[QUESTION 3: WHETHER THE SUBJECT OF LOGIC IS THE SYLLOGISM]

1. We ask about subject of logic, whether it be the syllogism.

**It seems not:**

For all knowledge (*scientia*)is via syllogism. If, then, there is a knowledge of the syllogism, this will be via syllogism. But this is false:

1. Both because the syllogism, which we seek knowledge of, is unknown, whereas the syllogism by which knowledge is had is known; for nothing is known through what is unknown.
2. And because I am searching for a syllogism by which one possesses knowledge: either there is knowledge of this, or there isn't. If there isn't, then by the same reason neither is there [knowledge] of the syllogism in general (*in communi*); for whatever is known of the general [case] is known also for any particular. If there is, then [this will be] through another syllogism, and so we shall proceed to an infinite of syllogisms we'd have to have knowledge of. But this is incongruous, for then none would be known. For, the infinite is unknown, from Aristotle's *Physics* I[[1]](#footnote-1); therefore, the same [thing] is both known and unknown.
3. Again, nothing is the subject of a whole and [its] part; but the syllogism is the subject of a part of logic[[2]](#footnote-2), sc. the books of the *Prior Analytics.* Therefore, etc.
4. Again, there never was a syllogism in sense, and so neither [is there] in the understanding. The consequence is plain from Aristotle's *On sense and what is sensed*[[3]](#footnote-3)*.*
5. **For the opposite:**

In logic, the properties (*passiones*)of the syllogism are shown (*demonstrantur*)principally from itself and from other [things] on account of it (*propter ipsum*). Therefore, etc[[4]](#footnote-4).

1. **Some say**[[5]](#footnote-5) that the subject of logic is the concept formed from the act of reason, since this is common to all the things logic considers. For the act of reason is threefold[[6]](#footnote-6): first, understanding indivisibles; second, joining or dividing those indivisibles; third, moving discursively from the known to the unknown. On the concept formed from the first act, there is the book of *Categories* which is on what is simple (*incomplexo*); on the concept formed from the second act, there is the book *On interpretation*, which is on the statement (*enunciatione);* on the concept formed by the third act there is thenew logic (*logica nova*), which is on the syllogism and its specific parts (*partibus subiectivis*).
2. Others posit that [logic] is concerned with second intentions applied to first [intentions], as Boethius[[7]](#footnote-7) says that these are common to everything determined in logic.
3. A third answer posits that being (*ens*) is the subject, since in *Metaphysics* IV[[8]](#footnote-8), Aristotle [states that] the metaphysician, dialectician, and sophist work on the same [subject]; the metaphysician works on being; therefore, etc.
4. A fourth answer posits speech (*oratio*)[[9]](#footnote-9), since, this being the genus of the statement, the old logic is limited to this [i.e. speech] and its parts; and it is put in the definition of the syllogism in *Prior Analytics* I[[10]](#footnote-10).
5. A fifth answer posits argumentation[[11]](#footnote-11), since the whole of logic is concerned with its aspects (*speciebus*)and parts.
6. A sixth answer posits the syllogism[[12]](#footnote-12), since all other things considered in logic are considered for the sake of it.
7. **To see which position** is more true, we must note that three conditions are required of the subject in a science. [The first is] that it is known what it is (*quid est*)and that it is (*quia est*), for these two must be presupposed for demonstration, as is stated in *Posterior Analytics* I[[13]](#footnote-13). The second is that in that science, the properties (*passiones*) of its subject be demonstrated of it from its quiddity (*quid est*). The third is that everything else determined in the science refers back to it and is considered for its sake. For otherwise, this unity lacking, there would be no unity of the science.
8. The first two conditions are lacking from the first three opinions[[14]](#footnote-14) put forth, since none of these are defined in logic in a general manner (*secundum rationem generalem*),as subjects are put forth. It is neither a prerequisite (*nec praemittitur*) as a principle of knowledge (*scientiae*), nor is any property (*passio*) of these demonstrated in general. Therefore, each of them is too common [to be a] subject. There is even no difference among these three, as is clear of the first and the second. We prove this of the third as well: for the subject here is either real being (*ens reale*) orthe being of reason (*ens rationis*). If the first, then the science [itself] is real, which is false. If the second, then it either treats the being of reason alone – that is, what is considered by the intellect – or the being of reason as *caused* by reason. If the first, then it is still would be a real [science]. For nothing is the subject of any science unless it is considered by the intellect or reason, for only as such is it universal. Therefore, it must be granted that it is of being caused by reason, which is the same as the others.
9. To the reason for the first[[15]](#footnote-15), it is plain that the argument is insufficient and commits the fallacy of the consequent, since the other two conditions of a subject are lacking.
10. To the authority of Boethius[[16]](#footnote-16) I say that logic is about these, but these are not its main (*primum*) subject, but more common than the subject, just as we say that every science is of being since none is of non-being[[17]](#footnote-17).
11. To the reason for the third position[[18]](#footnote-18), I say that they work on the same, not because the subject is the same, but because something is considered in logic whereby it is happens to work on all things. For many things are worked on in a science, but not because each of those things is the primary (*principale*) subject of the science.
12. For the fourth [option][[19]](#footnote-19), sc. speech, the second and third conditions[[20]](#footnote-20) are lacking. And when we accept that it belongs to the syllogism, I say that it only equivocally [belongs] to it and the statement; and what is equivocal is not a subject, for neither is it definable; in the definition of the syllogism, it is taken [to mean] 'argument'.
13. To the fifth [option][[21]](#footnote-21), sc. argumentation, the first[[22]](#footnote-22) is lacking. For Aristotle never defines argumentation generally (*in communi*), nor does he propose its definition as the principle of the science; rather, Boethius defines it in his *Topics[[23]](#footnote-23)*. The second, as is clear from the general reason (*secundum rationem generalem*), is also lacking. Next, I prove the third: for either it is equivocal, and then it is clear that there is not one science from *its* unity, for then neither what is knowable (*scibile*) nor what is intelligible [in the science] is one; or it is analogous to what is contained under it, and then there will not be one science from it, but from the unity of the primary [meaning] to which the others are subordinated (*attribuuntur)*, – and this is 'syllogism' – just as the unity of metaphysics is from the unity of substance, to which all other beings are subordinated.
14. **We must say**, then, that the first and proper subject [of logic] is the syllogism[[24]](#footnote-24). It meets the first condition, since immediately after its parts are determined in the old logic (*in veteri logica*), [Aristotle] advances (*praemittit*) its definition at the beginning of the *Prior Analytics*[[25]](#footnote-25). And the second, since in the same [work] he demonstrates many properties (*passiones*) of it through that definition – for instance, that mood and figure belong to it essentially (*de inesse*)*,* and in the chapter[[26]](#footnote-26) beginning “Since therefore in these”, [he shows] that [every syllogism] has only three terms, from the fact that it must move to a conclusion (*de necessitate accidere conclusioni*), etc[[27]](#footnote-27). And the third, since [Aristotle] determines its parts, sc. the simple (*incomplexo*) and the statement and its integral and subjective parts, for the sake of it in the books of the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*; and [he treats of] the other kinds of argumentation because these are reduced to it as the imperfect [is] to the perfect; and of the sophistical syllogism, as its privation, since it belongs to the same [science] to investigate [both] the condition (*habitus*) and the privation[[28]](#footnote-28). And so it is plain that the divisions of logic are according to the divisions and attributes of [the syllogism].
15. **To the first** argument[[29]](#footnote-29): I concede that the science is of the syllogism by a particular syllogism.
16. To the first[[30]](#footnote-30) [reason] against this[[31]](#footnote-31), I say that that syllogism is known as regards the truth of its premises, since these propositions are immediate; and with respect to the conclusion's following from the premises, since this is manifest *per se*, since “a syllogism is perfect which has need of nothing [else] to show itself necessary[[32]](#footnote-32)”, i.e. for it to be clear that the conclusion follows from the premises. But this syllogism by which the knowledge (*scientia*) [is acquired] is unknown as a consequence (*quoad passionem*) demonstrated of the syllogism commonly, so as such[[33]](#footnote-33) the syllogism generally (*in communi*) is unknown. For knowledge (*cognitio*) of the syllogism generally is not sought except as a consequence (*quoad passionem*), and so it is not [the case] that the same is both known and unknown in the same [respect] (*secundum idem*).
17. To the other[[34]](#footnote-34) [reason] against this, I say that the knowledge (*scientia*)is of the syllogism by which the knowledge is [had]. And when it is asked, 'through *which* syllogism?', I say through itself, for inasmuch as any property (*passio*) is shown by it [to hold] of every syllogism, it is shown [to hold] for itself inasmuch as it is a syllogism; nor does knowledge (*scientia*) of the particular occur otherwise”
18. To the second main argument[[35]](#footnote-35), I say that the syllogism, with respect to the properties (*proprietates*) formally consequent upon it, is the subject of the books of the *Prior Analytics*. But it is the subject of the whole of logic with respect to *all* of its properties (*passiones*), whether intrinsic (*in se*) or in its integral or subjective parts, or in what is reducible to it. Nor ought we call all things considered in a science [its] subject, but [only] the being (*esse*) for the sake of which the others are considered; as occurs in the subject of natural science – which is the mobile body – where motion and nature, which are not mobile bodies, are still discussed. – Or we can say that the major is false in sciences where the subject of the whole requires many things to be defined (*determinari*) in order to be understood (*propter eius cognitionem*). For then it will be necessary to define those many things in the science, and with this, the subject itself. And this is so, as is plain in the book of the *Physics*, with respect to the whole of natural science[[36]](#footnote-36).
19. To the third[[37]](#footnote-37) I say that that proposition of Aristotle “there is nothing in the intellect” etc., is true of what is primarily intelligible, which is the quiddity of a material being, but not of all things that are intelligible *per se*; for many things are understood *per se*, not because they form an image in sense, but by the reflection of the intellect; and so it is with the syllogism. “For '*per se*' extends farther than 'primarily' (*primo*),” as it says in *Prior Analytics* I[[38]](#footnote-38). For the isosceles has three [angles] *per se*, but not primarily.

1. **Aristot.,** *Physica* I t. 35 (AL VII1 19-20; **A** c. 4 187*b* 7-8): “So if the infinite, insofar as it is infinite, is unknown...”; **Aristot.,** *Anal. post.* I c. 24 t. 167 (AL IV2 147-48; **A** c. 24, 86*a* 5-6): “Now there are [things that are] unknowable insofar as they are infinite; but knowable insofar as they are limited”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Thomas**, *Expos. libri Post*. I prooem. (I2 6): “The certainty of a judgment possessed through a resolution is either from the form of the syllogism alone – and the bookof the *Prior Analytics*, which treats of the syllogism as such, is ordered toward this...”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **Aristot.,** *De sensu et sensato* c. 6 (c. 6, 445*b* 16-17); *Auctoritates Aristotelis* (ed. J. Hamesse p. 197): “Our intellect understands nothing apart from sense”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. **Robertus Kilwardby,** *De ortu scientiarum* c. 49 (ed. G. Judy p. 160-61): “And so a discourse inquiring after an unknown truth on a general question is a syllogism and its idea (*species*), which logic treats of”. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. **Thomas,** *Expos. libri Post* I prooem (I2 4-5): “We ought, then, to admit three parts of logic according to the diversity of the acts of reason. Now there are three acts of reason. The first two of these belong to reason on account of its being a kind of understanding. For one act of understanding is *understanding indivisibles*, or *simples* (*incomplexorum*), from which we conceive what a thing is; and this operation is called by some *informing the understanding* (*informatio intellectus*), or *imagining through understanding* (*imaginatio per intellectum*); and the teaching that is ordered toward this operation of reason is given by Aristotle in the book of *Categories*. While the second operation of understanding is *joining or separating [things] understood* (*compositio vel divisio intellectuum*), in which lie truth and falsity; and the teaching dedicated to this act of reason is given by Aristotle in the book *On interpretation*. While the third act of reason is what is proper to reason, sc. moving discursively from one into another, in order to come to recognize what is unknown through what is known; and the remaining books of logic are dedicated to this act”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. **Aristot.,** *De an.* III t. 21 (**Γ** c. 6, 430*a* 26-28); *Auctoritates Aristotelis* (ed. J. Hamesse p. 187): “The operation of the intellect is twofold: one [part of] which is called the apprehension of simple terms (*simplicium terminorum apprehensio*); the other, the joining and dividing of simple apprehended terms (*simplicium terminorum apprehensorum compositio et divisio*): under which a third is comprehended, sc. abstract reasoning (*ratiocinatio remota*)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. More likely **Avicena,** *Metaph.* I c. 2 (AviL 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. **Aristot.,** *Metaph*. IV t. 5 (AL XXV2 63; **Γ** c. 2, 1004*b* 22-23): “For sophistry and dialectics are concerned with the same genus as philosophy is”; the Arabic-Latin translation has: “...for the logician and sophist work on what it befits the philosopher to work on”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. **Boethius,** *In Categ. Aristot.* I (PL 64, 161CD): “Therefore, since every logical art is on speech (*oratione*), and this work principally treats of speaking (*vocibus*)...” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. **Aristot.,** *Anal. Priora* I c. 1 (AL III1 6; **A** c. 1, 24*b* 18-20): “Now a syllogism is a speech in which, certain things being posited, something else follows of necessity from what is posited because these things are so”. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. **Albertus M.,** *Liber de praedicabilibus* I c. 4 (ed. Borgnet I 8*a*): “Argumentation is, then, the proper subject of teaching logic (*logicae docentis*). And this is the judgment of three philosophers, sc. Avicenna, Alfarabi, and Algazel”. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. **Albertus M.,** *Liber de praedicabilibus* I c. 4 (ed. Borgnet I 8*b*): “The whole of logic, then, has argumentation or syllogism as its subject.”; **Thomas,** *Expos. libri Post*. I lect. 20 (I2 75): For logic considers the syllogism and the statement and the category, or whatever else of this sort, as subjects”. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. **Aristot.,** *Anal. post.* I c. 1 (AL IV1 5; **A** c. 1, 71*a* 11-16); cf. *Auctoritates Aristotelis* (ed. J. Hamesse p. 311): “Here again we hold that in any science we ought to presuppose the existence of its subject (*subiectum esse*), as well as what it might express (*quid significet ipsum*)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. n. 7-9 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Cf. n. 7 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. n. 8 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Cf. **Aristot.,** *Anal. post.* I c. 2 (AL IV1 7; **A** c. 2, 71*b* 25-26); *Auctoritates Aristotelis* (ed. J. Hamesse p. 312): “...there is no science of non-being”. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cf. n. 9 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Cf. n. 10 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Cf. n. 13 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Cf. n. 11 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. I. e. the first condition; cf. n. 13 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. **Boethius,** *De differentiis topicis* (PL 64, 1180C): “An argument is an account making something uncertain trustworthy (*Argumentum est ratio rei dubiae faciens fidem*).” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cf. n. 12 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. **Aristot.,** *Anal. Priora* I c. 1 (AL III1 6; **A** c. 1, 24*b* 22-24): “I therefore call that syllogism perfect which has need of nothing else besides what are taken up [in it] to make its necessity apparent”. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. **Aristot.,** *Anal. Priora* I c. 23 (AL III3 228; **A** c. 23, 40*b* 17). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In the exposition of John Foxal we read (f. 65*rb*): “...'of necessity (*ex necessitate*) to move to a conclusion', i.e. that the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises”; in the commentary of Mauritius de Portu it has (ed. Vivès I 82*a*): “And what follows is not there in the text of Aristotle, but is the teaching of the Doctor (*littera Doctoris*) when he states 'from the fact that it must move to a conclusion'...”. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Cf. *Auctoritates Aristotelis* (ed. J. Hamesse p. 122. 187): “It belongs to the same science to consider opposites: that is, the teaching of opposites is the same”; “A privation is known through its habit”; see **Aristot.,** *Metaph.* IV t. 4 (AL XXV2 62; **Γ** c. 2, 1004a 9-10); *Metaph.* V t. 16 (AL XXV2 97; Δ c. 10, 1018*a* 20-24). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Cf. n. 1 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Cf. n. 2 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. I.e. against Scotus' answer in n. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cf. n. 20 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Sc. as a consequence (*quoad quam passionem*). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. n. 3 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Cf. n. 4 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. **Aegidius Rom.,** *Physica* prolog. (ed. Venice 1502, f. 2*rb*): “And since physics is thus essentially concerned with mobile body, we ought to accept, after the division of mobile body, books partially belonging to (*partiales libros*) natural science. For mobile body, as is commonly said, is so simply or by limitation (*contracte*). And so it is defined simply in the book of *Physics*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cf. n. 5 above; cf. **Aegidius Rom.,** *Anal. Post.* I t. 33 (ed. Venice 1520, f. 62J. 63E): “We must say that nothing is in the intellect that was not first in sense... therefore, sense is in itself the doorway of all learning (*totius cognitionis*)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. **Aristot.,** *Anal. Post.*I c. 4 (AL IV1 14; **A** c. 4, 73*b* 38-39): “But perhaps the ίσοσκελές certainly has [three angles] equal to two right [angles], but [it does] not [have this] primarily (*primum*); rather, the triangle [has this]primarily”. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)