

ANA MARÍA MORA-MÁRQUEZ, *The Thirteenth-Century Notion of Signification: The Discussions and Their Origin and Development*. (Investigating Medieval Philosophy 10.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015. Pp. 256. \$142. ISBN: 978-900-429867-5. doi:10.1086/693663

In this slim, dense, and heavily text-based book, Mora-Márquez traces the development of the semantic notion of “signification” (*significatio*) from its origins in two distinct Greek philosophical conceptions, *semeion* and *symbolon*, into a uniquely medieval concept. Because medieval philosophers drew from both logical and grammatical traditions when discussing signification, there is no unified conception of the notion that holds across the entire thirteenth century or in all relevant disciplines. Mora-Márquez teases out the differences, explains how they relate to each other, and identifies the roots of the differences. Due to the complexity of the material, the book requires careful thought and attention in order to grasp all the subtle nuances in the ancient and medieval views.

The main argument is that over the thirteenth century two opposing ancient views of signification, rooted in the logical tradition of signification based on Boethius, and ultimately Aristotle; and the grammatical tradition of signification, based on Priscian, were developed into a single coherent concept. The coherence was eventually obtained by limiting the use of the concept in logic and grammar and highlighting its use in simple linguistic institution. By the end of the thirteenth century, signification played a central role in the institution of linguistic signs, and almost none in logical and grammatical accounts.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 is on “Signification of Concepts and Signification of Things” and considers the question of what it is that words signify. Part 2, “Signification in Logic and in Grammar,” looks at applications of signification. Bookending these are an introduction, a conclusion, a list of abbreviations, a bibliography (unedited primary texts; edited primary texts; and secondary texts), and indices (of subjects; modern authors; and ancient and medieval authors). Primary sources in Latin and Greek are translated into English by Mora-Márquez, with the originals in footnotes (which also contain comprehensive references to relevant contemporary secondary discussions). The translations occasionally incorporate infelicities, such as the use of “she” as the generic pronoun; while this may have become commonplace in contemporary philosophical literature, it is anachronistic to impose modern linguistic gender norms on medieval sources, particularly sources written in a gendered language where changing “he” to “she” makes the translation unfaithful. Additionally, while all primary sources in Greek and Latin are translated, secondary sources in other languages, such as French, are not.

In chapter 1 Mora-Márquez argues that Aristotle’s theory of meaning in *Perihermeneias* is aimed at identifying the grounds for assigning truth or falsity to assertions, and in particular, when one assertion is contradicted by another; and that the dialectical context is essential to understanding the theory. Because the focus is on how one can convey information by means of assertions, it is the truth values of *assertions* (that is, asserted sentences) rather than the truth value of (unasserted) sentences that is important, rather than how we are able to create truthful linguistic representations. Signification is central to conveying information because of the connection between signification and “being a sign of.” In order for something to be a sign of something, it must be a sign *for someone*, that is, one must have a particular person to whom the information is being conveyed. Boethius inherited this approach to language from Aristotle but was also influenced by Porphyry, who, in contrast, *was* interested in how we are able to obtain truthful linguistic representations.

This mixed inheritance provides the foundation for the medieval discussions, two of which are chosen in chapter 2 as representative and illustrative of different problems associated with the concept of signification. The first question is whether words signify concepts or things. Martin of Dacia and Peter Auvergne argued, contra Boethius, that names are im-

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posed on and signify concepts, as opposed to things; they were contradicted by Robert Kilwardby (on the grounds that because words do not signify naturally, they cannot have signification by imposition) and Albert the Great (on the grounds that since we cannot have cognitive access to essences, we cannot impose words directly on them). The second question, whether words lose their signification upon the destruction of their significate, is investigated through the sophism sentence “*Omnis homo de necessitate est animal*” (Every man of necessity is an animal), abbreviated OHNEA. The question is whether this sentence is true when there are no men, and in section 2.2, Mora-Márquez identifies four ways in which this question can be answered: (1) When there are no men, *homo* loses its signification, and OHNEA is neither true nor false. (2) The signification is not lost, and OHNEA is false. (3) The signification is not false, and OHNEA is true in one sense but false in another (via a distinction between actual being and dispositional or habitual being). (4) The signification is not lost, and OHNEA is true. The answers given by Roger Bacon, Boethius of Dacia, Peter John Olivi, and the author of the *Anonymous Alani* cumulatively provide witnesses for all four types of answers.

The second half of the book turns to the different ways in which the notion of signification is used in grammatical and logical contexts. In chapter 3, we are introduced to the different definitions of “name” (= “noun”) and “verb” in the logical tradition of Aristotle and in the grammatical tradition of Priscian. Aristotle’s definitions pick out “the features that allow words to bring about assertions that are susceptible of truth and falsity,” while Priscian aimed at determining “the features that allow words to be divided into different grammatical categories” (121). In the final chapter, Mora-Márquez presents the view of the late thirteenth-century modist grammarians, who argued that the way in which a word signifies (its mode of signification) is what gives it the part of speech that it has. This can be contrasted with the nonmodist approach of the logicians, who over the course of the thirteenth century followed Aristotle’s focus on the ways in which sentences can be used to make assertions and contradictions, and shifted from the question of how language can represent reality (that is, questions of when and how sentences are true and false) to questions of argumentative method (that is, when two assertions are contradictory).

In the conclusion, Mora-Márquez argues that the ultimate goal of a coherent notion of signification that could be used to justify both logic and grammar as scientific disciplines resulted in an increasing narrowing of the concept until it was no longer closely connected to either discipline. Modist grammar, whose heights were reached in the 1260s and 1270s, had almost entirely disappeared by the end of the century. Logic, too, was infected by the rampant nominalism that was in place by the end of the century, and in such an ontologically austere setting, it is not clear what role signification can play.

The book suffers occasionally from some nonstandard English and a lack of uniformity of vocabulary. For example, on one page “communicational” is found used for exactly the same concept as “communicative” (a preferable choice), which is used on the next page. Similarly, in section 2.1, “stand for” and “signify” are apparently used as synonyms; given that the former is often used as a translation of *suppositio* rather than *significatio*, this is confusing for anyone familiar with thirteenth-century semantic vocabulary. Elsewhere (119–20) what had previously been called “verbs” are called “attributes” without the change in terminology being explicitly pointed out. Finally, the awkward “datation” occurs in footnote 37 (140), where “dating” would be more natural. However, I found only two typos, one in footnote 117 (“voluntary” for “voluntary”), and another that probably only I would notice, as my name is misspelled in the acknowledgments.

The primary audience of the book is specialists in medieval logic and philosophy of language, and those lacking this background will likely find the book hard going. But for the specialist, it is a phenomenal resource, meticulously researched, interesting in content, and filling a very important gap in our understanding of semantic theory in the thirteenth cen-

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ture. Now, all we need, as Mora-Márquez points out, is someone to write the fourteenth-century sequel!

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LAWRENCE NEES, *Perspectives on Early Islamic Art in Jerusalem*. (Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World 5.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015. Pp. xvii, 242; many color figures. \$179. ISBN: 978-90-04-30176-4.  
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The Dome of the Rock sits atop one of the most richly symbolic sites of human occupation—a place known to Jews as the Temple Mount, where Solomon was believed to have built his shrine; and to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif, or the Noble Sanctuary. The location's historical and archaeological stratigraphy is as substantial as it is contested, having witnessed both moments of violent destruction and periods of significant patronage from prehistoric times to the current day. Lawrence Nees's *Perspectives on Early Islamic Art in Jerusalem* focuses on this patch of the city in the seventh century, at the moment when it took on many of the features still recognizable today. To specialists both in medieval and Islamic art, the author's background as an early Western medievalist might at first cause some surprise. In his introduction (chapter 1), Nees explicitly acknowledges his outsider status, making clear that his intent is to "pose some unexpected and provocative but also fruitful questions" (4).

Nees presents a series of case studies addressing problematic or overlooked issues concerning the area's earliest Islamic constructions. In chapter 2 ("The Earliest Mosque in Jerusalem"), Nees argues that the Haram itself was the first major place of prayer in the city and focuses specifically on an now-empty zone on the eastern side of the platform. Chapter 3 ("The Problem of 'Arculf' and the Earliest Mosque in Jerusalem") dismantles an early eighth-century European pilgrimage account about the site, *De locis sanctis* by Adomnan, abbot of Iona, which purports to be the eyewitness testimony of a certain "Arculf." Nees evaluates the text's historic veracity in describing the original size and location of this mosque and ultimately recognizes the text's literary valences and exegetical messages over its documentary value. Chapter 4 ("The Dome of the Chain: An Essay in Interpretation") turns to the small, open-air octagonal structure flanking the Dome of the Rock. Nees notes that there has been no dedicated study of this monument to date, a surprising fact given its charged location and evidently early Islamic dating. He offers an iconographic evaluation of the architectural features of the monument, particularly the arrangement of its spoliated Roman columns and capitals, to posit the structure's use as a royal enclosure. In chapter 5 ("The Columns and Eagle Capitals in the Dome of the Rock"), Nees studies figural capitals at the Dome of the Rock, which have also largely escaped scholarly consideration. He connects the iconography of the capitals to Byzantine and Umayyad artifacts depicting birds in various media to argue for the capitals' "metaphoric or symbolic significance" (125) and imperial connotations. Nees raises questions about the use of figural imagery in an Islamic religious space and considers whether the capitals' placement suggests ritualistic activities on the Haram.

Chapter 6 ("Conclusion: Crossing Borders") outlines many of the challenges facing scholars interested in early Islamic visual or material culture. Nees argues that art historical scholarship on the period will benefit from more encompassing approaches that look across disciplinary divides to address the overlaps and shared practices among the period's various confessional and linguistic communities. Nees rightfully describes the practical hurdles in working in this area of art history, including the field's small number of practitioners, political impediments to excavation at the sacred site, conflicting historical sources, and poorly documented archaeological remains. That few scholars have ever addressed the Dome of

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