

= Condemnations of 1210 ? 1277 =

The Condemnations at the medieval University of Paris were enacted to restrict certain teachings as being heretical . These included a number of medieval theological teachings , but most importantly the physical treatises of Aristotle . The investigations of these teachings were conducted by the Bishops of Paris . The Condemnations of 1277 are traditionally linked to an investigation requested by Pope John XXI , although whether he actually supported drawing up a list of condemnations is unclear .

Approximately sixteen lists of censured theses were issued by the University of Paris during the 13th and 14th centuries . Most of these lists of propositions were put together into systematic collections of prohibited articles . Of these , the Condemnations of 1277 are considered particularly important by those historians who consider that they had a side effect of encouraging scholars to question the tenets of Aristotelian science . From this perspective , some revisionist historians maintain that the condemnations had positive effects on the development of science , perhaps even representing the beginnings of modern science .

= = Condemnation of 1210 = =

The Condemnation of 1210 was issued by the provincial synod of Sens , which included the Bishop of Paris as a member (at the time Peter of Nemours) . The writings of a number of medieval scholars were condemned , apparently for pantheism , and it was further stated that : " Neither the books of Aristotle on natural philosophy or their commentaries are to be read at Paris in public or secret , and this we forbid under penalty of excommunication . " However , this had only local force , and its application was further restricted to the Arts faculty at the University of Paris . Theologians were therefore left free to read the prohibited works , the titles of which were not even specified . Alexander of Aphrodisias was probably among the Aristotelian commentators whose influence was targeted .

The University of Toulouse (founded in 1229) tried to capitalise on the situation by advertising itself to students : " Those who wish to scrutinize the bosom of nature to the inmost can hear the books of Aristotle which were forbidden at Paris . " However , whether the prohibition had actually had an effect on the study of the physical texts in Paris is unclear . English scholars , including Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon , studied at Paris , when they could have chosen to study at the University of Oxford , where the works could still be discussed in public . It is assumed that at the least they continued to be read in Paris in private , and there are also signs that their discussion had become public by 1240 .

= = Condemnation of 1270 = =

By 1270 , the ban on Aristotle 's natural philosophy was a dead letter . Nevertheless , the Bishop of Paris , Étienne Tempier , convened a meeting of conservative theologians and in December 1270 banned the teaching of certain Aristotelian and Averroist doctrines at Paris . Thirteen propositions were listed as false and heretical , some relating to Averroes ' doctrine of the soul and the doctrine of monopsychism , and others directed against Aristotle 's theory of God as a passive Unmoved Mover . The banned propositions included :

- " That there is numerically one and the same intellect for all humans " .
- " That the soul separated [from the body] by death cannot suffer from bodily fire " .
- " That God cannot grant immortality and incorruption to a mortal and corruptible thing " .
- " That God does not know singulars " (i.e. , individual objects or creatures) .
- " That God does not know things other than Himself " .
- " That human acts are not ruled by the providence of God " .
- " That the world is eternal " .
- " That there was never a first human " .

Those who " knowingly " taught or asserted them as true would suffer automatic excommunication ,

with the implied threat of the medieval Inquisition if they persisted . It is not known which of these statements were " taught knowingly " or " asserted " by teachers at Paris , although Siger of Brabant and his radical Averroist colleagues at the Faculty of Arts were targets . Evidently , the radical masters had taught that Aristotle put forward controversial propositions ? which according to the Averroists would have been true at least in philosophy , even if rejected in theology - the doctrine of two truths ? and questions such as free will and the immortality of the soul were doubtless subject to scholarly debate between masters and students . However , it seems " inconceivable " that any teacher would deny God 's Providence or present the Aristotelian " Unmoved Mover " as the true God .

= = Condemnation of 1277 = =

The chain of events leading up to Bishop Tempier 's condemnation of 1277 is still not entirely clear . The Catholic Encyclopedia records that the theologians of the University of Paris had been very uneasy due to the antagonism that existed between Christian dogmas and certain Peripatetic doctrines . According to the historian Edward Grant , the theologians desired to condemn Aristotle 's teachings on the eternity of the world and the unicity of the intellect .

On 18 January 1277 , Pope John XXI instructed Bishop Tempier to investigate the complaints of the theologians . " Not only did Tempier investigate but in only three weeks , on his own authority , he issued a condemnation of 219 propositions drawn from many sources , including , apparently , the works of Thomas Aquinas , some of whose ideas found their way onto the list . " The list published on 7 March condemned a great number of " errors " , some of which emanated from the astrology , and others from the philosophy of the Peripatetics . These included :

9 . " That there was no first man , nor will there be a last ; on the contrary , there always was and always will be generation of man from man . "

49 . " That God could not move the heavens with rectilinear motion ; and the reason is that a vacuum would remain . "

87 . " That the world is eternal as to all the species contained in it ; and that time is eternal , as are motion , matter , agent , and recipient ; and because the world is from the infinite power of God , it is impossible that there be novelty in an effect without novelty in the cause . "

The penalty for anyone teaching or listening to the listed errors was excommunication , " unless they turned themselves in to the bishop or the chancellor within seven days , in which case the bishop would inflict proportionate penalties . " The condemnation sought to stop the Master of Arts teachers from interpreting the works of Aristotle in ways that were contrary to the beliefs of the Church . In addition to the 219 errors , the condemnation also covered Andreas Capellanus 's *De amore* , and unnamed or unidentified treatises on geomancy , necromancy , witchcraft , or fortunetelling .

The condemnation of 1277 was later partially annulled " insofar as the teachings of Thomas Aquinas would seem to be implied . "

= = = Assessment = = =

The long list has often been labelled as not being particularly organised , and that it is " broad in scope to the point of confusion . " However , the order on the roll has been attributed to factors such as the order in which the errors appeared in the examined works . The list was reorganised shortly after 1277 , possibly to facilitate its use in the academic community . In the 20th century , the articles were once again reorganised by Pierre Mandonnet , numbering and distinguishing the 179 philosophical theses from the 40 theological ones . The list was summarised into groupings and further explained by John F. Wippel . It has also been emphasised by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy that " Tempier 's theses express positions that cannot be maintained in light of revealed truth , and for this reason are each followed by the qualification ' error ' . "

Another problem was that Tempier did not identify the targets of his condemnation , merely indicating that it was directed against unspecified members of the Arts Faculty in Paris . Siger of

Brabant and Boethius of Dacia have been singled out as the most prominent targets of the 1277 censure , even though their names are not found in the document itself , appearing instead in the rubrics of only two of the many manuscripts that preserve the condemnation . These two scholars were important proponents of the Averroist movement . The ground @-@ breaking study by the historian Roland Hissette has shown that many of the censured propositions appear to have come from Aristotle , from Arab philosophers , or from " the philosophers " (i.e. other Greek philosophers) .

The role that Pope John XXI played in the lead up to the condemnations is a more recent point of discussion . Because the papal letter preceded Tempier 's condemnation by only about six weeks , the traditional assumption was that Tempier had acted on papal initiative , and in an overzealous and hasty way . However , more than forty days after Tempier produced his list , another papal letter gives no indication that the Pope was as yet aware of Tempier 's action , and seems to suggest otherwise . It is therefore possible that Tempier had already been preparing his condemnations prior to receiving the Pope 's first letter . The Pope himself had not played any direct role in the condemnations , having merely requested an investigation , and one scholar has argued that there was " less than enthusiastic papal approval of the bishop of Paris ' actions . "

= = = Effects = = =

Pierre Duhem considered that these condemnations " destroyed certain essential foundations of Peripatetic physics " . Although the Aristotelian system viewed propositions such as the existence of a vacuum to be ridiculously untenable , belief in Divine Omnipotence sanctioned them as possible , whilst waiting for science to confirm them as true . From at least 1280 onward , many masters at Paris and Oxford admitted that the laws of nature are certainly opposed to the production of empty space , but that the realisation of such a space is not , in itself , contrary to reason . These arguments gave rise to the branch of mechanical science known as dynamics .

Pierre Duhem and Edward Grant state this caused a break from Aristotle 's work and forced the teachers of the time to believe Aristotle 's work imperfect . According to Duhem , " if we must assign a date for the birth of modern science , we would , without doubt , choose the year 1277 when the bishop of Paris solemnly proclaimed that several worlds could exist , and that the whole of heavens could , without contradiction , be moved with a rectilinear motion . "

Duhem 's view has been extremely influential in the historiography of medieval science , and opened it up as a serious academic discipline . " Duhem believed that Tempier , with his insistence of God 's absolute power , had liberated Christian thought from the dogmatic acceptance of Aristotelianism , and in this way marked the birth of modern science . " The condemnations certainly had a positive effect on science , but scholars disagree over their relative influence . Historians in the field no longer fully endorse his view that modern science started in 1277 . Edward Grant is probably the contemporary historian of science who comes closest to Duhem 's vision . What historians do agree upon is that the condemnations allowed science " to consider possibilities that the great philosopher never envisioned . " According to the historian of science Richard Dales , they " seem definitely to have promoted a freer and more imaginative way of doing science . "

Others point out that in philosophy , a critical and skeptical reaction followed on from the Condemnations 1277 . Since the theologians had asserted that Aristotle had erred in theology , and pointed out the negative consequences of uncritical acceptance of his ideas , scholastic philosophers such as Duns Scotus and William of Ockham (both Franciscan friars) believed he might also be mistaken in matters of philosophy . The Scotist and Ockhamist movements set Scholasticism on a different path from that of Albert the Great and Aquinas , and the theological motivation of their philosophical arguments can be traced back to 1277 . They stressed the traditional Franciscan themes of Divine Omnipotence and Divine Freedom , which formed part of Ockham 's first thesis .

Ockham 's second thesis was the principle of parsimony : also known as Ockham 's razor . This developed a new form of logic , based on an empiricist theory of knowledge . " While Scholastic in setting , " as David Lindberg writes , it was " thoroughly modern in orientation . Referred to as the via

moderna , in opposition to the via antiqua of the earlier scholastics , it has been seen as a forerunner of a modern age of analysis . " Other , even more skeptical thinkers in the mid 14th century included John of Mirecourt and Nicholas of Autrecourt . It has been suggested that the new philosophy of nature that emerged from the rise of Skepticism following the Condemnations , contained " the seeds from which modern science could arise in the early seventeenth century . "