critique of Goclenius has not yet received much attention in anatomies of the Hoffmann dispute.²⁵ But it provides a useful reference point in assessing to what extent the debate had degraded just two years later, when Hoffmann wrote a preface to a dissertation of his Helmstedt student Caspar Pfaffrad.

In 1596, Hoffmann had focused only on the failure of philosophy to provide an adequate understanding of the Divine. Now, two years later, he sets out to show that next to Satan himself, ‘carnal wisdom and carnal reason’ (*ratio et sapientia carnalis*) are the worst foes of Christianity, worse torturers than tyrants.²⁶ Tyrants can only torture bodies, but philosophers commit violence against souls, because they turn them from God. Philosophical instruction creates hybris and aggressiveness, and encourages the untutored mind to ponder theological questions, so that it commits itself to falsehoods.²⁷

The early church knew this from experience and had stated that ‘philosophers are patriarchs of heresy’ (*philosophos esse haereticorum patriarchas*).²⁸ Hoffmann contrasts this with the even worse degradation of theology in his own time: theologians themselves have succumbed to ‘carnal wisdom’, have questioned articles of faith, and have seduced the young to dispute the sense of Scripture on philosophical grounds. It was Luther’s Divine inspiration that originally

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 17–18: “*Quod enim Philosophi, quicquid de Deo et rebus divinis aliquousque pertexere videntur, quanto curiosius ac accuratius stabilire conantur, tanto minus tandem eius πληροφροσίαν tueantur, id docet experientia. [...] Mundum a Deo factum esse, videtur Philosophis demonstrabile, sed quanta cum nugatione et hesitatione agitur, ubi ad certitudinem assertionis stabiliendam, argumentis proceditur, et quidem ex quibus principiis, quando productus sit! Quapropter ad Hebrae. 11. vers. 3. dicitur: per fidem intelligimus mundum constructum fuisse verbo.*”

²⁵ Both Antognazza and Friedrich mention it only briefly. Cf. ANTOGNAZZA, *Hofmann-Streit*, p. 11; FRIEDRICH, *Grenzen*, p. 243.

²⁶ Cf. FRIEDRICH, *Grenzen*, p. 261, regarding the theological connotations of the epithet ‘carnal’.

²⁷ Cf. Daniel HOFFMANN – Caspar PFAFFRAD, *Propositiones de Deo, et Christi tum persona tum officio*, Helmstedt 1598, n. p.: “*Si quis historiam Ecclesiae ab initio usque ad haec tempora retexuerit, animadvertet, ei post Satanam saeviore hostem nunquam fuisse ratione et sapientia carnis in doctrina fidei dominatum affectante, cuius violentia etiam corporalium Tyrannorum immanitatem superat, cum animas ipsas vehementissime excruciet, et a vera Dei agnitione validissime avellat.*”

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, *Propositiones*, n. p.: “*Quanto vero magis excolitur ratio humana philosophicis studiis, tanto armatior prodit, et quo seipsam amat impensius, eo Theologiam invadit atrocius, et errores pingit speciosius. Unde Paulus [...] Philosophiam depraedantem discipulos Apostolorum agnovit, et [...] inter opera carnis reiecit haereses, quod primitiva Ecclesia per experientiam edocta sic explicavit: Philosophos esse haereticorum patriarchas.*”

took care of this problem, urging him to purge scholastic philosophy and to keep it from those who belong to the Holy Spirit and who should rely instead exclusively on the authority of Scripture.²⁹

The chronology now gets somewhat complicated. In a further tract that deals with the problem of ‘double truth’, published in 1600 and edited apparently by his students, Casmann is explicitly called out in the preface.³⁰ He is portrayed as a timid patron of the philosophical past. Besides innumerable other horrible errors, he dismisses Luther’s doctrine of double truth, i. e. the idea that one and the same proposition could be false in philosophy and true in theology. Even worse, Casmann’s choice of words is ‘diabolical’. This is what forced the editors to publish his refutation: “It was Otto Casmann who imposed on us the outmost obligation to publish this text.”³¹

Casmann’s *Modesta Assertio* is intended as a rebuttal of Hoffmann’s views not only on double truth, but also with regard to his wrong understanding of philosophy. Still, it is strange that Hoffmann in 1600 quotes Casmann verbatim and with correct page numbers, although *Modesta Assertio* gives 1601 as the date of its publication.³² So either this date is wrong, or we must assume that Hoffmann had got hold of proofs before publication. Did Casmann send the text himself? Both may have known each other, because Casmann studied in Helmstedt somewhere between 1582 and 1587. Or maybe some intermediary provided Hoffmann with the text.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, *Propositiones*, n. p.: “Cum vero hodie circumferimus oculos in orbe Christiano, statum eius inde miseriorem cognoscimus, quod multi Theologorum ad sapientiam carnis sublimes articulos fidei revocant, et iuventutem assuefaciunt ad disputationes quibus ad Philosophiae calculos exigitur sensus sacrarum literarum. [...] Quod enim auditoribus nostris sedulo inculcavimus, Lutheri Theologiam ideo esse puriorem, quod ille ad expurgandum fermentum Scholasticorum divinitus excitatus Philosophiam ab iis, quae sunt Spiritus Dei longe propulsavit, nihilque fidei Christianae commodum duxit, nisi quod ex limpidis fontibus Israelis haustum quanto ingratus carni tanto magis Spiritui saperet: [...]” Cf. allusion to Matt 16:6: “fermentum pharisaeorum et sadducaeorum”.

³⁰ On Hoffmann on double truth cf. FRIEDRICH, *Grenzen*, pp. 281–284.

³¹ Daniel HOFFMANN, *Pro Duplici Veritate Lutheri A Philosophis Impugnata, & ad pudendorum locum ablegata*, Magdeburg 1600, n. p.: “Extremam vero isthaec publicandi necessitatem imposuit nobis Ottho Casmannus.” The text goes on: “[...] qui [sc. Casmannus] in libello cuius titulus (Philosophiae, et Christianae, et Verae Modesta Assertio) multis retro seculis inauditum Philosophiae Patronum agit, et inter infinita portenta caetera, doctrinam Lutheri, quam hic ab Hoffmanno assertam vides, Diabolicis his verbis pag. 40 sugillat: ‘Duplex veritas una Theologica sapientiae divinae, altera Philosophica sapientiae humanae, est Diabolicum ad omnes errores atque atheismos excusandos et defendendos accommodatissimum figmentum.’” Hoffman quotes Casmann correctly.

³² Cf. *ibid.*, “Lectori benevolo”, n. p., quoting CASMANN, *Modesta Assertio*, p. 40.

It may not be possible to answer these open questions conclusively. But in the light of these findings it certainly makes sense to explore the question as to how far Casmann's text, and in particular his reflections on the proper definition of philosophy, can be understood as a reply to Hoffmann's polemics against any role for philosophy in the life of a true Christian. I will begin with the full title of Casmann's tract which contains the first indications that it may be directed against Hoffmann. I will then analyse both his views on the nominal and the real definition of philosophy in the light of Hoffmann's objections against the discipline.

The full title of Casmann's tract reads as follows: *Philosophiae Et Christianae Et Verae Adversus Insanos Hostium eius, & nonnullorum Hierophantarum morsus & calumnias Modesta Assertio*. It is thus a 'moderate assertion of philosophy being both Christian and true against insane vexations and slander of its enemies and of some hierophants'. Hoffmann certainly qualifies as an enemy of philosophy. And he believes that theologians have privileged access to the secrets of faith, so that he may also qualify as 'hierophant'. Nevertheless, we need more substantial evidence in order to argue for a link between Casmann's and Hoffmann's text.

Casmann articulates three theses that can be understood as a reply to Hoffmann's attack. (1) Enemies of philosophy do not clarify what they take philosophy to be. (2) Any distinction between Christian wisdom and carnal wisdom is spurious, because wisdom cannot be based on falsities. (3) The undisputable fact that pagan philosophy does contain falsities cannot be held against philosophy as such. There can be a truly Christian philosophy that is purged from the errors of pagan philosophers.

(1) Casmann states that in order to judge the dispute with the enemies of philosophy it is indispensable to find out first what exactly philosophy is. And the best strategy for that is to propose a definition for it.³³ And in fact it is fairly obvious that in order to criticise philosophy, we must be clear about what the thing is that we want to criticise. Whereas Hoffmann in 1596 had limited his claims against philosophy to philosophical reflection of the Divine, the 1598 preface is a wholesale attack on philosophy. But Hoffmann does not care to explain what exactly it is that he attacks: he provides no explicit definition of philosophy. Against this omission Casmann asserts that unless we define philosophy first,

³³ Cf. CASMANN, *Modesta Assertio*, p. 1: "De Philosophia Christiana, adversus omnis Philosophiae iniquos censors et calumniatores, disceptaturis, primum quid sit ea Philosophia [...] cognoscendum est. Melius autem haec non poterit cognosci et dignosci, quam si eius definitio proponatur et excutiatur."

we do not even know what exactly we are talking about. He then supports this claim with references to Francesco Piccolomini, Scaliger, Aristotle, and Cicero – a marked contrast to Hoffmann’s unscholarly mode of argumentation.³⁴

(2) According to its nominal definition, philosophy is the love of wisdom. Hoffmann’s 1598 distinction between ‘Christian wisdom’ and ‘carnal wisdom’ and his thesis that philosophy as a discipline subscribes to the latter are both spurious. If we find falsehoods in a body of knowledge, the habit of holding falsehoods to be true is closer to stupidity than to wisdom (*potius stultitiae non absimilis*).³⁵

(3) Scripture commands us to be lovers of wisdom, i. e. philosophers (based on Proverbs 8:33, “Hear instruction and be wise”). It thus exhorts us to acquaint ourselves with true wisdom.³⁶ If pagan philosophy is false, it does not fall within the scope of God’s command to study wisdom.³⁷ What is pagan in pagan thought does not belong to philosophy. In the same way, the thoughts of a slanderous, impious, and ill-mannered man do not belong to theology – so we may assume that Hoffmann’s polemics disqualify him in Casmann’s eyes as a theologian. If and insofar as pagans only sought for wisdom without finding it, they must count as ignorant (*stulti facti sunt*). Hence, true believers must be at the same time students of (Christian) philosophy, a philosophy that has been purged from pagan errors.³⁸

We can now return to Casmann’s real definition of philosophy and to the question why Casmann understands philosophy as a system not of the liberal arts, but of erudite wisdom. I believe that this modification is due to his polemics with Hoffmann. In order to deliver an apology for philosophy against Hoffmann’s invectives, it is crucial to show that the contrast exploited by Hoffmann is misleading: simple Christian wisdom that can be gleaned from Scripture alone and erudite pagan wisdom do not necessarily conflict, because Christian wisdom must

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2: “[...] *Philosophia Christiana est studium Christianae sapientiae: ut Ethnica, mundana, carnalis est studium, et amor Ethnicae, mundanae, carnalis sapientiae. Illa verae, haec aberrantis saepe numero est sapientiae. At aberrans sapientia, potius est stultitiae non absimilis.*”

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3: “*At loquitur Sapiens de vera sapientia: Neque ego de vana et falsa.*”

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3: “*Ethnicorum si quae falsa sunt, philosophica non sunt.*”

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3: “*Non Philosophiae est, quod est Ethnici, ut Ethnici, ut nec theologiae datur, quod hominis est male feriat, calumniatoris et impii. Ethnici quaesiverunt sapientiam, at non invenerunt in omnibus: Imo in ratiocinationibus suis, scilicet sophisticis, stulti facti sunt.*”

depend on learning, too.³⁹ So philosophy can be vindicated against theological criticism, if it is Christian and erudite at the same time.

It is tempting to understand Casmann's project primarily as the vindication of Christianity using the tool set of the philosopher. But at least in its infancy, Reformed Christian philosophy was apparently a vindication of philosophy against theological 'anti-philosophy'.⁴⁰ That means that Casmann and Hoffmann differ not just with regard to the relation of reason and faith, philosophy and theology, but in their understanding of philosophy itself. Confessional strife engenders metaphilosophical debate. Casmann's vision of a 'structured unity of erudite wisdom' nevertheless presupposes that theological insights always are in harmony with the findings of philosophy, reason unaided by revelation. However that may be, in sum we may conclude that the earliest discussions of philosophy as a system were meant to immunise Reformed philosophy against Hoffmann's attempt to revive Lutheran anti-philosophy.

Conclusion

Against Ritschl and subsequent scholarship relying on him it can be asserted with some confidence that the notion of a philosophical discipline as a system evolves in or before 1599 and that the thesis that philosophy itself could be a system is articulated (though not endorsed) first in 1601. Casmann's *Modesta Assertio* is thus a central text for understanding the evolution of both dimensions of philosophy as a system. Moreover, we have seen that the need for deeper metaphilosophical reflection arose not in a vacuum, but was motivated by the desire better to understand the task and scope of philosophy in a highly charged environment in which the relation between philosophy and theology or revelation was a matter of pressing importance not just for philosophers. It is then not without irony that one of the most vociferous and cantankerous critics of phi-

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Casmann's readers in the eighteenth century were no longer aware of this context. Cf. Johann Franz BUDDE, *Introductio ad historiam philosophiae Ebraeorum*, Halle 1702, p. 260, who accuses Casmann of blurring the line between reason and revelation. See also Stefan HESSBRÜGGEN-WALTER, *The Science of the Physically Possible? Wolff's Definition of Philosophy in the German Logic and the Impossibility of Christian Physics*, in: Arnauld PELLETIER (ed.), *Christian Wolff's German Logic: Sources, Significance and Reception*, New York – Zürich – Hildesheim 2017, pp. 19–28, 24.

osophy in German intellectual life at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may well have inadvertently helped to bring about a deepened self-reflection of philosophy as a discipline.

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Resumé

Jak a proč byla filosofie poprvé nazvána systémem: Casmann proti Hoffmannovi o křesťanské moudrosti a dvojí pravdě

Jak a proč se na přelomu 16. a 17. století v Německu vyvinula představa filosofie jako systému? *Modesta Assertio* (1601) Otto Casmanna poskytuje na tuto otázku nové odpovědi. Casmann, předchůdce Clemense Timplera na místě profesora ve Steinfurtu, hovoří o dalších „souputnících“ (*nostrates*), kteří věří, že filosofie je „uspořádaný systém svobodných umění“. Casmann sám tvrdí, že filosofie je „uspořádaná jednota učené moudrosti“. Jeho text je součástí debaty o vztahu filosofie a teologie mezi Danielem Hoffmannem a reformovanými filosofy. Lze se oprávněně domnívat, že Casmannovým terčem je sám Hoffmann. Studie ukazuje, že předpokladem „uspořádané jednoty učené moudrosti“ je soulad teologických vhladů a filosofických poznatků. Smyslem nejranější diskuse o filosofii jakožto systému tedy bylo učinit reformovanou filosofii imunní vůči Hoffmannově pokusu o oživení luteránské anti-filosofie.

Summary

How and Why Philosophy Was First Called a System: Casmann against Hoffmann on Christian Wisdom and Double Truth

How and why did the notion of philosophy as a system evolve in Germany at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries? Otto Casmann's *Modesta Assertio* (1601) provides new answers to this question. Casmann, Clemens Timpler's predecessor as professor in Steinfurt refers to other 'like-minded philosophers' (nos-

trates) who believe that philosophy is a ‘structured system of the liberal arts’. Casmann himself states that philosophy is a ‘structured unity of erudite wisdom’. The text is part of the debate between Daniel Hoffmann and the Reformed philosophers about the relation between philosophy and theology. It can be made plausible that Hoffmann himself was Casmann’s target. The paper shows that a ‘structured unity of erudite wisdom’ presupposes harmony between theological insights and the findings of philosophy. Thus the earliest discussions of philosophy as a system were meant to immunise Reformed philosophy against Hoffmann’s attempt to revive Lutheran anti-philosophy.

Keywords

Otto Casmann; Daniel Hoffmann; Bartholomaeus Keckermann; Clemens Timpler; System; Definition of philosophy