

Aquinas' New Aristotle and the Platonists:  
*Plotinus unus de magnis...inter commentatores de Aristotilis* (Aquinas, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*)<sup>1</sup>

A lecture for the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame  
Background Paper

Pope Leo XIII's purposes, when he directed the restoration of Christian philosophy "according to the mind of St Thomas Aquinas the Angelic Doctor," assumed that changes in that mind were rare. *Aeterni patris* was imbued with a war mentality out to resist the spirit of aggressive innovation in the hope of making philosophy once again firm and strong and solid.<sup>2</sup> Most of those joining in the revival shared the Papal desire that philosophical stability would result from education by the "angelic wisdom" of Thomas.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for Étienne Gilson, the infallibility of the Magisterium and the immutability of Thomas' philosophy were closely associated.<sup>4</sup> It was impossible both that the Church of Rome was the true Church and that she had made an error about the thinker she had chosen to be her "common doctor".<sup>5</sup> God's revelation of his name in Exodus guaranteed Thomas' metaphysic of *esse*. Nothing philosophy might discover could unsettle this Christian metaphysic.<sup>6</sup> In fact, despite our judgements contrary to Gilson's about whence Aquinas arrived at "*Qui est*" as the most

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<sup>1</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 43 (Rome 1976), cap. 3, p. 305, ll. 272-73.

<sup>2</sup> On the formula, "ad mentem" in Leo XIII's *Cum hoc sit* (4 August 1880), see Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 19. For the Pontiff's view of St Thomas, see *Aeterni patris* promulgated in the preceding year to which, from *Cum hoc sit*, a title "On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy According to the Mind of St Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor" was later added; see, for example, the translation of *Aeterni patris* in volume one of the 1911 translation of the *Summa Theologica* by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. On the Pope's intentions, see my "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism," *S. Tommaso nella storia del pensiero*, in *Atti dell' VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale*, 8 vols., ed. A. Piolanti, viii, Studi Tomistici 17 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982), 39–52.

<sup>3</sup> On what could happen to those, who, like M.-D. Chenu, tried to place Aquinas in his time and situation, see G. Alberigo, M. D. Chenu, E. Fouilloux, J.P. Jossa, J. Ladrière, *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir* (Paris: Cerf, 1985). On the character of Chenu's work, there are "Hommage au père M. D. Chenu," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 75, no. 3, (1991); Jan Grootaers, "Marie-Dominique Chenu, revisité," *Revue théologique de Louvain*, 27 (1996), 78–84 at 79, quoting Ruedi Imbach: in contrast to Maritain and Gilson "Chenu insiste sur le caractère *historique* de l'oeuvre". "Le projet historique du P. Chenu" in *Penser avec Thomas d'Aquin: Etudes thomistes de Louis-Bretrand Geiger OP*, présentées par Ruedi Imbach, Pensée antique et médiévale (Paris/ Fribourg: Cerf/ Editions Universitaires de Fribourg, 2000), xvi–xviii. See on Gilson's refusal to recognise Thomas' change of mind on Plato as holding the *creatio ex nihilo*, Mark Johnson "Aquinas' Changing Evaluation of Plato on Creation," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 66:1 (1992): 81–88 at 85, note 18.

<sup>4</sup> See Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 39–45 where one finds also a contrasting presentation of Chenu.

<sup>5</sup> É. Gilson, *Le philosophe et la théologie* (Paris: Fayard, 1960), 61: "Il était improbable que l'Église se fût trompée à ce point dans le choix d'un docteur commun et d'un patron de toutes les écoles catholiques. Trois propositions s'offraient ensemble à notre esprit: l'Église de Rome est la véritable Église; Thomas d'Aquin, comme le disait parfois le P. Laberthonnière, a fait à cette Église plus de mal que ne lui en a fait Luther; en philosophie comme en théologie, la norme de l'enseignement de l'Église est la doctrine de saint Thomas d'Aquin. L'une ou l'autre de ces propositions pouvait être vraie, elles ne pouvaient être vraies toutes à la fois."

<sup>6</sup> See my "From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: the Fate of Gilsonian Thomism in English-speaking North America," *Dionysius* 16 (1998): 157–188 at 187.

appropriate name of God, and about what it means,<sup>7</sup> we must affirm that Aquinas changed few of his doctrines. However, quieting Aquinas' mind into stasis, on this basis, would require severe abstractions of form from content and of meaning from context. Fixing his thinking by such means would return us, in effect, to manual scholasticism.<sup>8</sup>

In order to consider how Aquinas does change his mind a very great deal, I want to discuss with you this evening what happens to the *auctoritates*, particularly, Aristotle and the Platonists, in Thomas' dialectical teaching, especially after he has new or revised translations of Aristotle done from the Greek, rather than through the Arabic mediation, and first time translations from Greek into Latin of the Greek commentators and Proclus. This is Aquinas' "new" Aristotle.

#### AUGUSTINE OR ARISTOTLE?

One doctrinal change was recognised very early (about 1280) and continued to be acknowledged afterwards.<sup>9</sup> It is Thomas' important stepwise acceptance that knowledge involves the analogous formation of a Plotinian - Augustinian inner word (*verbum interius*) in minds, created and divine. This change makes a great difference for how humans know the Trinity and become deiform.<sup>10</sup> Scholars agree in tracing a development from the early *Commentary on the Sentences* through the *Disputed Questions on Truth* to the last redaction of the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. Significantly, however, the question among them is as to whether Aquinas was coming more under Augustinian theological influence or, whether, on the contrary, he was working out more radically the implications of an Aristotelian account of knowing.<sup>11</sup> The import of his diverse positions, their significance for the balance in his teaching of revelation and reason, grace and nature, questions of what Thomas read and how he read it, and of when he wrote his various works are wrapped up with judgments about how he stands to the ancient and mediaeval philosophical schools and theological traditions. Thus, a Dutch scholar concludes:

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<sup>7</sup>Aquinas, *ST* 1,13.11. For the source and historically contextualised meaning, see my *God in Himself, Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae*, Oxford Theological Monographs / Oxford Scholarly Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987/ 2000), 3–6.

<sup>8</sup>This is my version of the quelling decontextualising of Aquinas' teaching identified by Mark D. Jordan in "The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching and Its Failures," *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, Faith in Reason: Philosophical Inquiries (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 41–54 and in "St Thomas and the Police," *Rewritten Theology. Aquinas After His Readers*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 1–17.

<sup>9</sup>Harm Goris, "Theology and Theory of the Word in Aquinas: Understanding Augustine by Innovating Aristotle," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, edited by Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 61–78 at 64.

<sup>10</sup>For one view of these see see my *God in Himself*, 133–35.

<sup>11</sup>See in addition to Goris, Henri Paissac, *Théologie du verbe. Saint Augustin et saint Thomas* (Paris: Cerf, 1951), P. Vanier, *Théologie trinitaire chez s. Thomas d'Aquin. Evolution du concept d'action notionnelle*, Université de Montréal Publications de l'institut d'études médiévales 13 (Montréal/Paris 1953), D.J. Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity. A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Studies and Texts 96 (Toronto: PIMS, 1990) and Bruce D. Marshall, "Aquinas the Augustinian? On the Uses of Augustine in Aquinas's Trinitarian Theology," and "*Imago Dei*: A Test Case for St. Thomas's Augustinianism," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 41–61 and 100–144 respectively. Merriell stands increasingly alone in asserting that Aquinas moved towards Augustine as a result of reading the *De Trinitate*.

His elaboration of Aristotle's cognitive theory constitutes a radical innovation, going beyond Aristotle himself...Aquinas reconciles Augustinian theological heritage with an Aristotelian position, to the benefit of both.<sup>12</sup>

#### AUGUSTINE AND ARISTOTLE OR DIONYSIUS AND PROCLUS

At about same time that Aquinas had completed his change of mind on the mental word, he was working on his *Exposition of the Divine Names of Dionysius*. In part of it he used William of Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Categories* (finished in March 1266) which went with his translation of the commentary of Simplicius on the same.<sup>13</sup> The *Exposition* is the first of the long list of commentaries on non-Scriptural, Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian books which Aquinas undertook in the wake of William of Moerbeke's new translations, or revisions of the translations, of Aristotle, of Greek commentators on Aristotle, and of Proclus. Scholars frequently note the dependence of Aquinas' *Exposition of the De Anima* on Moerbeke's translation of Themistius' annotated paraphrase of the same work finished on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1267,<sup>14</sup> and the temporal coincidence between Aquinas on the *De Anima* and his treatise on human nature in the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>15</sup> However, the sequence in which Moerbeke's translation of Simplicius precedes the *Exposition of the Divine Names*, and the overlap in time and place of the beginning of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa*, are less noticed.<sup>16</sup> Yet one of their effects may be a profoundly important change not only in Thomas' theology but in that of the Latin West generally. This is the separation of the *de deo uno* (qq. 3-26) from the *de deo trino* (qq. 27-43) within Thomas' treatise *de deo* in the *Summa Theologiae* and his placing the *de deo uno* first. Thomas is said to be the originator of this fundamental structural determinant of the *de deo* and it appears for the first time there.<sup>17</sup> Further, while it has been maintained either (or both!) that Augustinian or Aristotelian rationalism underlies his division and ordering of the treatise, Thomas is explicit that he finds this distinction, and the reason for beginning from the divine as one and good, in Dionysius, and that no reduction of theology to philosophical reason is involved. Dionysius said that he separated the consideration of the undifferentiated and the

<sup>12</sup> Goris, "Theology and Theory of the Word," 78.

<sup>13</sup> Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories d'Aristote, Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, ed. A. Pattin, 2 volumes, Corpus Latinorum commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum 1-2 (vol. 1, Louvain/Paris, 1971, vol. 2 Leiden, 1975). There is a list of citations by Aquinas at vol. 1, xiv; at 1, xi, Pattin dates the work as finished in March 1266. On Aquinas' use of the new translation in his exposition of Dionysius, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume 1, The Person and His Work*, revised edition, translated by Robert Royal (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 434.

<sup>14</sup> Themistius, *Commentaire sur le Traité de l'âme d'Aristote, traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, édition critique et étude sur l'utilisation du Commentaire dans l'oeuvre de saint Thomas par G. Verbeke, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum 1 (Louvain / Paris, 1957).

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *A Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, trans. Robert Pasnau (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1999), xiv-xviii.

<sup>16</sup> Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Volume 1*, 333, 426, 346, 434.

<sup>17</sup> See W.J. Hankey, "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani*, ed. L. Obertello, (Roma: Herder, 1981), 367-375, idem, *God in Himself*, 24-35, idem, "Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot," *Christian Origins: Theology, rhetoric and community*, edited by Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones, Studies in Christian Origins (London: Routledge, 1998), 139-184 at 168-59, Paul Rorem "'Procession and Return' in Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors," *The Princeton Seminary Review* 13, #2 (1992), 147-163, idem, *Pseudo-Dionysius. A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 169-74.

differentiated names into distinct treatises.<sup>18</sup> Thomas also learns from Dionysius that “*unum habet rationem principii*.”<sup>19</sup> Further, following Dionysius, he begins his own *de deo uno*, which clearly takes the *On the Divine Names* as a model, with perfection and goodness—which immediately follow simplicity. By a Neoplatonic logic, following the one Dionysius derived from Proclus, which circles upon itself, having begun it with simplicity, Aquinas concludes the first section of the *de deo uno* with God’s unity.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the logic by which Aquinas will treat the procession of creatures after the procession of the Divine Persons because they all act together in creation, he also finds in the *Divine Names*.<sup>21</sup>

There are three elements of interest to us here. First, scholars divide about who Aquinas is following, so the changes are again at least partly about the characterisation of the players in his philosophical theology and their relations to one another. Second, we begin to see the role his commentaries, undertaken when he has Moerbeke’s translations, play on his thinking. Third, Aristotle keeps altering his character: in one movement, he is philosophical reason against Augustinian piety, contrastingly, in the other, Augustine and Aristotle are united when theology is infected by rationalism. In the next change we shall consider, Aquinas himself moves Dionysius, Augustine, Plato and Aristotle in relation to one another.

#### DIONYSIUS THE ARISTOTELIAN

Another kind of change of Thomas’ mind is indubitable. We see it in his representation of Dionysius’ philosophical affiliation. In his *Sentences Commentary*, when determining whether the heavens are of the same elemental nature as the inferior creation, Thomas observed that, before Aristotle, all thought they were identical. After him, “because of the efficacy of his reasons,” philosophers agreed and everyone followed Aristotle’s opinion. “Similarly the expositors of sacred Scripture differed on this matter, according as they were followers of the different philosophers by whom they were educated in philosophical matters.” Thus Basil and Augustine and many of the saints follow the opinion of Plato “in philosophical matters which do not regard the faith. Dionysius, however, almost everywhere follows Aristotle, as is clear to those who diligently look into his books.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio*, ed. C. Pera (Turin/ Rome: Marietti, 1950), II, i, § 110, p. 38, §121, p. 40, §§126-127, pp. 40–41, II, l. 2, §141, p. 46. It is not important that there is considerable doubt as to whether Dionysius wrote the *Theological Representations*, Aquinas thought he had.

<sup>19</sup> Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii*, II, ii, §143, p. 46. See also, II, ii, §135, p. 45.

<sup>20</sup> See my *God in Himself*, 57–80. and H.-D. Saffrey, “Theology as science (3rd-6th centuries),” trans. W.J. Hankey, *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIX, edited by Elizabeth A. Livingstone, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 321–39.

<sup>21</sup> Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii*, II, ii, §153, p. 48 and *ST* 1.45.6 “Whether to create is proper to any person?”: “On the contrary, Dionysius says (*Div. Nom.* ii) that all things caused are the common work of the whole Godhead.”

<sup>22</sup> Aquinas, *In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, vol. 1 (of 8), *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Busa (Stuttgart / Bad Cannstatt 1980) lib. 2, dist. 14, quest. 1, art. 2, 164. The online version is as follows: *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 14 q. 1 a. 2 co. *Respondeo dicendum, quod circa hanc quaestionem fuit philosophorum diversa positio. Omnes enim ante Aristotelem posuerunt, caelum esse de natura quatuor elementorum. Aristoteles autem primus hanc viam improbavit, et posuit caelum esse quintam essentiam sine gravitate et levitate et aliis contrariis, ut patet in 1 caeli et mundi; et propter efficaciam rationum ejus, posteriores philosophi consenserunt sibi; unde nunc omnes opinionem ejus sequuntur. Similiter etiam expositores sacrae Scripturae in hoc diversificati sunt, secundum quod diversorum philosophorum sectatores fuerunt, a quibus in philosophicis eruditi sunt. Basilus enim et Augustinus et plures sanctorum sequuntur in philosophicis quae ad fidem non spectant, opiniones Platonis: et ideo ponunt caelum de natura quatuor elementorum. Dionysius autem fere ubique sequitur Aristotelem, ut patet diligenter inspicienti libros ejus: unde ipse separat corpora caelestia ab aliis corporibus. Et ideo hanc positionem sequens dico, quod caelum non est de natura quatuor elementorum, sed est quintum corpus.* Generally in this paper I use the online *Corpus Thomisticum* Latin text, recognovit ac instruxit Enrique Alarcón automato electronico Pampilonae ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes a MM A.D. I indicate when I am using another edition.

Despite the riches of this answer in respect to Aquinas' view of Aristotle, the philosophical schools, the relation between philosophical argument and general opinion, and the relations between philosophy and Christian theology, we are not told what, besides much inspection of the Dionysian *corpus*, inspired his “almost everywhere” judgment.<sup>23</sup>

About a decade later, in his *Exposition of the De divinis nominibus*, Aquinas exhibits an altered view and an important advance in his knowledge of Platonism. He discerns how “one” functions as principle of everything. In the same section of the *Exposition* where he used the new translation of Aristotle, he lists “five modes in which one has the nature (*ratio*) of principle” and identifies two of them as coming from Plato.<sup>24</sup> His understanding of the subordination of all to the First Principle in Platonism will keep growing and, among other important consequences, will change his view of Plato. In later works, he will unite Plato to Aristotle—and conform Aristotle to Plato—in teaching that God creates *ex nihilo*. Now, earlier, in the *Proemium* to his *Exposition*, Aquinas discerns something else about Platonism which will endure, increase in importance, and be crucial to the conciliation of Plato and Aristotle. He sees that the Dionysian “way of speaking” and style, which he characterises as “obscure”, were those used by the Platonists. This is far from being a condemnation and points to another possible concordance. Platonic reasoning by way of separated abstractions is “neither consonant with the faith nor the truth”, when used in respect to natural things, on these Aristotle is always right for Aquinas. In contrast, when Platonists “spoke of the First Principle of things they are most true and consonant with Christian faith.” Thus, Dionysius is right to speak about God in terms of “goodness, or super-goodness or the principally good, or the goodness of all good.”<sup>25</sup> In later works, following Simplicius, he will tell us that obscure and poetic speech is both Platonic and suitable to theology, but that Aristotle and his followers interpret and refute him as if he were speaking literally. While Thomas will normally side with Aristotle in the literal dispute, nonetheless, room is left for a concord should letter be replaced by intention.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This has not prevented my guessing that the doctrinal likenesses, acknowledged by Aquinas and modern scholars between the Dionysian *corpus* and the *Liber de causis*, and Dionysius' Iamblichan-Proclean view of how we know which bears more resemblance to Aquinas' Aristotle than to his Plato are at play. See for example, my “Thomas' Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius,” *Dionysius* 20 (2002): 153–178 at 163–4 and “Aquinas, Plato, and Neo-Platonism” for *The Oxford Handbook to Aquinas* edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) in press.

<sup>24</sup> Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii*, XIII, ii §981, p. 364.

<sup>25</sup> Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii*, proemium §2, pp. 1–2.

<sup>26</sup> See on this his *Exposition of the De Caelo et mundo* and *Exposition of the De Anima*, my “Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas,” *The Heythrop Journal*, 42:3 (2001): 329–348 at 333–334. Here I give the same references and add some of the many possible more, Aquinas, *In Aristotelis Libros de Caelo et Mundo Expositio*, in idem, *In Aristotelis Libros de Caelo et Mundo, de Generatione et Corruptione, Meteorologicorum Expositio*, ed. R.M. Spiazzi (Turin/ Rome: Marietti, 1952), I, xx11, §§227–228, p. 108–109; I, xxiii, §233, p. 112. At III, ii, §§ 553–554, p. 282, Aquinas notes the view of Simplicius that Parmenides and Melissus are treated: *secundum ea quae exterius ex eorum verbis apparebant, ne aliqui, superficialiter intelligentes, deciperentur: secundum autem rei veritatem, intentio horum philosophorum erat quod ipsum ens* and refers to Hesiod as “*unus de theologis poetis, qui divina sub tegumentis quarundam fabularum tradiderunt*”; Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. 45, pars 1 (Commissio Leonina / Vrin: Rome / Paris, 1984), I, viii, at 407a2, lines 3–22, p. 38; Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. M.R. Cathala and R.M. Spiazzi (Turin / Rome: Marietti, 1964) 3.11 §468, p. 131 citing Simplicius *On the Categories*, he compares the hiding of the truth about the gods by the “philosophers of nature, Orpheus, Hesiod and others” to Plato hiding philosophical truth under mathematics”; *In Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. P.M. Maggiolo (Turin/ Rome: Marietti, 1965), I, xv, §138, p. 68 Aristotle is detected taking Plato's metaphors literally.

In the *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, which shows Aquinas' reading of both Themistius and Simplicius, he reaffirmed his earlier placing of Augustine within the Platonic tradition. Thomas judged: "Augustine followed Plato as much as the Catholic faith would allow."<sup>27</sup> He borrowed from the commentary of Simplicius *On the Categories* to explain the differences between the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophical procedures. When asking whether the spiritual substance, which is the human soul, is united to the body through a medium, he has Dionysius, John Damascene, Augustine, Peter Lombard, Averroes, lots of diverse Aristotle, and others in the *sic et non*. Thomas' Aristotelian hylomorphism, for which he warred against the Augustinians at great risk, is at stake.<sup>28</sup> Before he determined the matter "according to the true principles of philosophy which Aristotle considered",<sup>29</sup> Thomas places the opinions within a schema. He explains:

The diversity of these two positions stems from this, that some, in order to seek the truth about the nature of things, have proceeded from intelligible reasons, and this was the particular characteristic of the Platonists. Some, however, have proceeded from sensible things, and this was the particular characteristic of the philosophy of Aristotle, as Simplicius says in his commentary *Upon the Categories*.<sup>30</sup>

All depends upon whether abstractions exist separately and whether human reason can move down from them.

About six years into his work on the non-Scriptural commentaries, when he wrote the last question of his *Disputed Questions on Evil*, Aquinas put Augustine and Dionysius together. In a series of replies to objections, he first judges that Augustine spoke about the bodies of demons "as they seemed to some learned persons, that is the Platonists." According to the logic he took from Simplicius, Thomas goes on in the second reply to both affirm and correct the Platonists on how we know, and, in the third, he declares the philosophical allegiance of the Areopagite: "Dionysius was a follower of the judgments of the Platonists for the most part."<sup>31</sup> Two or three years later, in his *Exposition on the Liber de Causis*, which depends on his reading of Moerbeke's 1268 translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, Thomas decides both that its author "seems to follow the judgment of Dionysius" and that Aristotle, the Catholic faith, Dionysius, and his equally Proclean and Plotinian Arabic author are frequently in accord.<sup>32</sup> The *Treatise on Separate Substances*, written at the

<sup>27</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, ed. J. Cos, Commissio Leonina, vol. 24, 2 (Rome/ Paris, 2000), 10 ad 8, 113, lines 515–516: *Augustinus autem, Platonem secutus quantum fides catholica patiebatur.*

<sup>28</sup> On the Augustinians and what was at stake, see Alain Boureau, *Théologie, science et censure au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le cas de Jean Peckham, L'âne d'or* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999), 31; F.-X. Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines de Bonaventure à Duns Scot*, Initiations au Moyen Âge (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 46–47, and Fergus Kerr, "Thomas Aquinas," *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 201–220 at 208.

<sup>29</sup> Aquinas, *de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 3, p. 42, lines 351-52: *secundum uera philosophie principia que considerauit Aristotiles.*

<sup>30</sup> Aquinas, *de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 3, p. 40, lines 275-282: *Harum autem duarum opinionum diuersitas ex hoc procedit quod quidam ad inquirendam ueritatem de natura rerum processerunt ex rationibus intelligibilibus : et hoc fuit proprium Platoniorum, quidam uero ex rebus sensibilibus : et hoc fuit proprium philosophie Aristotilis, ut dicit Simplicius in Commento super Praedicamenta.* Aquinas is referring to Simplicius, *In Praedicamenta Aristotelis*, Prologus (Pattin: vol. 1, prologus, 8, line 70-9, line 85.)

<sup>31</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Malo*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. 23 (Rome / Paris, 1982), 16.1 ad 1, ad 2, and ad 3, p. 283. In the ad 3 we have "*Dionysius qui in plurimis fuit sectator sententiae Platonice.*"

<sup>32</sup> Aquinas, *Super Librum De Causis Expositio*, ed. H.-D. Saffrey, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition corrigée (Paris: Vrin, 2002), Prop. 4, p. 33, lines 11-12: *supra dictum est secundum sententiam DIONYSII, quam uidetur sequi AUCTOR huius libri.* On the

same time, combines a progressive history of philosophy with a complementary concordance of Aristotle and Platonism to serve establishing the truth about the immaterial substances who are the instruments of revelation and providence.

The movements I have traced exhibit that, for Aquinas from the beginning, there is an intimate relation between philosophy and Christian theology. Philosophical positions and ways of reason can be both false and contrary to the faith, and some of the saints follow dangerous philosophical roads. However, a philosophical way with true principles and convincing reasoning is available. After the Greek commentators help him to better understand its dynamic, he will become able to show how philosophy has a shape in which thought is compelled towards truth. He will do this after the manner of Aristotle, but the Stagirite will be read within a much more extensive and generous Neoplatonic vision of the history of philosophy than was his own. Because most of Thomas' guides will be either Neoplatonic commentators on Aristotle or, if Arabic Peripatetics, have reconciled Proclus and Aristotle,<sup>33</sup> philosophical truth for Aquinas will involve an embrace by Aristotle of his teacher which was beyond the Philosopher's own grasp. What impels the philosophical commentaries devoted to understanding, clarifying, expositing, and testing this true path has appeared. These stories show something else as well: how philosophical positions transmute, interchange and complement one another in Thomas' thinking.

#### HOW THOMAS USES AUTHORITIES: DIONYSIUS WITH ARISTOTLE

As to the transmutation, consider that the first identification of Dionysius as a follower of Aristotle was associated with his views on celestial spirits and celestial bodies, next, a style and way of reasoning and speaking moved him in the opposite direction towards identification among the followers of Plato. Finally, under the influence, or at least the authority of Simplicius, the choice of the opposed points from which knowing begins became the criterion for placement in a philosophical sect. Here, however, a problem arises: his two leading Christian followers of Plato use opposed starting points. Thomas' casting of the positions of his authorities so that they complement or transmute one another in order to move the argument towards the right determination is illustrated by a complex case which I hope to explain simply.<sup>34</sup> One of the uses of the case is to remind us that Thomas and his contemporaries are swimming in a sea of misidentified texts.

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comparisons Thomas makes between the Liber, Proclus, Dionysius and Aristotle, see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, "Saint Thomas lecteur du *Liber de causis*," in idem, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis* (Paris: Vrin, 1995), 229–258.

<sup>33</sup> On how the Arabs continue the late ancient programme, see de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge*, 20; idem, *La querelle des universaux: De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Des travaux (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 117 and 68–124; G. Endress, "The New and Improved Platonic Theology. Proclus Arabus and Arabic Islamic Philosophy," in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne. Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998) en l'honneur de H.D. Saffrey et L.G. Westerink*, éd. A.Ph. Segonds et C. Steel, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 1, XXVI (Leuven / Paris: Leuven University Press / Les Belles Lettres, 2000), 553–570. On the Arab continuation and original reinterpretation of the programme—including dealing with what they knew of Philoponus' opposition to it, see Cristina D'Ancona, "The Topic of the 'Harmony Between Plato and Aristotle': Some Examples in Early Arabic Philosophy," in *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, ed. A. Speer and L. Wegener (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 379–405 and idem, "Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in translation," *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10–31.

<sup>34</sup> More complete explications will be found in my "Magis...Pro Nostra Sententia': John Wyclif, his mediaeval Predecessors and reformed Successors, and a pseudo-Augustinian Eucharistic Decretal," *Augustiniana* 45: 3-4 (1995): 213–245 and my "Reading Augustine through Dionysius: Aquinas' correction of one Platonism by another," *Aquinas the Augustinian*, Chapter 10, 243–257.

In one of these, Aquinas finds attributed to Augustine a text by Lanfranc in which the body of Christ in the Eucharist is a sacrament of itself; thus, an invisible thing is sacrament of another invisible reality. This contradicts genuine statements of Augustine well-known to Aquinas, most famously “A sacrament is a visible form of invisible grace.”<sup>35</sup> Because Bonaventure allowed intellectual intuition for humans, he used an Augustinian view of human knowing to arrive at a doctrine of the sacraments which contradicted the genuine texts of Augustine, for the sake of the texts falsely ascribed to him. Aquinas did the opposite. For the sake of brevity, I skip over how he treated in his *Sentences Commentary* what Lombard rightly signalled as a troublesome text and move directly to the *Summa theologiae* where he, not Lombard, arranges the authorities.

By the fourth article of the question “On Sacraments”, “Whether a sacrament is always a sensible thing?” Aquinas has established only that a sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing inasmuch as through it humans are sanctified. The question of its sensibility remains unsettled. Augustine’s authority is prominent but, as in the previous articles, Aquinas places him on both sides of the question. Crucially, Aquinas’ philosophical authority for understanding the relevant logic is Aristotle, and the determining sacred authority is Dionysius.<sup>36</sup> This is not the only place where Dionysius’ Iamblichan-Proclean Platonism is used in such a context as an authority for the necessity of the human turn to sensible sacraments. In his *Sentences Commentary*, Dionysius had been cited to the effect that knowing by way of the sensible is our natural way of cognition.<sup>37</sup> Near the end of his life, in his *Exposition of John’s Gospel*, Dionysius will reappear. A sensible sign is necessary to the sacrament of regeneration because “as Dionysius says, the divine wisdom orders everything so that each is provided for according to its own condition.” Humanity is “*cognoscitivus*” and “the natural mode of this kind of cognition is that spiritual things should be known through sensible things, because all our knowing begins from sense.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cognitionem venire”, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.1.1 (CCSL 32, 32) is found at Lanfranc, *de Corp. et Sang.*, cap. 12, PL 150, 422 B-C; Gratian, *Decretum*, pars 3, *de cons.*, dist. 2, cap. 33 (ed. Friedberg, vcl. i, p. 1324); Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, 2 vol. (Grottaferrata, 1981), lib. 4, dist. 1, quest. 3, vol. ii, p. 233; Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, ed. M. F. Moos, 4 vol., iv (Paris, 1947), lib. 4 dist. 1 quest. 1, art. 1, quaestiuncula 3, arg. 1; *ST* 3.60.1 obj. 2. A similar list could be given for “Sacrificium ergo visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est sacrum signum est”, *De Civitate Dei*, 10.5 (CCSL 47, 277). There is an important bibliographical note at p. 232 of Volume 2 of the Grottaferrata edition of Lombard’s *Sententiae* (1981). “Sacramentum est invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma” is equally well distributed. It becomes the standard definition and derives from Augustine, *Epistola* 105.3.12 (CSEL 34, 604). There are references at Gratian *Decretum*, pars 3, *de cons.*, dist. 2, cap. 32 (ed. Friedberg, vol. i, p. 1324); Lombard, *Sententiae*, lib. 4, dist. 1, quest. 2 and lib. 4, dist. 8, quest. 6 (Grottaferrata, vol. ii, pp. 232 and 284).

<sup>36</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 3.60.4: *Est autem homini connaturale ut per sensibilia perveniat in cognitionem intelligibilem. Signum autem est per quod aliquis devenit in cognitionem alterius. Unde, cum res sacrae quae per sacramenta significantur, sint quaedam spiritualia et intelligibilia bona quibus homo sanctificatur, consequens est ut per aliquas res sensibiles significatio sacramenti impleatur, sicut etiam per similitudinem sensibilium rerum in divina Scriptura res spirituales nobis describuntur. Et inde est quod ad sacramenta requiruntur res sensibiles, ut etiam Dionysius probat, in I cap. caelestis hierarchiae.* Aristotle appears in obj. 1 and the ad 1.

<sup>37</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 4, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, qc. 2, arg. 2 (ed. Moos, 1947, §57, p. 17): *Praeterea. Dionysius in I cap. Eccles. Hierar.,... assignat hanc causam institutionis huiusmodi sensibilium figurarum in sacramentis; quia per huiusmodi materiale elementum melius reducitur ad spiritualia, propter connaturalitatem cognitionis nostrae ad sensibilia. Sed homo in statu innocentiae materialis erat, et ex sensibilibus cognitionem accipiens, propter quod etiam in paradiso dicitur positus ad operandum, ut naturales vires rerum experiretur. Ergo et tunc indiguit huiusmodi sacramentis.*

<sup>38</sup> Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura*, ed. R. Cai (Turin/ Rome: Marietti, 1951), III, iv, §443: *propter humanam cognitionem: nam, sicut Dionysius dicit, divina sapientia ita omnia ordinat ut unicuique provideat secundum modum suae conditionis. Homo autem est naturaliter cognoscitivus; oportet ergo eo modo dona spiritualia hominibus conferri, ut ea*



The authority of Augustine's authentic texts cannot settle the question as to whether something sensible is essential to a sacrament. In the *Summa theologiae* question, he is correctly represented in opposed ways. He thinks both that sensible things are the least of things "without which humans are able to live well", and also that sacraments involve a physical element and the coming of the divine Word.<sup>39</sup> Thus the matter turns rather on the question of human nature. If humans have intellectual intuition, then they do not need sensible signs to lead them to the holy. Augustine and his followers, as heirs of the Plotinian divided soul whose true reality is in *NOUS*, allow for an intellectual intuition independent of sensation. Dionysius is Aquinas' source for the other Neoplatonic tradition cohering with what he learns from Aristotle. For it, because the individual soul is entirely descended into the realm of becoming, humans cannot come to the divine except through the sensible. And so, signs which would lead us must be sensible, not because signs are by nature sensible, but rather because what God would use to make us holy must be adapted to our condition. By this route Thomas affirms a genuine text of Augustine, which appeared at the beginning of the question: "And hence what are principally called signs are what are offered to the senses, as Augustine says in the second book of *De doctrina Christiana*."<sup>40</sup> Augustine's definition is saved from its reversal by Lanfranc through an Aristotelian and Dionysian philosophical anthropology, opposed to his own—or, perhaps better, one of, or part of his own. In common with mediaeval Latins from Eriugena on who knew both Neoplatonic traditions, Aquinas unites Augustine with Dionysius, but in the marriage he arranged Dionysius rules because he provides the dominant logical structure.<sup>41</sup> Further, because he held that Aristotle had "the true principles of philosophy",<sup>42</sup> and because of his determination to work out where they led, Aristotle gave a special twist and a greater weight to the Proclean Dionysius,

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*cognoscant; I Cor. II, 12: ut sciamus quae a Deo donata sunt nobis. Naturalis autem modus huius cognitionis est ut spiritualia per sensibilia cognoscat, cum omnis nostra cognitio a sensu incipiat. Oportuit ergo ad hoc quod intelligamus id quod spirituale est in hac regeneratione, quod esset in ea aliquid sensibile et materiale, scilicet aqua: per quod intelligamus quod sicut aqua lavat et purgat corporaliter exterior, ita et per Baptismum homo lavatur et purgatur interior spiritualiter.*

<sup>39</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 3.60.4 obj. 3: *res sensibiles sunt minima bona sine quibus homo recte vivere potest* and s.c.: *Augustinus dicit super Ioan: "Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum."*

<sup>40</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 3.60.4 ad 1: *Effectus autem sensibilis per se habet quod ducat in cognitionem alterius, quasi primo et per se homini innotescens, quia omnis nostra cognitio a sensu oritur. Effectus autem intelligibiles non habent quod possint ducere in cognitionem alterius nisi in quantum sunt per aliud manifestati, idest per aliqua sensibilia. Et inde est quod primo et principaliter dicuntur signa quae sensibus offeruntur: sicut Augustinus dicit in II De doctrina Christiana, ubi dicit quod "signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, facit aliquid aliud in cognitionem venire." Effectus autem intelligibiles non habent rationem signi nisi secundum quod sunt manifestati per aliqua signa. Et per hunc etiam modum quaedam quae non sunt sensibilia, dicuntur quodammodo sacramenta, in quantum sunt significata per aliqua sensibilia,...*

<sup>41</sup> See my "Dionysian Hierarchy in St. Thomas Aquinas: Tradition and Transformation," *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident, Actes du Colloque International Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, éditées Ysabel de Andia, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 151 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 405–438 at 435–436, "Augustinian Immediacy and Dionysian Mediation in John Colet, Edmund Spenser, Richard Hooker and the Cardinal de Bérulle," *Augustinus in der Neuzeit, Colloque de la Herzog August Bibliothek de Wolfenbüttel, 14-17 octobre, 1996*, sous la direction de Kurt Flasch et Dominique de Courcelles, éd. Dominique de Courcelles, (Turnhout: Editions Brepols, 1998), 125–160, and "Neoplatonism and Contemporary Constructions and Deconstructions of Modern Subjectivity," a response to J. A. Doull's "Neoplatonism and the Origins of the older Modern Philosophy" for a festschrift for James Alexander Doull, *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*, edited by David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 250–278 at 256.

<sup>42</sup> Aquinas, *de Spiritualibus Creaturis* 3, p. 42, lines 351-52.

who had for Aquinas the authority of Paul's convert on the Areopagus and of the repository of apostolic spiritual wisdom.<sup>43</sup>

#### HOW THOMAS COMPOSES HIS MIND

In common with his contemporaries, almost all of Aquinas' doctrines are responses within variously formed disputations.<sup>44</sup> This rule applies even to his philosophical commentaries, not only because of the mini disputations he often stages within them, but also because he is deciding between inherited or newly known competing interpretations.<sup>45</sup> In the disputations, Aquinas has markedly different degrees of control both over the questions and over which authorities, arguments, and positions define what and who are at issue. To turn his determinations into fixed doctrines, they must be abstracted from their questions formed by the *sic et non* opposition of the *auctoritates*.

Several dynamics are at play in Thomas' disputatiously formed teaching. He complains in his prologue to the *Summa theologiae* that the prevailing scholastic structures impeded beginning students by a "multiplication of useless questions, articles and arguments". However, when he decides the order of the questions and the play of authorities within them, as in this *Summa*, we find not only innovation but also that out of each precariously balanced answer new questions arise. Frequently, the responses to the objections in the disputation, thus the way authorities are accommodated (what usually happens), or their positions refuted, push the argument to the new question.<sup>46</sup> Although the *Summa's* planned *mone, proodus, epistrophe* structure would have made it complete in two senses, because it both returns to the beginning and passes through all the kinds of reality, the internal process is, in principle, endless. As a matter of fact, Aquinas not only did not finish the work but had also moved on from some of its determinations before he died. In any case, for *disputatio*, how the authorities are understood and used keeps being modified—often because the modification enables the accommodation. Thus, the *auctoritates*, whose conflicts forced Hellenic, Jewish, Christian and Islamic scholastic theology into being, are not themselves stable. They acquire their characters in two ways. On the one hand, as actors in the drama of the disputation, either placed where they are and how they appear by Aquinas for his purposes, very often on both sides of a question, or imposed by disputants outside his control, or fixed in the question by its history and circumstances, they change roles in the on-going *sic et non*.

On the other hand, Aquinas may change his mind about their positions in virtue of something he newly comes to see or know. We observe this mutation of his characters at work most clearly in *lectio*, the public reading of texts. His commentaries provide examples of such reading. Indeed, some of them are reports by the auditors of lectures; several corrected

<sup>43</sup> See Alain de Libera, "Une Anthropologie de la grâce. Sur *La Personne humaine au xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle d'É.-H. Wéber*," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 77 (1993): 241–254 at 250–254. For the opposite view of their relation, see M. Ewbank, "Remarks on Being in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Expositio de divinis nominibus*," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 56 (1989): 123.

<sup>44</sup> See Alain de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, 3rd ed. (Paris: PUF, 1998), 374: for artisans and theologians "La dispute est la vraie base du travail."

<sup>45</sup> See R.-A. Gauthier, in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, 270\*–272\* and idem, Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryerminias*, Editio altera retractata, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. I\* 1 (Commissio Leonina / Vrin: Rome / Paris, 1989), 82\*–84\*.

<sup>46</sup> I tried to exhibit how this happens in respect to some questions in *God in Himself*. For some bad advice on how to read a Thomistic question, despite his correct view of the role of the objections and the replies to them, see Thomas Aquinas, *The Treatise on Human Nature: Summa Theologiae 1a 75–89*, trans. Robert Pasnau (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), xix–xx.

by Aquinas. Others employ the form, but seem to have been composed outside the lecture hall. His philosophical commentaries belong within the immensely long and diverse commentary tradition, primarily, in his case, as it was received, developed, and practiced in the Faculty of Arts in Paris—the city of philosophers’ (as Albertus Magnus put it).<sup>47</sup>

Besides receiving the Greek commentators through the Latins: Boethius, Macrobius, and Calcidius, Thomas had them, as the Parisian artisans did, especially, but by no means exclusively, through the commentaries of Averroes. Avicenna, Averroes, and Maimonides, and the other inhabitants of the Arabic philosophical world whose works and views were known to Aquinas and his contemporaries, had been educated by Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, and the late ancient Greek commentators. They had them in Arabic owing to the translation project of the Abbasid caliphs which, though distinct from the pre-Islamic Syrian translation from Greek to Syriac, used Syriac intermediaries.<sup>48</sup> Aquinas’ Latin versions showed the damage they had suffered in their mediation from Greek into Syriac, from Syriac into Arabic and from Arabic, by an often linguistically complex process, into Latin.<sup>49</sup> Because of William of Moerbeke’s efforts, begun in 1260 with Alexander of Aphrodisias *On Aristotle’s* Meteorology, Aquinas would lay his hands on some of the same works by Alexander, Themistius, Simplicius, and Proclus which had formed Arabic philosophy,<sup>50</sup> now translated directly from the Greek. To understand his hermeneutical situation, we must remember that he is often confronting the use of a Greek commentary by an Arabic intermediary with his new Latin translation of the same.<sup>51</sup> Getting back behind the Arabs, higher up the spring to the ancient sources themselves, excited him greatly, and we cannot doubt that the arrival of Moerbeke’s translations is part of what motivated his commentaries.<sup>52</sup> There are ironies in the fact that in his desire to get back to the Greeks generally, and to a pristine Aristotle especially, he shared the spirit of Averroes.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Gauthier, in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, 270\*; on “the city of philosophy”, see Jan Aertsen, “Aquinas’s Philosophy in its Historical Setting,” *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. N. Kretzmann and E. Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12–37 at 24 and 20–21. There is much in common between the form of his philosophical and his Biblical commentaries, see N.M. Healy, Introduction, to *Aquinas on Scripture. An Introduction to his Biblical Commentaries*, ed. T.G. Weinandy, D.A. Keating, and J.P. Yocum (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 9–13.

<sup>48</sup> F.E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), 57–67; Cristina D’Ancona Costa, *La Casa della Sapienza: La trasmissione della metafisica greca e la formazione della filosofia araba* (Naples: Guerini, 1996), Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), 20–22.

<sup>49</sup> On the complexities in Toledo which often involved a Jewish mediator, see R. Brague, *Eccentric Culture. A Theory of Western Civilization*, trans. S. Lester (South Bend: St Augustine’s Press, 2002), 49. On the mediocre result see “Averroes latinus” in de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, 383. On the corpus, see Charles Burnett, “Arabic into Latin: the reception of Arabic philosophy into Western Europe,” *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, 370–404.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Richard Taylor, “Themistius and the Development of Averroes’ Noetics,” *Soul and Mind. Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle’s De Anima*, Philosophes médiévaux, ed. J.-M. Counet and R. Friedman (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), idem (ed. and trans. with Thérèse-Anne Druart), Averroes (Ibn Rushd) of Cordoba, *Long Commentary on the De Anima of Aristotle* (New Haven/ London: Yale, 2010), I and lxxvi–xcvi; Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle’s De Anima*, ed. and trans. Alfred L. Ivry (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young, 2002), xiii–xxvi, and *passim*; Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2003); Michael Chase, “The Medieval Posterity of Simplicius’ Commentary on the Categories: Thomas Aquinas and al-Farabi,” *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle’s Categories*, ed. Lloyd A. Newton (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2008), 9–29 at 12.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Gauthier’s learned notes in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, I, vii, p. 38 at lines 3–13 and II, I, p. 68 at lines 68–69.

<sup>52</sup> See the amusing account by Gauthier, in Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, 81\*–84\*.

<sup>53</sup> Gutas, *Greek Thought*, 153.

The twentieth-century's greatest editor of Aquinas, Père René-Antoine Gauthier, O.P., judged that Moerbeke's translations of the Greek commentators were more important for the special quality of Thomas' expositions than were his translations of Aristotle.<sup>54</sup> My lecture is a vindication and expansion of this particular judgment in which he does not mention Moerbeke's Simplicius *On the Categories*, which, together with his Themistius *De Anima*, helped push Aquinas from doxographer to historian of philosophy after the Aristotelian and Platonic modes.<sup>55</sup>

Certainly Thomas' *Exposition of the Book of Causes* depends entirely for his change of mind about its author, and for most of its content, on Moerbeke's translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Together with his colleagues at Paris, where the *Liber* was on the University list of the books of Aristotle for lecture, he had supposed for most of his working life that the *Liber* was the cap of Aristotle's system; the propositions, if not perhaps the commentary on them, being by The Philosopher.<sup>56</sup> From the beginning of his writing, neoplatonic philosophical principles: "every secondary cause is only a cause through the primary cause", "a thing is known according to the mode of the knower", "what knows its essence has complete return upon itself", "the first of created things is *esse*" were derived from it and credited to the Philosopher. The distance between Thomas and ourselves is exhibited in his lack of embarrassment when unmasking his own deception.

On the one hand, there is little apparent change. After his prologue puts Aristotle<sup>57</sup> together with the Gospel of John to justify pursuing knowledge of the first causes, Thomas identifies the *Liber* as excerpted by Arab philosophers from the *Elements*. After his *Exposition*, he did not use the *Liber* as an authority again. This is not, however, because he rejected the philosophical principles he had imbibed, nor, because, like Albertus Magnus, he was too attached to the Arabic Peripatetic-Neoplatonic amalgam it capped to admit that it was not by The Philosopher.

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<sup>54</sup> R.-A. Gauthier in Aquinas, *Expositio Libri Posteriorum*, Editio altera retractata, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. I\* 2 (Commissio Leonina / Vrin: Rome / Paris, 1989), 55\*: "St. Thomas, as commentator on Aristotle is above all indebted to William of Moerbeke for his translations of the Greek commentators: the translations of the commentaries of Themistius on the *De Anima*, of Alexander of Aphrodisias on the *De Sensu*, of Ammonias on the *Peryermenias*, of Simplicius on the *De celo*, judiciously used, have given the commentaries of Saint Thomas a new dimension."

<sup>55</sup> Moreover, Gauthier and others extend the list of Greek commentaries and philosophical treatises he came to know still further. See, for example, on Boethius, Gauthier in Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermenias*, 49\*-50\* and 81\*-82\*; in respect to Gerard of Cremona's translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De intellectu et intellecto*, see Alain de Libera, *L'Unité de l'intellect: Commentaire du De unitate intellectus contra averroistas de Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 2004), 39.

<sup>56</sup> For example, see Aquinas, *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. 50 (Rome / Paris 1992), 6.1 3 obj 2 where a position taken from the *Liber* is ascribed to the "Philosopher." On the question, see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, "Philosophus in Libro de causis", *Le Liber de causis* comme ouvrage Aristotélicien dans les commentaries de Roger Bacon, du Ps. Henri de Gand et du Ps. Adam de Bocfeld," in idem, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis*, 195-228, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes* [*Super Librum De Causis Expositio*], translated and annotated by V.A. Guagliardo, C.R. Hess, R.C. Taylor, introduction by V.A. Guagliardo, The Catholic University of America Press, Thomas Aquinas in Translation 1 (Washington, 1996), ix-xiii. The treatment of Albertus Magnus there must be updated by Thérèse Bonin, *Creation as Emanation. The Origin of Diversity in Albert the Great's On the Causes and the Procession of the Universe*, Publications in Medieval Studies XXIX (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2001) and Alain de Libera, *Métaphysique et noétique, Albert le Grand, Problèmes et Controverses* (Paris: Vrin, 2005), see my "Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum: The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas' Doctrine of Creation," *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr Robert D. Crouse*, edited by Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten and Walter Hannam, Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 309-333.

<sup>57</sup> In the *Ethics*, the *Parts of Animals*, and the *Metaphysics*.

On the other hand, after pointing to the facts that the *Liber* was a translation from the Arabic, and did not exist in Greek, he painstakingly located the sources of the *Liber* in the *Elements*, which he notes was translated from the Greek, and works out how Proclus had been both adopted and modified. He compares Proclus, as the acme of Platonism, to the Dionysian *corpus*, the *Liber*<sup>58</sup>, Aristotle and Christian faith. With this addition to his knowledge of the Greek fount of philosophy, he continued more sure-footedly and determinedly with the conciliation of Platonism and Aristotle for the sake of truth, philosophical and religious. This was the project, conscious or unconscious, explicit or implicit, of most of the commentators he knew, including Averroes.

For example, from Averroes, Thomas derived one of its results which he would use early and often, “the motionless motion” which God can have so that he is appropriately called living.<sup>59</sup> It originates from interpreting a passage of the *De Anima* probably intended to oppose the notion of the soul as self-moving in Plato through that very idea.<sup>60</sup> In the *Sentences Commentary* and other early works, Aquinas takes up Augustine’s use of the *large* sense of motion when it refers to intellectual life, and he explains what Augustine means through Plato as represented by Averroes.<sup>61</sup>

#### CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGING YOUR MIND ON ARISTOTLE

It seems then that most of what is new in Thomas as philosopher is related to the ways in which his authorities are set in relation to one another. Crucial are how Aristotle and Platonism are mutually defined and connected and, in this connection, how the coherence of philosophy with Christian faith can be identified and the boundaries of that faith can be reconsidered. A telling instance of such change took place through his new detailed study of the texts, encouraged by the Moerbeke translations. This involves the question of the eternity of the world and the related questions of the *creatio ex nihilo* and who taught it. Thomas begins in the *Commentary on the Sentences* with the same position on three points as

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<sup>58</sup> Saffrey, in Aquinas, *Super Librum De Causis Expositio*, xxxvi and Cristina D’Ancona Costa, “Saint Thomas lecteur du *Liber de causis*,” in idem, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis*, 229–258. D’Ancona Costa second examines the comparisons Thomas makes between the *Liber*, Proclus, Dionysius and Aristotle.

<sup>59</sup> I have written a good deal about this, perhaps too much given that part of Michael Chase’s criticism of a particular of my treatment in “Aquinas and the Platonists” *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, edited by Stephen Gersh and Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen, with the assistance of Pierter Th. van Wingerden (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 279–324 at 300–306, seems correct. See M. Chase, “The Medieval Posterity of Simplicius’ Commentary on the *Categories*,” his “reserves” are at 20–23 and concern the positions of Iamblichus and Simplicius. For the role of motionless motion in Thomas’ doctrine of God, see my *God in Himself*, 103–106.

<sup>60</sup> On its origins see See Stephen Gersh, *KINESIS AKINETOS: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, Brill Philosophia Antiqua 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1973); idem, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, Brill Studien zur Problemgeschichte der Antiken und Mittelalterlichen Philosophie VIII (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 67ff., 243ff.

<sup>61</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 1 d. 8 q. 3 a. 1 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod Augustinus accipit large moveri, secundum quod ipsum intelligere est moveri quoddam et velle, quae proprie non sunt motus sed operationes. In hoc enim verificatur dictum Platonis qui dicit: Deus movet se; sicut dicit Commentator, qui dicit quod Deus intelligit se et vult se: sicut etiam dicimus, quod finis movet efficientem. Vel dicendum, quod movet se in creaturarum productione, ut dictum est, hac dist., quaest. 1, art. 1. and see Aquinas, *Super de Trinitate*, quest. 5, art. 4, obj. 2, p. 151, line 14–p. 152, line 16. The *De Veritate* from the same period also deals with this question by reference to the 8th book of Averroes’ *Commentary*, see quest. 23, art. 1, ad 7 (Leonine edition, vol. 22, part 3, p. 654).*

Moses Maimonides, to whom he referred twice in the article in which he determined the matter, even if on a crucial point he is following Latin theologians and invoked “Gregory”.<sup>62</sup>

Their common positions are: 1) the eternity of the world cannot be demonstrated,<sup>63</sup> 2) Aristotle knew that his arguments for it were only probable,<sup>64</sup> 3) the doctrine that creation has a temporal beginning cannot be demonstrated either.<sup>65</sup> He follows Maimonides in teaching that the temporal beginning is to be believed as taught by prophecy, not demonstrated, reproducing his position in both reasoning and content.<sup>66</sup> With him, and against so-called Augustinians like Bonaventure, Aquinas judges that the endeavour of theologians to claim necessity for what cannot be demonstrated only serves to bring contempt on the faith and to undermine trust in the rational demonstrations on which divine science does and must rely.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Gauthier judges that Aquinas follows the exact position of Maimonides whom he cites twice in the article but “semble bien présenter une thèse de théologiens latins, appuyée, dit-il, sur un texte de saint Grégoire.”: Aquinas, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 43 (Rome 1976), 55. For English translations of the crucial texts from the *Sentences*, see *Aquinas on Creation*, trans. S.E. Balder and W.E. Carroll, *Mediaeval Sources in Translation* 35 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997).

<sup>63</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 5 co: *Alii dixerunt, quia res fuerunt ab aeterno secundum illum ordinem quo modo sunt; et ista est opinio Aristotelis, et omnium philosophorum sequentium ipsum; et haec opinio inter praedictas probabilior est: tamen omnes sunt falsae et haereticae.*

<sup>64</sup> Maimonides, *Guide*, II, Introduction on Prop. XXVI that Time and motion are eternal, constant, and in actual existence.... “Aristotle frequently attempts to establish this proposition; but I believe that he did not consider his proofs to be conclusive. It appeared to him to be the most probable and acceptable proposition. His followers, however, and the commentators of his books, contend that it contains not only a probable but a demonstrative proof, and that it has, in fact, been fully established. On the other hand, the Mutakallimun try to prove that the proposition cannot be true, as, according to their opinion, it is impossible to conceive how an infinite number of things could even come into existence successively. They assume this impossibility as an axiom. I, however, think that this proposition is admissible, but neither demonstrative, as the commentators of Aristotle assert, nor, on the other hand, impossible, as the Mutakallimun say.” For the *Guide* I use the online Friendlander translation which I occasionally modify from Pines. Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 5 co: *Dico ergo, quod ad neutram partem quaestionis sunt demonstrationes, sed probabiles vel sophisticae rationes ad utrumque. Et hoc significant verba philosophi dicentis quod sunt quaedam problemata de quibus rationem non habemus, ut utrum mundus sit aeternus; unde hoc ipse demonstrare nunquam intendit: quod patet ex suo modo procedendi; quia ubicumque hanc quaestionem pertractat, semper adiungit aliquam persuasionem vel ex opinione plurium, vel approbatione rationum, quod nullo modo ad demonstratorem pertinet.*

<sup>65</sup> Maimonides, *Guide*, I, 71: “I have examined this method, and find it most objectionable. It must be rejected, because all the proofs for the creation have weak points, and cannot be considered as convincing except by those who do not know the difference between a proof, a dialectical argument, and a sophism. Those who understand the force of the different methods will clearly see that all the proofs for the creation are questionable, because propositions have been employed which have never been proved. I think that the utmost that can be effected by believers in the truth of Revelation is to expose the shortcomings in the proofs of philosophers who hold that the Universe is eternal, and if forsooth a man has effected this, he has accomplished a great deed! For it is well known to all clear and correct thinkers who do not wish to deceive themselves, that this question, namely, whether the Universe has been created or is eternal, cannot be answered with mathematical certainty; here human intellect must pause.”

<sup>66</sup> For Maimonides, Genesis must be interpreted literally so as to teach the temporal beginning of the world, *Guide of the Perplexed*, II.14 and 25. Aquinas writes: *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 5 co: *Et haec positio innititur auctoritati Gregorii, qui dicit quod quaedam prophetia est de praeterito, sicut Moyses prophetizavit cum dixit Genes. 1: in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram. Et huic positioni consentio: quia non credo, quod a nobis possit sumi ratio demonstrativa ad hoc; sicut nec ad Trinitatem, quamvis Trinitatem non esse sit impossibile; et hoc ostendit debilitas rationum quae ad hoc inducuntur pro demonstrationibus, quae omnes a philosophis tenentibus aeternitatem mundi positae sunt et solutae: et ideo potius in derisionem quam in confirmationem fidei vertuntur si quis talibus rationibus innixus contra philosophos novitatem mundi probare intenderet.*

<sup>67</sup> Maimonides, *Guide*, II, 15ff.; Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, lib. 2, dist. 1, q. 1, a. 5. co.

Differently from Aquinas, Maimonides knows, as Shlomo Pines tells us, that “the doctrine of the kalam was originally taken over ... from Christian doctors, who wrote in Greek or Syriac”, and that Philoponus is at the origins of this dialectical theology.<sup>68</sup> Thomas never gets Philoponus’ diverse positions straight—not altogether surprising because he derives so much of what he knows of him from the contemptuously opposed Simplicius. He is acquainted with Philoponus both by his name among the Arabs, “John the Grammarian”, and as “Philoponus”, receiving arguments from the two opposed sides of this importantly transitional figure: the Neoplatonist conciliator, on the one hand, and the Christian rejecter of the pagan concordance in *Contra Proclum*, on the other.<sup>69</sup> Significantly, for the sake of a doctrine of the temporal beginning of creation, Aquinas does not reject the late ancient and Arabic concordance of the two philosophers who he believes, following Simplicius and others, determine the fundamental positions of philosophy. Instead he unites Plato and Aristotle to support the doctrine of creation from nothing.

Maimonides divides Plato and Aristotle on creation: Plato is more compatible with scriptural revelation on the temporal beginning, but no compromise with Aristotle on this question is possible.<sup>70</sup> Aquinas differs.<sup>71</sup> The difference has three elements. First, Aquinas

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<sup>68</sup> Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. with Introduction and Notes by S. Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. cxxvi and I, 71. “You should also know that whatever the Mohammedans, that is, the Mu'tazilah and the Ashaariyah, said on those subjects, consists in nothing but theories founded on propositions which are taken from the works of those Greek and Syrian scholars who attempted to oppose the system of the philosophers, and to refute their arguments. The following was the cause of that opposition: At the time when the Christian Church brought the Greeks and Syrians into its fold, and promulgated its well-known dogmas, the opinions of the philosophers were current amongst those nations: and whilst philosophy flourished, kings became defenders of the Christian faith. The learned Greek and Syrian Christians of the age, seeing that their dogmas were unquestionably exposed to severe attacks from the existing philosophical systems, laid the foundation for this science of Dogmatics: they commenced by putting forth, such propositions as would support their doctrines, and be useful for the refutation of opinions opposed to the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. When the Mohammedans caused Arabic translations of the writings of the Philosophers to be made, those criticisms were likewise translated. When the opinions of John the Grammarian, of Ibn Adi, and of kindred authors on those subjects were made accessible to them, they adopted them, and imagined that they had arrived at the solution of important problems.”

<sup>69</sup> Among many representations of Philoponus in this exposition we have Aquinas opposing him in order to reconcile Plato and Aristotle on creation, *In de Caelo*, I, vi, §§60-61, pp. 29–30: *Sciendum est autem circa primum, quod quidam posuerunt corpus caeli esse generabile et corruptibile secundum suam naturam, sicut Ioannes grammaticus, qui dictus est Philoponus. Et ad suam intentionem adstruendam, primo utitur auctoritate Platonis, qui posuit caelum esse genitum et totum mundum. Secundo inducit talem rationem. Omnis virtus corporis finiti est finita, ut probatur in VIII Physic.: sed virtus finita non potest se extendere ad durationem infinitam (unde per virtutem finitam non potest aliquid moveri tempore infinito, ut ibidem probatur): ergo corpus caeleste non habet virtutem ut sit infinitum tempore. Tertio obiicit sic. In omni corpore naturali est materia et privatio, ut patet ex I Physic.: sed ubicumque est materia cum privatione, est potentia ad corruptionem: ergo corpus caeleste est corruptibile. Si quis autem dicat quod non est eadem materia caelestium corporum et inferiorum, obiicit in contrarium: quia secundum hoc oportet quod materia esset composita, ex eo scilicet quod est commune utrique materiae, et ex eo quod facit diversitatem inter materias. Sed haec necessitatem non habent. Quod enim Plato posuit caelum genitum, non intellexit ex hoc quod est generationi subiectum, quod Aristoteles hic negare intendit: sed quod necesse est ipsum habere esse ab aliqua superiori causa, utpote multitudinem et distensionem in suis partibus habens; per quod significatur esse eius a primo uno causari, a quo oportet omnem multitudinem causari. At In de Caelo, I, viii, Aquinas defends Aristotle against the uncomprehending John the Grammarian: §86, p. 41: *Obiicit autem contra hoc Ioannes grammaticus,....Sed in hoc deficit ab intellectu Aristotelis. Non enim hoc intendit Aristoteles...**

<sup>70</sup> Maimonides, *Guide*, II, 25 (Pines, p. 330): For if creation in time had been demonstrated—if only as Plato understands creation—all the incoherent claims made to us on this point by the philosophers would become void. In the same way, if the philosophers would succeed in demonstrating eternity as Aristotle understands it, the Law as a whole would become void, and a shift to other opinions would take place.

argues that philosophical reason demonstrates *creatio ex nihilo*, that is, the production of the whole substance of things, presupposing nothing uncreated, although only faith knows that there was a temporal nothingness before creation.<sup>72</sup> Second, always for him, as Averroes explains, Aristotle teaches the *creatio ex nihilo* which philosophy knows—i.e. that there is a cause of the substance of things in their very *esse*.<sup>73</sup> Third, in contrast, Plato thinks there are other principles co-eternal with God. In accord with his view in the *Sentences Commentary*, in the early *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, Thomas maintains that, for the Platonists, the divine mind, or intellect, is “a certain inferior substance...full of all the ideas of things” and that this subordination requires that they posit “three first things and principles.”<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Thomas' views on Plato in this regard change, see L. Dewan, “St. Thomas, Aristotle, and Creation,” *Dionysius* 15 (1991): 81–90; M.F. Johnson, “Did St. Thomas Attribute a Doctrine of Creation to Aristotle,” *New Scholasticism* 63 (1989): 129–155; idem, “Aquinas' Changing Evaluation of Plato on Creation.”

<sup>72</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 2 co. *Respondeo quod creationem esse, non tantum fides tenet, sed etiam ratio demonstrat. ... Hoc autem creare dicimus, scilicet producere rem in esse secundum totam suam substantiam. Unde necessarium est a primo principio omnia per creationem procedere. Sciendum est autem, quod ad rationem creationis pertinent duo. Primum est ut nihil praesupponat in re quae creari dicitur: ... causalitas creantis se extendit ad omne id quod est in re; et ideo creatio ex nihilo dicitur esse, quia nihil est quod creationi praeexistat, quasi non creatum. Secundum est, ut in re quae creari dicitur, prius sit non esse quam esse: non quidem prioritate temporis vel durationis, ut prius non fuerit et postmodum sit; ... Et secundum ista duo creatio dupliciter dicitur esse ex nihilo. Tum ita quod negatio neget ordinem creationis importatae per hanc praepositionem ex, ad aliquid praeexistens, ut dicatur esse ex nihilo, quia non ex aliquo praeexistenti; et hoc quantum ad primum. Tum ita quod remaneat ordo creationis ad nihil praeexistens, ut affirmatus; ut dicatur creatio esse ex nihilo, quia res creata naturaliter prius habet non esse quam esse; et si haec duo sufficiant ad rationem creationis, sic creatio potest demonstrari, et sic philosophi creationem posuerunt. Si autem accipiamus tertium oportere ad rationem creationis, ut scilicet etiam duratione res creata prius non esse quam esse habeat, ut dicatur esse ex nihilo, quia est tempore post nihil, sic creatio demonstrari non potest, nec a philosophis conceditur; sed per fidem supponitur.* See T.B. Noone, “The Originality of St. Thomas's Position on the Philosophers and Creation,” *The Thomist*, 60 (1996): 275–300 at 295–299.

<sup>73</sup> These assertions begin here: Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 5 ad s. c. 1. *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod sicut dicit Commentator in Lib. de substantia orbis, Aristoteles nunquam intendit quod Deus esset causa motus caeli tantum, sed etiam quod esset causa substantiae ejus dans sibi esse.* Idem, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 5 ad s. c. 2 *Avicenna in sua metaphysica: dicit enim omnes res a Deo creatas esse, et quod creatio est ex nihilo, vel ejus quod habet esse post nihil. ... et per hunc modum conceduntur a philosophis res a Deo creatae et factae.* Some later assertions are found in the *Exposition of Aristotle's Physics*: In *Physic.*, VIII, iii, §996, p. 516: *Est autem valde notandum quod hic dicitur; quia ut in II Metaphys. habetur, eadem est dispositio rerum in esse et in veritate. Sicut igitur aliqua sunt semper vera et tamen habent causam suae veritatis, ita Aristoteles intellexit quod essent aliqua semper entia, scilicet corpora caelestia et substantiae separatae, et tamen haberent causam sui esse.* In *Physic.*, VIII, xxi, §1154, p. 616: *Omne enim quod non est suum esse, participat esse a causa prima, quae est suum esse. Unde et ipsemet confitetur in libro de substantia orbis, quod Deus est causa caeli non solum quantum ad motum eius, sed etiam quantum ad substantiam ipsius: quod non est nisi quia ab eo habet esse. Non autem habet ab eo esse nisi perpetuum: habet ergo perpetuitatem ab alio. Et in hoc etiam consonant dicta Aristotelis, qui dicit in V Metaphys., et supra in principio huius octavi, quod quaedam sunt necessaria quae habent causam suae necessitatis.* Probably his last statement is in the *Exposition of Aristotle's De Caelo*: In *De Caelo*, I, viii § 90, p. 43 *Omne quod est in natura, vel est a Deo, sicut primae res naturales; vel est a natura sicut a secunda causa, puta inferiores effectus. Sed Deus nihil facit frustra, quia, cum sit agens per intellectum, agit propter finem. Similiter etiam natura nihil facit frustra, quia agit sicut mota a Deo velut a primo movente; sicut sagitta non movetur frustra, in quantum emittitur a sagittante ad aliquid certum. Relinquitur ergo quod nihil in natura sit frustra. Est autem attendendum quod Aristoteles hic ponit Deum esse factorem caelestium corporum, et non solum causam per modum finis, ut quidam dixerunt.* For a list of places see Balder, *Aquinas on Creation*, 128 and Johnson, “Did St. Thomas Attribute”.

<sup>74</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 1 q. 1 a. 1 co. *Tertius error fuit eorum qui posuerunt agens et materiam, sed agens non esse principium materiae, quamvis sit unum tantum agens: et haec est opinio Anaxagorae et Platonis: nisi quod Plato superaddidit tertium principium, scilicet ideas separatas a rebus, quas exemplaria dicebat; et nullam esse causam alterius; sed per haec tria causari mundum, et res ex quibus mundus constat.* Aquinas, *Super de Trinitate*, quest. 3, art. 4, resp., p. 115, line 110–p. 116, line 123: *quandam inferiorem substantiam ... plenam omnium rerum ydeas and tres primas et principales.* See also *ibid.*, quest. 1, art. 4, ad 8, p. 90, line 163–p.91, line 183; idem, *De articulis Fidei et Ecclesiae sacramentis*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 42 (Rome, 1979), p. 246: *error Platonis et Anaxagorae, qui posuerunt mundum factum a Deo, sed ex materia praeiacenti.* Idem, *ST* 1.32.1 ad 1. See V. Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint*



Aquinas will change his mind on two matters: 1) firstly, he will come to the conviction that Aristotle believed himself to have demonstrated that the world was eternal, and 2) secondly, that Plato also taught the *creatio ex nihilo*. As a result of the second, he will bring Plato and Aristotle into accord and represent Aristotle's teaching in Platonic terms using the language of participation.

Thomas continued to maintain the comforting view that Aristotle did not believe he had demonstrated the eternity of the world when he was writing the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. There he nicely summed up the position he held in common with Maimonides as follows:

It is not necessary that the world always exists and it is not possible to demonstrate this. Aristotle's reasons are relatively, but not simply, demonstrative; their force is limited to contradicting the reasons of some of the ancients who asserted that the world began to exist in some modes which were impossible in reality. This appears in three ways. Firstly, because, both in *Physics* VIII and in *De Caelo* I, he prefaces opinions, for example, of Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Plato, and brings forward reasons to refute them. Secondly, because wherever he speaks of this subject, he quotes the testimony of the ancients, which is not the way of someone demonstrating but persuading. Thirdly, because he expressly says (*Topic*. i, 9), that there are dialectical problems, about which we do not have reasons, for example, "whether the world is eternal."<sup>75</sup>

Such "a forced concordance between metaphysics and theology" would have drawn the reproach of Siger of Brabant, always an attentive reader, and ultimately a follower, of Thomas.<sup>76</sup> A few years later, in his *Exposition of Aristotle's Physics*, Thomas dismisses the Maimonidean position which had also been his own with scorn:

These then are the reasons by which Aristotle intended to prove that motion always existed and will never cease....Some, in a vain attempt to show that Aristotle concluded nothing contrary to the faith, have said that Aristotle does not intend here to prove as true that motion is perpetual but to allege reasons for both sides of a question that is doubtful. That this is frivolous is evident to anyone who investigates

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*Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis*, Brill Studies in the History of Christian Thought 69 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 26–28.

<sup>75</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 1.46.1: *Non est igitur necessarium mundum semper esse. Unde nec demonstrative probari potest. Nec rationes quas ad hoc Aristoteles inducit, sunt demonstrativae simpliciter, sed secundum quid, scilicet ad contradicendum rationibus antiquorum, ponentium mundum incipere secundum quosdam modos in veritate impossibiles. Et hoc apparet ex tribus. Primo quidem, quia tam in VIII Physic. quam in I de caelo, praemittit quasdam opiniones, ut Anaxagorae et Empedoclis et Platonis, contra quos rationes contradictorias inducit. Secundo, quia, ubicumque de hac materia loquitur, inducit testimonia antiquorum, quod non est demonstratoris, sed probabiliter persuadentis. Tertio, quia expresse dicit in I Lib. Topic., quod quaedam sunt problemata dialectica, de quibus rationes non habemus, ut utrum mundus sit aeternus.*

<sup>76</sup> F.-X. Putallaz and R. Imbach, *Profession philosophe: Siger de Brabant*, Initiations au Moyen Âge (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 141. For more on the interchanges between Siger and Aquinas, see Gauthier in Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, 249–250. Gauthier's later views, reflected in his introduction to Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, are convincingly modified both by Putallaz and R. Imbach and by B. Carlos Bazán, "Siger of Brabant," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 632–642. Fundamentals of Gauthier's framework so far as they depend on hypotheses as to what Averroes' thought and how it was understood by Latins in the 13th-century are now undermined by Taylor in Averroes, *Long Commentary*, xcvi–cv.

Aristotle's procedure here. Moreover, he uses the eternity of time and of motion as a principle to prove the existence of a first principle both here in *Physics* VIII and in *Metaphysics* XII. That shows he considered it proved.<sup>77</sup>

This brings out another difference from Maimonides. Rabbi Moses follows Aristotle's proof for the existence and incorporeality of the first principle using the eternity of time and motion as an hypothesis, although rejecting it himself.<sup>78</sup> Aquinas did not attempt so convoluted a method. There is a more important issue for us, however. Why the "frivolous"? Does Thomas have a different mode of thinking when he is commenting on a philosophical work according to the norms of the Faculty of Arts and his readers, both critical and admiring, in it, which makes his previous theological procedure problematic? I do not have an answer to this question but it cannot be doubted that the way of proceeding he now scorns was his own used over a long time. In any case, there is more here than a judgment about a matter of fact and John Marenbon argues convincingly that Aquinas changes his mode of reasoning.

Somewhat later in the same Paris milieu where he expounded the *Physics*, in his *On the Eternity of the World*, Aquinas works out the consequences of this change of mind. Doctrinally his position is the same as that which he proposed in 1254 as a Bachelor commenting on the *Sentences*, neither the eternity of the world nor the temporal creation are able to be demonstrated. Nonetheless, according to Gauthier, this little treatise shows signs that Thomas is now personally involved and has much at stake. "The Master of 1270 feels that he has enough authority to criticise and even judge from on high his 'adversaries'."<sup>79</sup> *On the Eternity of the World* specifies what on this matter constitutes heresy.

Owing to the position he took in his *Sentences Commentary*, he is caught between Bonaventure and the Franciscans, on the one side, who demand a demonstration of what faith teaches, and the Aristotelians in the Faculty of Arts, on the other, to whose positions he had conceded so much. He begins by assuming: "in accordance with the Catholic faith, that the world had a beginning in time." Nonetheless, still a question arises "whether the world could have always existed." In arriving at the truth about this Thomas wants first to "distinguish where we agree with our adversaries and in what we disagree with them." Continuing but widening his position from his *Sentences Commentary*, for him there is a sharp difference between the questions on the temporal beginning and on creation:

If someone holds that something besides God could have always existed, in the sense that there could be something always existing and yet not made by God, then we differ with him: such an abominable error is contrary not only to the faith but also to the teachings of the philosophers, who confess and prove that everything that in any way exists cannot exist unless it be caused by him who supremely and most truly has existence. However, someone may hold that there has always existed

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<sup>77</sup> Aquinas, *In Physic.*, VIII, ii, § 986, pp. 509–510: *Hae igitur rationes sunt, ex quibus Aristoteles probare intendit motum semper fuisse et nunquam deficere.... Quidam vero frustra conantes Aristotelem ostendere non contra fidem locutum esse, dixerunt quod Aristoteles non intendit hic probare quasi verum, quod motus sit perpetuus; sed inducere rationem ad utramque partem, quasi ad rem dubiam: quod ex ipso modo procedendi frivolum apparet. Et praeterea, perpetuitate temporis et motus quasi principio utitur ad probandum primum principium esse, et hic in octavo et in XII Metaphys.; unde manifestum est, quod supponit hoc tanquam probatum.*

<sup>78</sup> Maimonides, *Guide*, II, Introduction (Pines, pp. 239–40). The best explanation of Maimonides' procedure I have found is de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, 215–218.

<sup>79</sup> Gauthier in Aquinas, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, 54–56 at 55.

something that, nevertheless, had been wholly caused by God, and thus we ought to determine whether this position is tenable.<sup>80</sup>

He decides that the notions “having being made” and “never not being” are not contradictory.<sup>81</sup> John Marenbon outlines what is remarkable in these questions and the manner in which Aquinas treats them:

Aquinas does not, as in his previous treatments of the issue, discuss the factual question about what happened and then the second-order issue of our epistemic access to the answer...He analyses a set of possibilities and, because he is dealing with questions of pure logical compatibility, he is able to argue demonstratively, although the area is one where, so far as actual facts are concerned, no demonstrations are acceptable to him. Moreover, he is keen to emphasise that, in the sort of question he is considering, to give the wrong answer is not heretical...The argument of the *De aeternitate mundi* is bold and brilliant...Yet it can be seen in some ways as a retrenchment in Aquinas’ position. Rather than consider what can and cannot be demonstrated about the world as it is, and so discuss the differing competencies of philosophical reason and revelation, Aquinas turns to questions purely about possibility, in a way that anticipates the way theologians would commonly work in the fourteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

Part of what pushed Aquinas to this new kind of reasoning was his growing conviction that the great authorities in philosophy both taught the essentials of *creatio ex nihilo*. Plato will join Aristotle. Thomas’ shift begins ambiguously in the early *Disputed Questions on Power*. In them, relying on Macrobius, on the one hand, he gives us his former Plato with two primal separate substances, the Father, and, subordinately, his mind, full of ideas.<sup>83</sup> On the other, in the same work, human knowledge is represented as progressing from its beginning point among the first philosophers occupied with sensible things. In the move to the intelligible, on the authority of Augustine, Plato appears with Aristotle and his followers among the philosophers who arrived at a universal cause of being in agreement with the Catholic faith. Plato, in searching for the one which is common to a plurality, had discovered that all derived from unity both in numbers and in natural things.<sup>84</sup> The *Summa*

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<sup>80</sup> Aquinas, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, p. 85, lines 1-16: *Supposito, secundum fidem Catholicam, quod mundus durationis initium habuit, dubitatio mota est, utrum potuerit semper fuisse. Cuius dubitationis ut veritas explicetur, prius distinguendum est in quo cum adversariis convenimus, et quid est illud in quo ab eis differimus. Si enim intelligatur quod aliquid praeter Deum potuit semper fuisse, quasi possit esse aliquid tamen ab eo non factum: error abominabilis est non solum in fide, sed etiam apud philosophos, qui confitentur et probant omne quod est quocumque modo, esse non posse nisi sit causatum ab eo qui maxime et verissime esse habet. Si autem intelligatur aliquid semper fuisse, et tamen causatum fuisse a Deo secundum totum id quod in eo est, videndum est utrum hoc possit stare.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88, lines 211-213: *Sic ergo patet quod in hoc quod dicitur, aliquid esse factum et nunquam non fuisse, non est intellectus aliqua repugnantia.*

<sup>82</sup> John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy. An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), “Study J: The eternity of the world: Bonaventure, Aquinas and Boethius of Dacia,” 258–262 at 260–61.

<sup>83</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia*, ed. P.M. Pession (Rome/ Turin: Marietti, 1965), 6.6, resp C, *Quaestiones Disputatae* vol. ii, p. 174: *Plato namque posuit duas substantias separatas, scilicet Deum patrem...et postmodum mentis ipsius.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.5, p. 49: *Postiores vero philosophi, ut Plato, Aristoteles et eorum sequaces, pervenerunt ad considerationem ipsius esse universalis; et ideo ipsi soli posuerunt aliquam universalem causam rerum, a qua omnia alia in esse prodirent, ut patet per Augustinum. Cui quidem sententiae etiam Catholica fides consentit. Et hoc triplici ratione demonstrari potest: quarum prima est*

*theologiae* is similarly ambiguous. There is a tentative judgement, owed to Lombard and Calcidius, that Plato believed in uncreated first matter, and an opposed judgment, later in the *Prima Pars*, in which he seems to be with Aristotle asserting a universal cause of all being.<sup>85</sup>

Thomas' important rethinking of the *Physics* provided him with certainty on the matter. Again he starts with the first philosophers and finds an advance to the good conclusion in which Plato and Aristotle are explicitly linked:

The first of the philosophers solely considered the causes of accidental mutations, and thought all becoming was alteration. Those who succeeded them arrived at a knowledge of substantial changes, but those who came still later, such as Plato and Aristotle, arrived at a knowledge of the principle of all existence.<sup>86</sup>

Thomas' most completely worked out comparison of what are now the two fountains of philosophical truth about the most important of matters comes a few years later in his treatise on the angels, the *De Substantiis Separatis* of 1272. I must say something about that further on. However, it is already clear that Aquinas thinks within a complex interlocking web of positions and figures and that, when a judgement changes about one of the elements, everyone must be repositioned. It is no wonder that everything in Dante's Heaven of the Doctors depends upon who is sitting beside whom.<sup>87</sup>

#### PHILOSOPHY AS INTERPRETATION

In his commentaries and treatises like the *De Unitate intellectus* and the *De aeternitate mundi*, Thomas engaged the Parisian "city of philosophy." He, and his commentaries, were valued there, so much so that at his death the Arts Faculty sent condolences and asked both for some of his unfinished philosophical writings and also for the Latin versions of Simplicius *On the De caelo* and Proclus *On the Timaeus*, he had promised to send them.<sup>88</sup> Commentary was the primary way of doing philosophy and, those from whom he learned this way of philosophizing were by no means passively receptive to the text. To understand what it would have been for Aquinas from the beginnings of his philosophical education, we are helped by Richard Taylor's judgment that, in the case of Averroes: "philosophical commentaries and distinctly philosophical treatises are meant by him to be for the most part demonstrative works."<sup>89</sup>

*haec.... Et ista videtur ratio Platonis, qui voluit, quod ante omnem multitudinem esset aliqua unitas non solum in numeris, sed etiam in rerum naturis.*

<sup>85</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 1.15.3 ad 3 and ad 4 and *ST* 1.44 articles 1 & 2. Johnson, "Aquinas' Changing Evaluation of Plato on Creation": 84–87 is crucial to understanding these texts.

<sup>86</sup> Aquinas, *In Physic.*, VIII, ii, § 975, p. 506: *Quorum primi consideraverunt causas solarum mutationum accidentalium, ponentes omne fieri esse alterari: sequentes vero pervenerunt ad cognitionem mutationum substantialium: postremi vero, ut Plato et Aristoteles, pervenerunt ad cognoscendum principium totius esse.* See also VIII, ii, §974 where he speaks of Aristotle and *plures Platoniorum.*

<sup>87</sup> See J. Marenbon, "Dante's Averroism," *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. J. Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 349–374 at 366–369 and R.D. Crouse, "Dante as Philosopher: Christian Aristotelianism," *Dionysius* 16 (1998): 141–156 and my "Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform: Neoplatonic Paradigms for Reform by Self-Knowledge from Augustine to Aquinas," *Reforming the Church Before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, edited by Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot, England/Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Press, 2005), Chapter 3, 39–60 at 44.

<sup>88</sup> Aertsen, "Aquinas's Philosophy," 13–14; Fergus Kerr, "Thomas Aquinas," in *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 207.

<sup>89</sup> Taylor in Averroes, *Long Commentary*, xviii, n. 7.

A good deal has been made of Thomas' statement in his *Commentary on the De Caelo of Aristotle* that "the study of philosophy is not for the purpose of knowing what humans might perceive, but how the truth of things would actually have it."<sup>90</sup> The search for truth rather than opinion is supposed to characterise Aquinas in opposition to Simplicius.<sup>91</sup> Since, however, Thomas' commentary is so dependent Moerbeke' translation of Simplicius, *On the De Caelo*, that Aquinas' work may have been occasioned by its completion on the 15th of June 1271, more caution in making the contrast ought to have been used.<sup>92</sup> Aquinas is commenting on a chapter of the *De Caelo* where Aristotle starts his argument as to whether the heaven is ungenerated and indestructible or the contrary, a matter of great importance to Aquinas, and one where the position of Plato is closer to Christian faith than Aristotle's. Aristotle begins not only by surveying the theories of other thinkers but also by justifying this procedure.<sup>93</sup> Simplicius and Aquinas spin out his brief remarks into three reasons and, exceptionally, Aquinas goes beyond Simplicius—something hard to do—in order to make the same points even more strongly. His exposition becomes an explanation and justification of his own method, and of scholastic method generally.

First, demonstrations are criticisms of contrary opinions and "Whoever wishes to know any truth, must know the doubts which are against that truth, because the solution of doubts is the finding of truth, as is said in III *Metaphysics*. And thus, to know the truth, it is very important to see the reasons for contrary opinions."<sup>94</sup> Thomas' (and Simplicius') second reason, has to do with persuasion. The conclusions are rendered more credible "if first the solutions of the reasons which gave rise to the dispute are given. For as long as a man is in doubt, before his doubt is resolved, his mind is like someone bound, who cannot move."<sup>95</sup> Third, following both Aristotle and Simplicius, Aquinas says that we must behave as judges, not as adversaries at law criticising out of hatred alone. He adds "This is not appropriate to philosophers, who profess to be searchers for the truth."<sup>96</sup> Consequently when a few

<sup>90</sup> Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxii, §228, p. 109: *studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quid homines senserint, sed qualiter se habeat veritas rerum.*

<sup>91</sup> E.g., F. Bossier, "Traductions latines et influences du *Commentaire In de Caelo* en Occident (XIIIe-XIVe s.)," *Simplicius sa vie, son oeuvre, sa survie*, ed. I. Hadot, Peripatoi 15 (Berlin & London: de Gruyter, 1987), 289–325 and Aertsen, "Aquinas's Philosophy," 21 (Aertsen makes no explicit contrast with Simplicius).

<sup>92</sup> For a small sampling of Thomas' reproduction of Simplicius' history and acceptance of his judgments on the hermeneutic principles compare Aquinas, *In De Caelo* (ed. Spiazzi) with Simplicius [philosophus acutissimus], *Commentaria in quatuor libros de celo Aristotelis*, Guillermo Morbeto Interprete (Venice: apud H. Scotum, 1540) as follows: prooemium, §4 = prooemium; I, vi §61 = fol. 14<sup>v</sup>a, comm. 11; I, xxii §§ 223-228 = fol. 46<sup>r</sup>a - fol. 47<sup>b</sup>, comments 98-100; I, xxiii § 233 = fol. 48<sup>b</sup>, comm. 102; I, xxix § 277 = fol. 54<sup>v</sup>a, comm. 125; I, xxix §283 = fol. 55<sup>b</sup> - <sup>v</sup>a, comm. 129; II, iii §314 = fol. 61<sup>r</sup>a, comm. 5; III, ii §§551- 555 = fol. 90<sup>r</sup> comments 4 & 5.

<sup>93</sup> Simplicius, *Commentaria in de celo*, fol. 47<sup>b</sup>, comm. 100. See Aristotle, *On the Heavens* I.10, 279b4ff., Simplicius, *On Aristotle's "On the Heavens 1.10.-12,"* trans. R.J. Hankinson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 3ff.; Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxii, §§222-230, pp. 108–109.

<sup>94</sup> Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxii, §223, p. 108: *Secundo ibi: contrariorum enim etc., assignat rationes tres quare hic et alibi aliorum opiniones pertractet. Quarum prima est quia demonstrationes, idest probationes, contrariorum, idest contrariarum opinionum, sunt dubitationes de contrariis, scilicet opinionibus, idest sunt obiectiones ad contrarias opiniones: expedit autem ei qui vult cognoscere aliquam veritatem, ut sciat dubitationes quae sunt contra illam veritatem; quia solutio dubitatorum est inventio veritatis, ut dicitur in III *Metaphys*. Et ita ad sciendum veritatem multum valet videre rationes contrariarum opinionum.*

<sup>95</sup> Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxii, §224, p. 108: *quia ea quae dicenda sunt magis redduntur credibilia apud illos qui primo audiunt iustificationes, idest rectificationes, sermonum dubitatorum, idest solutiones rationum ex quibus dubitatio emergit: quia quandiu homo dubitat, antequam eius dubitatio solvatur, est mens eius similis legato, qui non potest ire.*

<sup>96</sup> Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxii, §225, p. 108: *Et dicit quod quando nos posuerimus opiniones aliorum, et induxerimus eorum rationes, et solverimus eas, et posuerimus rationes in contrarium, minus inerat nobis quod videamur condemnare dicta aliorum gratis, idest sine debita ratione, sicut qui reprobant dicta aliorum ex solo odio, quod non convenit philosophis, qui*

paragraphs later, Aquinas, after he has read Simplicius' prolix report of Alexander's arguments, and his equally prolix defence of Plato as treated unfairly because he was not speaking literally, asserts that philosophy studies the truth of things not opinions, we both feel his impatience and know that he is in agreement with Aristotle and Simplicius about method.

Both commentators distinguish rational demonstration of the truth of things from historical work, and from the dialectic of positions which history makes possible. The historical, linguistic, and grammatical inquiries in commentary, the exposition and clarification of the argument, were parts of, but subordinate to, philosophical demonstration. No more than Aquinas, had Simplicius thought that his report of the positions of others and his reconciling strategy set him against finding the truth of things.

Michael Chase describes the criteria for the good exegete of Aristotle which Simplicius sets out in his commentary on the *Categories*, a work Thomas had and used:

a master exegete must be thoroughly familiar with the Stagirite's writings and stylistic habits, and be objective, not always striving to prove that Aristotle is right, "as if he had enrolled himself in the Philosopher's school." When it comes to apparent disagreements between Plato and Aristotle, however, the good exegete "must...not convict the philosophers of discordance by looking only at the letter of what [Aristotle] says against Plato; but he must look towards the spirit, and track down the harmony which reigns between them on the majority of points."<sup>97</sup>

This describes generally Thomas' practice as exegete of Aristotle, and so far as the method of bringing Plato and Aristotle into concord is concerned, he increasingly took this route.<sup>98</sup> There can be no doubt that Aquinas practiced philosophical commentary within the long tradition, did so better and more confidently as he had texts translated directly from the Greek to help him, and that he followed them and his earlier mentors in thinking that it was a way to determine the truth of things.

#### MIXING UP PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY

If this case exhibits how important the interplay of positions is, another example displays again both how philosophy and Christian theology are intertwined and how Aquinas' understanding and casting of his players changes. We are led to it by a note in Père Gauthier's edition of Thomas' *Commentary on the De Anima* of Aristotle. When he arrives at perhaps the most disputed passage in Aristotle's works, the treatment of the poetic and potential intellects, and of intellect as separable, impassive and unmixed, Thomas sets up a tiny version of the mini questions he often inserts into his commentaries. This one considers "that the agent intellect is not a separated substance." In it "some (*quidam*)" are represented as claiming, on the basis of this passage, that the agent intellect is a separate substance and that it differs substantially from the potential intellect.<sup>99</sup> Gauthier explains "*quidam*" starting

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*profitentur se inquisitores esse veritatis. Oportet enim eos qui volunt sufficienter iudicare de veritate, quod non exhibeant seipsos sicut inimicos eorum de quorum dictis est indicandum; sed sicut arbitros, et disquisitores pro utraque parte.*

<sup>97</sup> M. Chase, "The Medieval Posterity of Simplicius' Commentary on the *Categories*," 13. He is quoting his own translation of Simplicius, *In Cat.*, p. 7, lines 29-32 Kalbfleisch, see Simplicius, *On Aristotle's "Categories 1-4,"* trans. Michael Chase (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>98</sup> This is also the view of Chase where he is dependent on my "Aquinas and the Platonists" and "Thomas' Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius."

<sup>99</sup> Aquinas, *Sententia libri De Anima*, III, c 4, lines 87-92, p. 220.

with the *Sentences* commentary. We shall follow the path traced with some additions of my own.

As when, in the same neophyte work, he considered the divergent opinions on the matter of the celestial bodies, Aquinas begins with sweeping statements while determining this question: “almost all philosophers after Aristotle are in accord that the agent and possible intellects differ substantially and that the agent intellect is a separated substance.”<sup>100</sup> He treats Avicenna, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avempace, Theophrastus, Themistius, and Averroes, in the article, and although he has a Latin translation of Avicenna’s writings on the soul, Richard Taylor tells us that “with the exception of two sentences on the teaching of Avicenna, the sole source for Aquinas on these thinkers appears to be the *Long Commentary* by Averroes.”<sup>101</sup> Except in the case of Avicenna, Aquinas tends to follow Averroes’ judgments on the views he reports of the other philosophers, both Arab and Greek. Aquinas will be glad to free himself of this subservience when he has some books of the Greek commentators.

Somewhat over a decade later, without any great improvement in his sources of information, treating the same question in the *Contra Gentiles*, the “almost all” has been reduced to Alexander of Aphrodisias and Avicenna, besides Averroes, as a matter of course.<sup>102</sup> Significantly for understanding how Thomas’ mind works, because he will use the same argument again in a different context, and because it adds to the list of those on the side of a separate agent intellect, we note that both in this chapter and in one shortly earlier, Aquinas draws together these Peripatetics and the Platonists. He argues that there is either little or no difference between the doctrines that science flows into our souls from separate intelligible forms and from a single separate agent intellect; he asserts that both doctrines are false and that Aristotle has proved it.<sup>103</sup> In any case, by this argument Plato and his followers have been added to the “quidam.” The *Disputed Questions de Anima* contribute almost nothing, “quidam” has become “many.”<sup>104</sup>

Thereafter, constructing the list takes a different turn in virtue of Thomas’ reading of Themistius’ *Paraphrase of the De Anima* on which Averroes was very dependent.<sup>105</sup> There he finds a formula for relating Plato and Aristotle, like the one he learned from Simplicius, one

<sup>100</sup> Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 17 q. 2 a. 1 co: *ferè omnes philosophi concordant post Aristotelem, quod intellectus agens et possibilis differunt secundum substantiam; et quod intellectus agens sit substantia quaedam separata, et postrema in substantiis separatis, et ita se habet ad intellectum possibilem quo intelligimus, sicut intelligentiae superiores ad animas orbium.*

<sup>101</sup> Richard Taylor, “Aquinas and the Arabs: Aquinas’s First Critical Encounter with the Doctrine of Averroes on the Intellect, In 2 Sent. d. 17, q. 2, a. 1,” at p. 6 of 39, awaiting publication.

<sup>102</sup> Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 76 n. 1: *Ex his etiam concludi potest quod nec intellectus agens est unus in omnibus, ut Alexander etiam ponit, et Avicenna, qui non ponunt intellectum possibilem esse unum omnium.*

<sup>103</sup> Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 76 n. 5: *Item. Plato posuit scientiam in nobis causari ab ideis, quas ponebat esse quasdam substantias separatas: quam quidem positionem Aristoteles improbat in I metaphysicae. Constat autem quod scientia nostra dependet ab intellectu agente sicut ex primo principio. Si igitur intellectus agens esset quaedam substantia separata, nulla esset vel modica differentia inter opinionem istam et Platoniam a philosopho improbatam. Contra Gentiles, lib. 2 cap. 74 n. 5: Sed si diligenter consideretur, haec positio, quantum ad originem, parum aut nihil differt a positione Platonis. Posuit enim Plato formas intelligibiles esse quasdam substantias separatas, a quibus scientia fluebat in animas nostras. Hic autem ponit ab una substantia separata, quae est intellectus agens secundum ipsum, scientiam in animas nostras fluere. Non autem differt, quantum ad modum acquirendi scientiam, utrum ab una vel pluribus substantiis separatis scientia nostra causetur: utrobique enim sequetur quod scientia nostra non causetur a sensibilibus.*

<sup>104</sup> Aquinas, *Q. d. de anima*, a. 5 co: *Et ideo plures posuerunt intellectum agentem esse substantiam separatam, intellectum autem possibilem esse aliquid animae nostrae.*

<sup>105</sup> Taylor, “Themistius and the Development of Averroes’ Noetics.”

which he will use frequently.<sup>106</sup> We find it first in the question on the human intellectual powers in the *Summa theologiae*. In this *Summa*, Themistius is named on the initial appearance of the formula: “Aristotle compared the active intellect to light, which is something received into the air: while Plato compared the separate intellect impressing the soul to the sun, as Themistius says in his commentary on *De Anima* III.” It is used again in the next article “Whether the Agent Intellect is One in all.”<sup>107</sup> Importantly, in these questions only philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, are named, and the *sic et non* arises almost entirely out of the text the *De Anima*.

The next use of Themistius’ formula brings in a surprising new name. In the *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures*, once again asking exactly the same question as in the *Summa*, Augustine shows up often in the *sic et non*. In his determination, after the sun – light comparison credited again to Themistius, Augustine appears in a quotation which both places him among those for whom the sun illumines mind, and as identifying the separate intellect with God. Aquinas writes:

But that which makes things intelligible after the manner of the sun, which illuminates, is something that is one and separate, which is God. Hence Augustine says in I *Soliloquia*: “Reason promises...to show God to my mind as the sun is shown to the eyes; for the eyes of the mind, so to speak, are the senses of the soul. But all the most certain branches of learning are of such a nature as things illumined by the sun, so that they can be seen...and God Himself is the one who illumines.”<sup>108</sup>

In his reply to the eighth objection which comes from Augustine, Aquinas must treat him again. However, as you will remember, in these *Disputed Questions*, we also met Simplicius *On the Categories*. In virtue of joining Simplicius’ way of distinguishing the Platonic and the Aristotelian epistemological procedures by their starting points with Themistius’ differentiation of the philosophers according to the mode of illumination, Augustine’s position is understood through the logic which compels the history of philosophy. These historical progressions,<sup>109</sup> become more a mode of explanation and persuasion as Thomas immerses himself in Aristotle, his Greek commentators, Peripatetic and Neoplatonist, and in Platonist texts, Augustinian, Dionysian and Proclean.<sup>110</sup> I shall say something further about them shortly. Here Aquinas writes:

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<sup>106</sup> The formula is found at VI, p. 235, u. 355 ff. in Verbeke’s edition. For other lists of its use see the note of Cos in Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 ad 8, p. 106, lines 277-278 and Bazán in Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima*, ed. D.-C. Bazán, Commissio Leonina, vol. 24, pars 1 (Rome/ Paris 1996), 14\*.

<sup>107</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 1.79.5 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod omnia quae sunt unius speciei, communicant in actione consequente naturam speciei, et per consequens in virtute, quae est actionis principium, non quod sit eadem numero in omnibus. Cognoscere autem prima intelligibilia est actio consequens speciem humanam. Unde oportet quod omnes homines communicent in virtute quae est principium huius actionis, et haec est virtus intellectus agentis. Non tamen oportet quod sit eadem numero in omnibus. Oportet tamen quod ab uno principio in omnibus derivetur. Et sic illa communicatio hominum in primis intelligibilibus, demonstrat unitatem intellectus separati, quem Plato comparat soli; non autem unitatem intellectus agentis, quem Aristoteles comparat lumini.* And 1.79. 4 co: *Et ideo Aristoteles comparavit intellectum agentem lumini, quod est aliquid receptum in aere. Plato autem intellectum separatum imprimenter in animas nostras, comparavit soli; ut Themistius dicit in commentario tertii de anima.*

<sup>108</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 co: *Illud vero quod facit intelligibilia per modum solis illuminantis, est unum separatum, quod est Deus. Unde Augustinus dicit in I Soliloquiorum: promittit ratio (...) se demonstraturam Deum meae menti, ut oculis sol demonstratur; nam mentis quasi oculi sunt sensus animae. Disciplinarum autem quaeque certissima talia sunt qualia illa quae sole illustrantur, ut videri possint. Deus autem est ipse qui illustrat.*

<sup>109</sup> Aertsen, “Aquinas’s Philosophy,” 28

<sup>110</sup> See Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, passim, *ST* 1.44.2, *ST* 1.84.1 with 1.84.2.



But yet in order to examine more searchingly the meaning of Augustine and what the truth is on this point, it must be noted that certain ancient philosophers, who did not assert any way of knowing except sensation nor any entities besides sensible things, declared that no certainty concerning truth could be had by us...<sup>111</sup>

Providentially, Plato arises to bring the certainty to knowing which faith requires:

Plato...agreeing with the ancient philosophers that sensible things are always in flux and that the sense power has no certain judgment of things, Plato... in order to establish the certainty of knowing posited, on the one hand, species separated from sensible things and immovable, and he said that the sciences concerned these; on the other hand, he posited in man a knowing power higher than sense, namely, the mind or intellect, illumined by a kind of higher intelligible sun, as the sight is illumined by the visible sun.<sup>112</sup>

Augustine follows him. Although, as a Christian, he was compelled to place the ideas in the divine mind, our minds know by participating in these:

Augustine, however, following Plato as far as the Catholic Faith allowed, did not posit species of things with a subsistence of their own, but, instead of them, he posited ideas of things in the divine mind and said that through these, by an intellect which is illumined by divine light, we form judgments about all things<sup>113</sup>

In order to complete the history, Aquinas tells us that “Aristotle proceeded by another way,” which he describes in three brief points, ending remarkably:

Thirdly,...above the sense there is an intellectual power which makes judgments concerning truth, not through any intelligible things that exist outside, but through the light of the agent intellect, which makes things intelligible. Now it does not matter much if we say that intelligible things themselves are participated in from God, or that the light which makes them intelligible is participated in from God.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 ad 8: *Sed tamen ut profundius intentionem Augustini scrutemur, et quomodo se habeat veritas circa hoc, sciendum est quod quidam antiqui philosophi, non ponentes aliam vim cognoscitivam praeter sensum, neque aliqua entia praeter sensibilia, dixerunt, quod nulla certitudo de veritate a nobis haberi potest...*

<sup>112</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 ad 8: *Plato vero discipulus eius consentiens antiquis philosophis quod sensibilia semper sunt in motu et fluxu, et quod virtus non habet certum iudicium de rebus, ad certitudinem scientiae stabiliendam, posuit quidem ex una parte species rerum separatas a sensibilibus et immobiles, de quibus dixit esse scientias; ex alia parte posuit in homine virtutem cognoscitivam supra sensum scilicet mentem vel intellectum illustratum a quodam superiori sole intelligibili, sicut illustratur visus a sole visibili.*

<sup>113</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 ad 8: *Augustinus autem, Platonem secutus quantum fides Catholica patiebatur, non posuit species rerum per se subsistentes; sed loco earum posuit rationes rerum in mente divina, et quod per eas secundum intellectum illustratum a luce divina de omnibus iudicamus.*

<sup>114</sup> Aquinas, *Quaestio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, 10 ad 8: *Aristoteles autem per aliam viam processit. ... Tertio, quod supra sensum est virtus intellectiva, quae indicat de veritate, non per aliqua intelligibilia extra existentia, sed per lumen intellectus agentis, quod facit intelligibilia. Non multum autem refert dicere, quod ipsa intelligibilia participantur a Deo, vel quod lumen faciens intelligibilia participetur.*

The last word is conciliatory, but in the conciliation Aristotle is moved towards Plato. It is no great matter whether as Christians we speak Platonically or in an Aristotelian manner, provided, that either the ideas or the light in which our minds participate are in the divine intellect or are God. Here as elsewhere, one of the costs of agreement is that Aristotle's teaching will be expressed in the language of participation.<sup>115</sup>

The final work in the list inspired by "quidam" we shall treat combines historical investigation and concordance between Aristotle and Platonism enabled by Moerbeke's translations. Here "almost all philosophers after Aristotle" or an indefinite has become a carefully constructed arrangement of a large cast of philosophical players, because the structure of the array is itself the greatest part of the argument. The title of *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas* identifies its opponent, the movement in the Parisian Faculty of Arts which Aquinas represents as inspired by Averroes.<sup>116</sup> Aquinas employs what Alain de Libera has shown to be critical historical method in respect to philosophical traditions.<sup>117</sup> He is using Moerbeke translations of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius, and Themistius, amongst other commentators, in an effort to refute philosophers like Siger of Brabant who claim to be faithful Aristotelians. Crucially, although the error attacked, that there is only one possible intellect for all humans, contradicts Christian faith—as the ecclesiastical condemnations which come quickly after the publication of the treatise attest<sup>118</sup>—Aquinas is determined to do this without leaving the sphere of philosophy.

Thomas uses two weapons in his battle against error: the authority of the history of philosophy and philosophical argument. The opening words of *On the Unity of the Intellect*, "Just as all men naturally desire to know the truth, so there is a natural desire innate in them to flee error" are an implicit reference to the first words of the *Metaphysics* with a negative twist added.<sup>119</sup> Appropriately then, he intends to show the position of these Latins to be "no less against the principles of philosophy than against the documents of faith."<sup>120</sup> Thomas belittles the knowledge of the texts of those he opposes at the same time as declares his first line of attack: "They say they follow the words of the Peripatetics, though they have never seen their books on the subject [of the possible intellect] except those of Aristotle who was the founder of the Peripatetic school; we shall show first that the aforesaid position is

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<sup>115</sup> For other reconciliations of Augustine and Aristotle on knowing see ScG III.46 where Thomas endeavours to mould a text from the *De Trinitate* so that Augustine does not teach that the soul immediately knows itself and thus becomes compatible with Aristotle. Houston Smit, "Aquinas's Abstractionism," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 10 (2001): 85–118 argues that Aquinas seeks a general reconciliation of Aristotle's abstraction and Augustine's innatism and doctrine of recollection; in "Participatio divini luminis, Aquinas' doctrine of the Agent Intellect: Our Capacity for Contemplation," *Dionysius* 22 (2004): 149–78, I endeavour to place Smit's demonstration within the programme of the Neoplatonists to reconcile Plato and Aristotle. On the struggle to describe Aquinas' thought in this language, see *Penser avec Thomas d'Aquin: Etudes thomistes de Louis-Bretrand Geiger OP*, présentées par Ruedi Imbach, Pensée antique et médiévale (Paris/Fribourg: Cerf/Editions Universitaires de Fribourg, 2000) and my "From Metaphysics to History."

<sup>116</sup> On the title see Gauthier in Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, 247–48.

<sup>117</sup> See Thomas d'Aquin, *L'Unité de l'intellect contre les Averroïstes suivi des Textes contre Averroës antérieurs à 1270*, texte latin, traduction, introduction, biographie, chronologie, notes et index par A. de Libera, 2nd ed. (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1997).

<sup>118</sup> See John F. Wippel, "The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277," in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, 65–73; *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277*, nouvelle éd. du texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire par David Piché, Sic et Non (Paris: Vrin, 1999).

<sup>119</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 1, p. 292, lines 1-2: *Sicut omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant veritatem, ita naturale desiderium inest hominibus fugiendi errors...*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 20-21: *Nec id nunc agendum est ut positionem praedictam in hoc ostendamus esse erroneam quia repugnat veritati fidei Christianae.*

entirely repugnant to his words and opinions.”<sup>121</sup> They have read nothing beyond Aristotle except Averroes and he is not a genuine Peripatetic! Thomas’ sense of the superiority of his learning carries through to the conclusion and, indeed, largely constructs it.

Because Thomas has Moerbeke’s translation of Themistius’ paraphrase of the *De Anima*, he is able to address and modify “the image which Averroes presented to the Latins of the psychology of Themistius,”<sup>122</sup> to which he was himself subject when he treated the same matter in his *Sentences* commentary. In consequence of this and much else, with a mixture of indignation and contempt, he can invoke the authority of “all the philosophers, Arabs and Peripatetics,” except these Latins, and most strongly, every Greek: Aristotle, Theophrastus, Themistius and Plato himself, when he concludes.<sup>123</sup> He is definitive, the Parisian philosophers have picked the wrong master, Averroes, whose interpretation of Aristotle they were following, “was not so much a Peripatetic as a corrupter of Peripatetic philosophy.”<sup>124</sup>

The most well known of those against whom he battles is Siger of Brabant, whom he does not name. We cannot deal here with the long and much disputed questions: Did Aquinas and his fellow theologians create the position they opposed? Is it, in fact, that of Averroes? Is Aquinas fair either to Averroes, to whom he owed much even on the matter in question, or to Siger, who seems to have corrected his positions in light of Thomas’ criticisms? Is he just to both his and Siger’s neo-Augustinian adversaries? This is regrettable because in these questions are perhaps the best evidence for the overall thesis of this lecture.<sup>125</sup> Nonetheless, there is no more obvious case than this in which the construction of the authorities is the argument and there are some striking moments when he brings up Simplicius and Themistius. We shall conclude with these.

In the first of these Plato is understood through Aristotle in order to save the standing of Plotinus and Themistius as Aristotelian commentators. Plato is reported by Nemesius, masked as Gregory of Nyssa, as believing man is only intellect, a soul using a body. This is interpreted through Plotinus via Macrobius whom he had already used in a *sed*

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., lines 34-38: *Peripateticorum verba sectari se dicunt, quorum libros numquam in hac materia viderunt, nisi Aristotelis qui fuit sectae Peripateticae institutor; ostendemus primo positionem praedictam eius verbis et sententiae repugnare omnino.* And 5, p. 314, lines 394-395: *Unde mirum est quomodo aliqui, solum commentum Averrois videntes, pronuntiare praesumunt...*

<sup>122</sup> Gauthier in Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, 251. On Averroes use of Themistius, see Gauthier in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, p. 219\* and Taylor, “Themistius and the Development of Averroes’ Noetics.” For Aquinas’ encounter with Averroes’ Themistius in the *Sentences commentary*, see Taylor, “Aquinas and the Arabs: Aquinas’s First Critical Encounter.” On Thomas very extensive use of Themistius in his *Sententia on the De Anima*, see Gauthier in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, pp. 273\*-282\*.

<sup>123</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 5, p. 314, line 344–p.314, line 396: *Patet autem falsum esse quod dicunt hoc fuisse principium apud omnes philosophantes, et Arabes et Peripateticos, quod intellectus non multiplicetur numeraliter, licet apud Latinos non. Algazel enim Latinus non fuit, sed Arabs. Avicenna etiam, qui Arabs fuit... Et ut Graecos non omitamus, ponenda sunt circa hoc verba Themistii in commento... hoc sensisse omnes philosophos Graecos et Arabes, preter Latinos.*

<sup>124</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 5, p. 314, lines 389-394: *Patet etiam quod Averroes perverse refert sententiam Themistii et Theophrasti de intellectu possibili et agente. Unde merito supradiximus eum philosophiae Peripateticae perversorem.*

<sup>125</sup> Gauthier in his edition of Aquinas’ *Sententia on the De Anima* and elsewhere argues the theologians constructed the position they attacked, for convincing contrary views, see Putallaz and Imbach, *Profession philosophique*, Bazán, “Siger of Brabant,” and Taylor in Averroes, *Long Commentary*, xcvi–civ, just to begin. For what Aquinas owed to Averroes certainly beyond his admission and perhaps also beyond his capacity to recognise, see Taylor, “Aquinas and the Arabs: Aquinas’s First Critical Encounter”, idem, “Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul according to Aquinas and Averroes,” in *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul. Reflections on Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions*, Maha El-Kaisy Friemut and John M. Dillon, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 187–220 and idem, “Averroes’ Epistemology and Its Critique by Aquinas,” *Thomistic Papers VII. Medieval Masters: Essays in Memory of Msgr. E.A. Synan*, R.E. Houser, ed. (Houston: Centre for Thomistic Studies, 1999), 147–177.

*contra* of the *Summa Theologiae* to give authority to his own position on how to structure the virtues. There we had *Plotinus, inter philosophiae professores cum Platone princeps*.<sup>126</sup> Now Thomas tells us that:

Plotinus, as Macrobius reports, claimed that the soul itself is man, saying, “Therefore the true man is not what is seen, but that which rules what is seen. . . .” Yet Simplicius, in his commentary on the *Categories*, numbers Plotinus among the greatest commentators on Aristotle. This doctrine does not seem far distant from the words of Aristotle, who says in Book Nine of the *Ethics* . . . “just as the state and every other organized whole seems to be that which is the chief thing in it, so too man,” and adds that “each man either is this, namely intellect, or is it especially.” It is in this sense that I appraise Themistius’s words earlier and Plotinus’s now when they say that man is soul or intellect.<sup>127</sup>

At the beginning of the next chapter, before getting on to his main object, destroying the idea of a single possible intellect for humans, when citing Themistius, for the first time in this treatise, on the sun-light difference as models for knowing, he makes some conciliating remarks in respect to the single agent intellect in a way we might anticipate from his treatment of Augustine in *On Spiritual Creatures*:

There would perhaps be some reason for saying [that there is one for all] of agent intellect, and many philosophers do say it, for nothing absurd seems to follow from several things being perfected by one agent, as by one sun the visual powers of all animals are able to see. Although this is not Aristotle’s intention—he holds that the agent intellect is in the soul—he nonetheless compares it to a light, and Plato, holding that the intellect is one separate thing, likened it to the sun, as Themistius tells us, for there is one sun but many lights diffused from it for the sake of seeing.<sup>128</sup>

We come in the last chapter of the treatise to the second appearance of Themistius’ formula and we find Avicenna and Plato joining the war against Averroes and his Parisian followers on the numerical multiplication of the intellect. In order to invoke them, he must,

<sup>126</sup> Aquinas, *ST* 2-1.61.5 *sed contra*.

<sup>127</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 3, p. 305, line 264–p. 306, line 289: *Sed et Plotinus, ut Macrobius refert, ipsam animam hominem esse testatur, sic dicens: ergo qui videtur, non ipse verus homo est, sed ille a quo regitur quod videtur. Sic, cum morte animalis discedit animatio, cadit corpus a regente viduatum; et hoc est quod videtur in homine mortale. Anima vero, quae verus homo est, ab omni mortalitatis conditione aliena est. Qui quidem Plotinus, unus de magnis commentatoribus, ponitur inter commentatores Aristotelis, ut Simplicius refert in commento praedicamentorum. Haec autem sententia nec a verbis Aristotelis multum aliena videtur. Dicit enim in nono Ethic., quod boni hominis est bonum elaborare et sui ipsius gratia: intellectivi enim gratia quod unusquisque esse videtur. Quod quidem non dicit propter hoc quod homo sit solus intellectus, sed quia id quod est in homine principaliter est intellectus; unde in consequentibus dicit, quod quemadmodum civitas principalissimum maxime esse videtur, et omnis alia constitutio, sic et homo; unde subiungit, quod unusquisque homo vel est hoc, scilicet intellectus, vel maxime. Et per hunc modum arbitror et Themistium in verbis supra positus, et Plotinum in verbis nunc inductis, dixisse quod homo est anima vel intellectus.*

<sup>128</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 4, p. 307, lines 6-12: *Forte enim de agente hoc dicere, aliquam rationem haberet, et multi philosophi hoc posuerunt. Nihil enim inconveniens videtur sequi, si ab uno agente multa perficiantur, quemadmodum ab uno sole perficiuntur omnes potentiae visivae animalium ad videndum; quamvis etiam hoc non sit secundum intentionem Aristotelis, qui posuit intellectum agentem esse aliquid in anima, unde comparavit ipsum lumini. Plato autem ponens intellectum unum separatum, comparavit ipsum soli, ut Themistius dicit. Est enim unus sol, sed plura lumina diffusa a sole ad videndum.*

as at the beginning of chapter 4, abstract from the truth of their views about how intellect acts:

And lest we omit the Greeks, we should cite the words of Themistius in his commentary. For when he asked of the agent intellect whether it was one or many, he answered: “Either the first illuminator is one but the illumined and illumining many: for the sun is one, but you will say that light is in some way imparted to sight. For this reason Aristotle proposes light rather than the sun in the comparison, but Plato proposes the sun.” It is clear from these words of Themistius that neither the agent intellect, of which Aristotle speaks, is the one who is illuminator, nor the possible that which is illumined. There is indeed one principle of illumination, namely a certain separated substance which is either God, according to Catholics, or the ultimate intelligence according to Avicenna. Themistius proves the unity of this separate principle by the fact that the teacher and learner understand the same thing, which would not be the case if there were not the same illuminating principle. What he says later, that some doubt whether the possible intellect is one, is certainly true. But he says no more of this because his intention was not to discuss the diverse opinions of philosophers, but to explicate the teachings of Aristotle, Plato and Theophrastus. Hence at the end he concludes, “What I said to express what seemed to philosophers to be the case is of singular difficulty and concern. From what I have said, one can gather the views of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and especially of Plato, about them.” It is evident, therefore, that Aristotle and Theophrastus and Themistius and Plato himself did not hold as a principle that the possible intellect is one for all.<sup>129</sup>

Concordance and suspending decision about the truth of things are means by which Plato can be united to Aristotle and the Peripatetics and they to him in order to amass philosophical authorities against threats on the home front.

#### FROM DOXOGRAPHY TO HISTORY

As I have suggested, Moerbeke’s translation of Themistius’ paraphrase of the *De Anima* did more than expand Thomas’ knowledge of the positions of the philosophers. When joined with Simplicius *On the Categories*, it enabled him to discern what Jan Aertsen

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<sup>129</sup> Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus*, cap. 5, p. 314, lines 354-389: *Et ut Graecos non omittamus, ponenda sunt circa hoc verba Themistii in commento. Cum enim quaesivisset de intellectu agente, utrum sit unus aut plures, subiungit solvens: aut primus quidem illustrans est unus, illustrati autem et illustrantes sunt plures. Sol quidem enim est unus, lumen autem dices modo aliquo partiri ad visus. Propter hoc enim non solem in comparatione posuit (scil. Aristoteles), sed lumen; Plato autem solem. Ergo patet per verba Themistii quod nec intellectus agens, de quo Aristoteles loquitur, est unus qui est illustrans, nec etiam possibilis qui est illustratus. Sed verum est quod principium illustrationis est unum, scil. aliqua substantia separata, vel Deus secundum Catholicos, vel intelligentia ultima secundum Avicennam. Unitatem autem huius separati principii probat Themistius per hoc, quod docens et addiscens idem intelligit, quod non esset nisi esset idem principium illustrans. Sed verum est quod postea dicit quosdam dubitasse de intellectu possibili, utrum sit unus. Nec circa hoc plus loquitur, quia non erat intentio eius tangere diversas opiniones philosophorum, sed exponere sententias Aristotelis, Platonis et Theophrasti; unde in fine concludit: sed quod quidem dixi pronunciare quidem de eo quod videtur philosophis, singularis est studii et sollicitudinis. Quod autem maxime aliquis utique ex verbis quae collegimus, accipiat de his sententiam Aristotelis et Theophrasti, magis autem et ipsius Platonis, hoc promptum est proपालare. Ergo patet quod Aristoteles et Theophrastus et Themistius et ipse Plato non habuerunt pro principio, quod intellectus possibilis sit unus in omnibus.*

calls “historical progression” in philosophy,<sup>130</sup> compelled, as Aristotle had said, “by the truth itself”. Aertsen points us to the question in the *Summa theologiae* on whether prime matter is caused by God. It seems, contrary to the Christian faith, here articulated by Augustine in the *sed contra*, that, as the Aristotelian supposition of all change, prime matter cannot be made (*facta*). However, in fact, “the ancient philosophers advanced in the knowledge of the truth”, though “step by step and, as it were, haltingly.”<sup>131</sup> Ultimately, by advancing to more and more universal causes, “some”, which certainly includes for him Aristotle, “climbed to the consideration of being as being (*ens inquantum est ens*).” “So we must posit that even prime matter is caused by the universal cause of beings.” Aristotle has arrived at a condition of creation from nothing and, as Aertsen observes, it “appears as the result of the *internal* development of thought independent of the external aid of revelation.”<sup>132</sup>

We are brought to the role of Themistius in constructions of this kind by another progressive history in the *Summa*. This one appears when Thomas asks “Whether the soul knows bodily things through its own essence.” There, when starting with the *antiqui philosophi*, he gives as their principle “like is known by like (*simile simili*)”, with the consequence that the object known is in the knower corporeally as it is in the known. Aquinas follows this with a representation of Plato as moving truth forward by use of the same principle in order to teach, on the contrary, an immaterial knowing positing as its object an immaterial separate form.<sup>133</sup> In this treatise of the *Summa*, he uses the formula repeatedly,<sup>134</sup> and even more frequently in his *Exposition of the De Anima* written at the same time.<sup>135</sup> Thomas had used *simile simili* only once before.<sup>136</sup> That ‘like is known by like’ was a principle of the physicists is from Aristotle’s *De Anima*<sup>137</sup>, however, its new frequent use by Aquinas in his progressive histories constructed in the *Summa* and *De Anima* commentary may be explained by its appearance in Themistius.<sup>138</sup>

At the place where the formula occurs in Aristotle and Themistius, Thomas begins his comment by observing that the *antiqui philosophi*, “compelled by the truth itself”, assumed that the principles of things were in the soul. This notion is found in Aristotle who speaks in the *Metaphysics* of “the things themselves opening the way and compelling the first philosophers to seek”, and of the ancients being “compelled by the truth itself”.<sup>139</sup> Similarly, in the *Physics*, he finds the same philosophers “compelled as it were by the truth itself”.<sup>140</sup> Thomas does not fail to notice these compulsions and comments on them in his expositions

<sup>130</sup> Aertsen, “Aquinas’s Philosophy,” 28; he does not mention the role of the Themistius paraphrase or of Simplicius.

<sup>131</sup> *ST* 1.44.2: *Respondeo dicendum quod antiqui philosophi paulatim, et quasi pedetentim, intraverunt in cognitionem veritatis. A principio enim, quasi grossiores existentes, non existimabant esse entia nisi corpora sensibilia.... Ulterius vero procedentes, distinxerunt per intellectum inter formam substantialem et materiam, quam ponebant increatam;... Quarum transmutationum quasdam causas universales ponebant, ut obliquum circulum, secundum Aristotelem, vel ideas, secundum Platonem.... Utrique igitur consideraverunt ens particulari quadam consideratione, vel inquantum est hoc ens, vel inquantum est tale ens. ... Et sic oportet ponere etiam materiam primam creatam ab universali causa entium.*

<sup>132</sup> Aertsen, “Aquinas’s Philosophy,” 30.

<sup>133</sup> *ST* 1.84.2: “the nature of knowledge is opposite to the nature of materiality (*ratio cognitionis ex opposito se habet ad rationem materialitatis*).”

<sup>134</sup> *ST* 84.2, 85.2, 85.8 and 88.1.

<sup>135</sup> Aquinas, *Sententia de anima*, I, iv; I, v (thrice); I, xii (four times); II, ix (thrice); II, x (four times).

<sup>136</sup> Aquinas, *De Veritate*, 2.2 co.

<sup>137</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 404b17.

<sup>138</sup> Themistius, *Commentaire sur le Traité de l’âme d’Aristote, traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, Liber Primus, p. 26, line 10.

<sup>139</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.3 984a18: *res ipsa viam fecit similiter et quaerere coegit* and 984b10: *ab ipsa veritate*.

<sup>140</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, I.10 188b29-30: *tanquam ab ipsa veritate coacti*.

of the works.<sup>141</sup> However, in his *Exposition of the De Anima*, he adds the physicists “dreamed, as it were, of the truth.”<sup>142</sup> This dreaming seems designed to explain why these ancients could not give reasons for what they said and why they were moved upward towards incorporeal causes. Be that as it may, Themistius had the same explanation; he wrote that “they seem to dream up this reality, the incorporeal nature I mean.”<sup>143</sup> Thomas may be following Themistius.

Thomas’ most detailed progressive history is found in his *On the Separate Substances*, angels, which, like his *Exposition of the Liber de Causis*, depended on Moerbeke’s translation of Proclus’ *Elements*. Proclus added to the information available for writing a progressive and conciliating history of philosophy and theology, pagan, Jewish, Islamic and Christian.<sup>144</sup> The first chapter of the history concerns “The opinions of the ancients and of Plato.” There is a movement forward among the ancients towards the knowledge of separate substance; they get beyond the corporeal gods of the atomists and the Epicurean search for ceaseless pleasures which such deities inspire. Plato does better than his predecessors in dealing with the two errors philosophy must overcome. One is the denial that humans can know with certainty. The second is that nothing exists separate from bodies. Plato solves both errors, solves them together, and his solution is correct insofar as they can only be solved together. However, the connection between knowledge of the truth and the existence of separate substances is not what Plato takes it to be. In order to save knowledge, Plato simply reversed the Physicists, solving the problem too immediately. Plato projected what belongs to our thinking onto an external reality:

Thus, according to this reasoning, because the intellect when knowing the truth apprehends something beyond the matter of sensible things, Plato thought some things existed separated from sensible things.<sup>145</sup>

For Aquinas, Plato’s work is an essential part of the philosophical progress. However, history quickly becomes more complicated. Thomas notes that the *Platonici* posited orders of separate forms upon which intellects depended. Plato is represented as establishing a hierarchy in which mathematical are intermediate between the forms and sensibles.<sup>146</sup> At the highest level were entities like the good itself, intellect itself, and life itself. Aquinas judged that, in this case, the Platonic error in solving the epistemological dilemma involved a false separation of the object from the subject of intellection. The *intelligibilia* were separated from the intellects when the “gods, which is what Plato called the separate intelligible forms,” were separated from knowing.<sup>147</sup> The philosophical error involved in this

<sup>141</sup> Aquinas, *In Physica*, I, x, §79, p. 43; *In Meta.*, I, v, §93, p. 28; I, xii, §194, p. 57 and I, xvii, §272, p. 78.

<sup>142</sup> Aquinas, *Sententia de anima*, I, iv, p. 18, lines 17-19: *antiqui philosophi quasi ab ipsa veritate coacti sompniabant quoquo modo veritatem.*

<sup>143</sup> Themistius, *Commentaire sur le Traité de l’âme d’Aristote, traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, Liber Primus, p. 36, lines 65-66: *divinare videntur banc naturam, dico autem. incorpoream.* Translating with Todd in Themistius, *On Aristotle’s On the Soul*, trans. Robert B. Todd (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 29.

<sup>144</sup> For a description of the history depending on the concordance and complementarity of Plato and Aristotle see John O. Riedl, “The Nature of the Angels,” *Essays in Thomism*, ed. Robert E. Brennan (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), 111-148; Cristina D’Ancona Costa, *La Casa della Sapienza*, 9-11, and my “Thomas’ Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius”: 165-175.

<sup>145</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 1, D 42, lines 75-79: *unde secundum hoc quod intellectus veritatem cognoscens aliqua seorsum apprehendit praeter materiam sensibilium rerum, sic aestimavit esse aliqua a sensibilibus separata.*

<sup>146</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 1, D 42, lines 94-104: *media inter species seu ideas et sensibilia.*

<sup>147</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 4, D 47, lines 3-19: *deos dicebat esse species intelligibiles separatas.*

separation of subject and object evidently has religious consequences. Happily, Aristotle does not need separate forms to explain how we know.<sup>148</sup> Thus, as he judged in his *Exposition* of the *Liber*, in this aspect of his teaching on the kinds of separate substances, Aristotle's parsimony is "more consonant with the Christian faith."<sup>149</sup> However, the Platonic tendency to multiply entities also benefits the truth.

The second chapter of the *De Substantiis Separatis*, is devoted to the opinion of Aristotle. There he judges that Aristotle's way of reasoning, by way of motion, to the existence of separate substances is *manifestior et certior*.<sup>150</sup> In his *On the Categories*, Simplicius had also judged the Aristotelian way to have a more persuasive necessity for those living at the level of sensation.<sup>151</sup> There is, however, a deficiency in Aristotle's *alia via*. What is defective matches its virtue. His staying "with what does not depart much from what is evident to sense" gives a greater certainty to our rational knowledge of the existence of separate substances. It shows its limits, however, when determining their kinds and numbers. On this, Aristotle's position seems "less sufficient than the position of Plato."<sup>152</sup> By limiting separate substances to the two kinds needed to move the heavens, and with their numbers tied to the same necessity, he fails, on the one hand, to account for the spirits which possess us and of which sorcerers dispose, and, on the other, by tying the number of the angels to the necessities of what is beneath them, he has reversed the proper order of reasoning. Michael Chase refers us to another formula in Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories*, relating Plato and Aristotle. It comes to mind at this point, because the implied criticism of Aristotle by Simplicius here is Aquinas' own in respect to the number and kinds of spiritual creatures.

[Aristotle] always refuses to deviate from nature; on the contrary, he considers even things that are above nature, according to their relation to nature, just as, by contrast,

<sup>148</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 2: *Non enim necesse est ut ea quae intellectus separatim intelligit, separatim esse habeant in rerum natura.*

<sup>149</sup> Aquinas, *Super De causis*, prop. 10, p. 67, line 19– p. 68, line 6. *Circa primum igitur considerandum est quod, sicut supra iam diximus, Platonici, ponentes formas rerum separatas, sub harum formarum ordine ponebant ordinem intellectuum. Quia enim omnis cognitio fit per assimilationem intellectus ad rem intellectam, necesse erat quod intellectus separati ad intelligendum participarent formas abstractas; et huiusmodi participationes formarum sunt istae formae vel species intelligibiles de quibus hic dicitur. Sed quia, secundum sententiam Aristotelis quae circa hoc est magis consona fidei Christianae, non ponimus alias formas separatas supra intellectum ordinem, sed ipsum bonum separatim ad quod totum universum ordinatur sicut ad bonum extrinsecum, ut dicitur in XII metaphysicae, oportet nos dicere quod, sicut Platonici dicebant intellectus separatos ex participatione diversarum formarum separatarum diversas intelligibiles species consequi, ita nos dicamus quod consequuntur huiusmodi intelligibiles species ex participatione primae formae separatae, quae est bonitas pura, scilicet Dei. He makes much the same point at prop. 13, p. 83, lines 8-17. He begins: *secundum sententiam Aristotelis, quae in hoc magis Catholicae doctrinae concordat, non ponimus multas formas supra intellectus sed unam solam quae est causa prima, oportet dicere quod, sicut ipsa est ipsum esse, ita est ipsa vita et ipse intellectus primus....**

<sup>150</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 2, D 44, lines 11-13: *Aristoteles manifestiori et certiori via processit ad investigandum substantias a materia separatas, scilicet per viam motus. Compare ST 1.2.3 resp.: Prima autem et manifestior via est, quae sumitur ex parte motus. Certum est enim et sensu constat aliqua moveri in hoc mundo.*

<sup>151</sup> Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories*, i, prologus, p. 8, line 74–p. 9, line 79. Chase translates, p. 22, lines 23-25: "Since he is conversing with people living on the level of sensation, he prefers that vividness which derives from sensation. This is why his demonstrations have such constraining force..."

<sup>152</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 2, D 45: *Haec autem Aristotelis positio certior quidem videtur, eo quod non multum recedit ab his quae sunt manifesta secundum sensum; tamen minus sufficiens videtur quam Platonis positio. Primo quidem, quia multa secundum sensum apparent quorum ratio reddi non potest secundum ea quae ab Aristotele traduntur. Apparent enim in hominibus qui a Daemonibus opprimuntur, et in magorum operibus, aliqua quae fieri non posse videntur nisi per aliquam intellectualem substantiam.... Secundo, quia inconueniens videtur immateriales substantias ad numerum corporalium substantiarum coarctari. Non enim ea quae sunt superiora in entibus, sunt propter ea quae in eis sunt inferiora, sed potius e converso: id enim propter quod aliquid est, nobilius est.*



the divine Plato, according to Pythagorean usage, examines even natural things insofar as they participate in the things above nature.<sup>153</sup>

As the treatise advances, the agreements of Plato and Aristotle are considered in the same way as their complementary differences had been. We cannot dilate on these but we must not fail to note an accord between Plato and Aristotle we have considered before which involves both the ongoing change in his view of Plato and, here, a clearly Platonic representation of what both Aristotle and Plato think. This is their agreement on the creation of all things by a single First Principle. In *On Separate Substances*, Thomas reports that:

According to the opinion of Plato and Aristotle... It is necessary beyond the mode of coming to be, by which something becomes by the coming of form to matter [this doctrine he ascribed to the *Naturales*], to presuppose another origin of things, according as *esse* is bestowed on the whole universe of things by a first being which is its own being.<sup>154</sup>

This creation *ex nihilo* is not contradicted because Plato and Aristotle held immaterial substances and the heavenly bodies to have always existed. Aquinas declares that they did not therefore deny a cause of their being; indeed, they did not “deviate in this from the doctrine of Catholic faith” by positing *increated*.<sup>155</sup> He states the doctrine that God is the sole cause of being for all things in a form which is more Platonic than Aristotelian. The First Principle is called *simplicissimum*, and Thomas argues that “because subsistent being must be one ... it is necessary that all other things which are under it exist in the way they do as participants in *esse*”.<sup>156</sup> His exposition of the *Liber de causis* shows that, having looked at Plato more and more in Neoplatonic terms, Thomas saw that, for Platonists, all is derived from one exalted First Principle from which being comes. Even if the Platonists “posited many gods ordered under one” rather than, as we do, “positing one only having all things in itself,” everyone agrees “universality of causality belongs to God.”<sup>157</sup> The Platonic language betrays what underlies this concordance here.

The notion that Aristotle taught a doctrine of creation was developed among the late Antique conciliators of Plato and Aristotle. The Platonists want to draw together the pagan

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<sup>153</sup> Chase, “The Medieval Posterity of Simplicius’ Commentary on the *Categories*,” 16. See *In Praedicamenta*, p. 6, 27-30 Kalbfleisch, and Chase’s translation at p. 22, lines 28-30.

<sup>154</sup> Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, cap. 9, D 57, lines 103-118: Oportet igitur supra modum fieri quo aliquid fit, forma materiae adveniente, praecognoscere aliam rerum originem, secundum quod esse attribuitur toti universitati rerum a primo ente, quod est suum esse.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 9, D 58, lines 215-220: *Non ergo aestimandum est quod Plato et Aristoteles, propter hoc quod posuerunt substantias immateriales seu etiam caelestia corpora semper fuisse, eis subtraxerunt causam essendi. Non enim in hoc a sententia Catholicae fidei deviarunt, quod huiusmodi posuerunt increata, sed quia posuerunt ea semper fuisse, cuius contrarium fides Catholica tenet.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, cap. 9, D 57, lines 103-110: *Cum enim necesse sit primum principium simplicissimum esse, necesse est quod non hoc modo esse ponatur quasi esse participans, sed quasi ipsum esse existens. Quia vero esse subsistens non potest esse nisi unum, sicut supra habitum est, necesse est omnia alia quae sub ipso sunt, sic esse quasi esse participantia.*

<sup>157</sup> Aquinas, *Super De causis*, prop. 19, 106, lines 13-17: *Causalitas autem horum ad ordinem divinum pertinet, sive ponantur multi dii ordinati sub uno secundum Platonicos, sive unus tantum in se omnia habens secundum nos: universalitas enim causalitatis propria est Deo.*

*Genesis*, the *Timaeus*,<sup>158</sup> and its “Demiurge” with Aristotle’s *Physics* and his Unmoved Mover. To do this they needed to find some way of reconciling Aristotle’s eternal universe with that in the *Timaeus*, which is, as Aquinas had discerned in his *Exposition of the De Caelo* written just before the *On Separate Substances*,<sup>159</sup> generated and corruptible, though perpetual because it is held in being by the divine will.<sup>160</sup> The efforts and diverse positions of the ancient commentators give rise to the pervasive notion in late Antiquity and the Middle Ages that Aristotle and Plato regarded the First Principle as a creator.<sup>161</sup> Aquinas and his Aristotle are its heirs.

#### CONCLUSION

It is worse than useless to bring a conception of the history of philosophy to Aquinas—or indeed to other mediaeval philosophical theologians. This is not primarily because Aquinas’ understanding has crucial *lacunae* and inherited misidentifications and misconceptions—and some he conceives on his own—although there are plenty of those. More importantly, it is because the figures in the history acquire their characters mutually in the never ending disputation which philosophy is. From at least the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among us historical narrative became the equivalent of, or the replacement for, metaphysics. The result is three intertwined opposing movements in philosophy: increasingly demanding historical and philological study, history as ideology, and philosophy which subsists on the imagination of a timeless reason.<sup>162</sup> If we follow or seek to understand Aquinas, we cannot divide history and philosophy in these ways. Certainly, the last fantasy is not Thomas’. The relation of reason to its intellectual principle for him is fundamentally Proclean.<sup>163</sup> In consequence, reason circles round its centre variously; one of these motions his *Summa theologiae* exhibits. A

<sup>158</sup> See P. Hadot, “Physique et poésie dans le *Timée* de Platon,” in idem, *Études de philosophie ancienne*, L’ane d’or (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998), 277.

<sup>159</sup> Aquinas, *In De Caelo*, I, xxiii § 236, p. 113; I, xxix § 283, p. 138.

<sup>160</sup> See R. Sorabji, “Infinite power impressed: the transformation of Aristotle’s physics and theology,” K. Verrycken, “The metaphysics of Ammonius son of Hermeias,” and idem, “The development of Philoponus’ thought and its chronology,” in *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and their Influence*, ed. R. Sorabji (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 181–198; 199–231; 233–274, respectively. See also Proclus, *On the Eternity of the World, De Aeternitate Mundi*, Greek text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Helen S. Long and A.D. Macro (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), which shows the concordance of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics in the Platonic tradition, but also argues that the dispute about the eternity of the world is internal to late ancient philosophical theology generally and is not just a dispute between pagans and Christians. Michael Share, in his translation of Philoponus, *Against Proclus’ On the Eternity of the World 1-5*, *The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005). as well as others have raised important questions about parts of this thesis.

<sup>161</sup> On Albertus Magnus see L. Dewan, “St Albert, Creation and the Philosophers,” *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 40 (1984): 81–90, idem, “St. Thomas, Aristotle, and Creation,” *Dionysius* 15 (1991): 81–90. On the opposition to the concordance in late antiquity and the Arabic world, see Cristina D’Ancona, “The Topic of the ‘Harmony Between Plato and Aristotle,’” K. Verrycken, “The Creation of the World according to Zacharias of Mytilene,” *Dionysius* 27 (2009): 97–116, Philoponus, *Against Aristotle on the Eternity of the World*, trans. Christian Wildberg, *The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

<sup>162</sup> See my “Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth Century Religious Revival,” *Dionysius* 9 (1985): 85–127, “Radical Orthodoxy’s *Poiesis*: Ideological Historiography and Anti-Modern Polemic,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 80:1 (Winter 2006): 1–21, and “9/11 and the History of Philosophy,” *Animus* 11 (2006): 1–26.

<sup>163</sup> K. Corrigan, “L’auto-réflexivité et l’expérience humaine dans l’*Ennéade* V, 3 [49], et autres traités: de Plotin à Thomas d’Aquin,” *Études sur Plotin*, éd. M. Fattal (Paris/ Montreal: L’Harmattan, 2000), 149–172 at 157 and my “Between and Beyond Augustine and Descartes: More than a Source of the Self,” *Augustinian Studies* 32:1 (2001): 65–88 at 84–85.

distinguished graduate, both of my own university and this, described how reason moves for Proclus in words with which we may close, although not end:

[A]s long as our thinking remains *dianoia* without passing over into *Nous* it will seek wholeness without achieving it. ... [*D*]ianoia is always still on the way. The intelligible is present to it only through its own dividing circuit of *Nous* ... This circuit is never finished for *dianoia* because *dianoia* is a circumference which never touches the centre which it explicates. ... [It] is erotic ... drawn towards its object.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> D. Gregory MacIsaac, "Projection and Time in Proclus," *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John Inglis (Richmond [England]: Curzon Press, 2002), 99–101 and my "'Knowing As We are Known' in *Confessions* 10 and Other Philosophical, Augustinian and Christian Obedience to the Delphic *Gnothi Seauton* from Socrates to Modernity," *Augustinian Studies* 34:1 (2003): 23–48 at 41–48.