

Aquinas' First Principle: Being or Unity?

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Nowadays those¹ who write most perceptively about the works of Thomas Aquinas know that they are no longer treating a philosophy and theology which enjoys any special privilege in the Catholic Church. This is certainly a correct assessment of the mentality of contemporary Catholic theologians and philosophers and is, moreover, the direction of the most recent Papal declarations,² if one allows for the glacial slowness of change at that level. This is no doubt an excellent thing for the doctrine of St. Thomas, even if it is a reverse for Thomism and the political and ecclesiastical causes that attached themselves to it. For the official authority given to philosophy and theology "according to the mind of Saint Thomas" meant not only that his thought was forced to serve political and practical purposes in a world vastly different from that in which he wrote,³ but also, that contemporary Roman Catholic theologians and philosophers found in him their own interests and perspectives. For example, his philosophy was

1. Cf. M. Jordon, "The Grammar of *Esse*", *The Thomist*, 44 (1980), pp.1-26; A. Kenny, *Aquinas*, Oxford, 1980, p. 28; R. F. Harvanek, "History and *Aeterni Patris*", *Notes et Documents Institut International "J. Maritain"*, V,16 (1979, July-September), pp.1-12.

2. Cf. The "allocuzione" of John Paul II to the VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale, Roma, September 13, 1980; for a critical assessment of the tendency since Vatican II cf. B. de Margerie, "A quelles conditions d'après *Lumen Ecclesiae* (para. 15-16) une philosophie peut-elle servir d'instrument à l'élaboration d'une christologie catholique", presented to the Congress and to appear in its *Atti*.

3. Cf. Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, in Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine), I, Rome, 1882, pp.iii-xiv. For an enthusiastic contemporary appreciation there is Giuseppe Card. Siri, "Il momento storico nel quale namque l'Enciclica *Aeterni Patris*", to appear in the *Atti* of the VIII Congresso Tomistico; for a more critical view see my paper, "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism", *ibid.*; R. F. Harvanek, *art. cit.*; J. Hennesey, "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival: A Political and Philosophic Event", *The Journal of Religion*, 58 Supplement, (1978), pp. SS 185-197; G. A. McCool, "Twentieth-Century Scholasticism", *ibid.*, pp. SS 198-221 and *idem*, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, 1977, and F.van Steenberghen, *Introduction à l'étude de philosophie médiévale*, Louvain-Paris, 1974, pp. 56ff. are all useful.

variously found to be existentialist,⁴ and idealist,⁵ realist⁶ and critical.⁷ The acceptability of the modern philosophy after Descartes — or the Heideggerian critique of it —, of idealism — or its existentialist (and even indirectly the Marxist)⁸ reaction — was disputed in terms of interpretations of Thomas' teaching. A similar list of contemporary theological issues could also be supplied.⁹ And, when Thomas' text did not itself provide the doctrines sought, new texts¹⁰ were invented which provided their basis. As a

4. A very partial list indicating only the felt affinity with Heidegger would include: E. Gilson, "Trois leçons sur le Thomisme et sa situation présente", *Seminarium*, New Series, V,4 (1965), pp. 682-737 — reprinted as *Les tribulations de Sophie*, Paris, 1967; *idem*, *L'être et l'essence*, 2nd ed. Paris, 1962, Appendix II; J. Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, London, 1968, pp.107-8; C.Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris, 1961, p.636, *idem*, "Le retour au fondement de l'être", *St. Thomas d'Aquin Aujourd'hui*, Recherches de philosophie VI, Paris, 1963, pp. 177-193; *idem*, "Il nuovo problema dell'essere e la fondazione della metafisica", *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274-1974, Commemorative Studies*, II, Toronto, 1974, pp. 423-457; also articles by G. Giannini and C. Moreau in *Sapientia Aquinatis* (IV Congressus Thomistici Internationalis), Rome, 1955, and by T. A. Fay and C. Fabro in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale, Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, IV, Napoli, 1976.

5. P. Rousselot, *L'intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1924; cf. D. Bradley's analysis of Rahner's Thomism in "Rahner's Spirit in the World: Aquinas or Hegel", *The Thomist*, XLI, 2 (1977), pp. 167-199.

6. Again the list could be endless; the classical works are those of É Gilson, such as "Le réalisme methodique", *Philosophia Perennis*, II, Regensburg, 1930, pp. 744-755 and *Réalisme thomist et critique de la connaissance*, Paris, 1939.

7. To establish a positive relation to modern critical philosophy is the aim of the "transcendental" Thomists whose great master is J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, the five cahiers of which were published between 1922 and 1946 in Belgium and France — cf. D. Bradley "Transcendental Critique and Realist Metaphysics", *The Thomist*, XXXIX, 4 (1975), pp. 631-667. A middle position was attempted by Mons. Noël in *Notes d'épistémologie*, Louvain, 1925, and elsewhere.

8. K. Rahner, in *Geist im Welt, zur Metaphysik der endlichen Erkenntnis bei Thomas von Aquin*, 2nd ed. with foreword by J.B. Metz, München, 1957, does for Thomas what Feuerbach did for Hegel. J.B. Metz has drawn out the political consequences in *Christliche Anthropozentrik, Über die Denkform des Thomas von Aquin*, München, 1962 and in *Zur Theologie der Welt*, Mainz und München, 1968.

9. E.g., E. Gilson, "Trois leçons. . .", p.687 on doctrines which theologians refuse to recognize in Thomas because they are contrary to modern conceptions. The labour of M.D. Chenu (in *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, Chicago, 1964, p.305 and "Création et histoire", *Commemorative Studies*, II, pp. 391-399) to find in Thomas a contemporary *heilsgeschichte* theological spirit is another instance.

10. Cf. D. J. McCarthy, "Une doctrine en quête d'un auteur", *Rev. phil. de Louvain*, 66 (1968), pp. 630-660.

result nothing is more necessary than a reconsideration of St. Thomas which separates the historical sense of his doctrine from the various Thomisms — unless one judges that he is in the same situation in which some feel 'God' to be, i.e., so misused he is best left alone for a while.

But, if we are realistic about historical studies, we will recognize that they are not entirely divorced from contemporary concerns. What I propose in this article is a consideration of aspects of Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* which might partly correct a dominant tendency of the Thomism of the last one hundred years, exploit the fruits of recent historical scholarship, and establish a connection between Thomas' thinking and a present direction in theology.

What satisfies these three criteria is a consideration of the *Summa* in relation to aspects of the Neoplatonism after Plotinus. For first, the practical and political purposes on account of which Thomas' teaching was revised and promoted within the Catholic Church — as well as such circumstances as the Jesuit¹¹ involvement in the revival — determined that the Platonic element in his thought was deemphasized. Thomas was understood philosophically as an Aristotelian, indeed, as reviving a purer Aristotelianism against the Platonized versions of the Philosopher which he found for example in the Arabic commentators. These he was obliged to combat not only for the missionary purposes of the Church, but also, because of the dangerous consequences for Christian doctrine, morals, and political life which this Arabic Platonized Aristotelianism (or Latin Averroism) was conceived to have when taken up by Christian intellectuals — it was to provide a basis for imperial anti-Papal claims.¹² In this picture, Thomas, like Leo XIII and his followers, would be seen to be struggling against the secularist philosophers of his day. There is something in this account, but F. van Steenberghen¹³ has shown both the political

11. Cf. P. Dezza, "La preparazione dell'Enciclica *Aeterni Patris* il contributo della Compagnia di Gesu," *Atti VIII Congresso Tomistico*. For the commitment of the Jesuits to the Aristotelian interpretation of Thomas cf. R.F. Harvanek, *art. cit.*, p.5. For the Jesuit Cardinal Ehrle's role in establishing this interpretation in Leo's revival cf. F. von Steenberghen, *op. cit.*, p.57.

12. There is a very extended controversy about the balance of these two aims and whether and how they provide a motive for the *Summa contra Gentiles*: cf. A. Gautier, *Contra Gentiles*, I, Paris, 1961, introduction; F. van Steenberghen, *La philosophie au XIIIe siecle*, Louvain-Paris, 1966, pp. 316-324, and van Riet "La Somme contra les Gentiles et la polemique islamo-chrétienne", *Aquinas and the Problems of his Time, Mediaevalia Lovaniensis*, I, V, Leuven-The Hague, 1976, pp. 156-160.

13. *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century*, Nelson, 1955.

element in the historical controversy and the historical muddles and fictions which developed. Moreover, this account obviously is blind to Thomas' own Platonism.

Second, the developed study of the history of late Neoplatonism is quite recent, having been set off very largely by E. R. Dodd's edition and translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.¹⁴ The progress of these studies was interrupted by the Second World War and it is only now that they have advanced far enough to yield much fruit for the interpretation of the history of medieval theology and philosophy. Stephen Gersh has applied its results to the earliest part in his *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*,¹⁵ but Thomas, whose relation to Neoplatonism is entirely through these later forms, — he knew nothing of Plotinus — has hardly begun to be reconsidered in this reworking.

Third, partly as a result of the impact of these historical studies and the possibilities for philosophy and theology which they recall, but partly also in response to their perception of the contemporary necessities of thought, some Catholic theologians have endeavoured to revive and develop a Christian Neoplatonism. What attracts them to this ancient tradition and what primarily characterizes it for them is its being a negative theology. The person who has developed the historical, systematic, and contemporary aspects of this Plotinian and post-Plotinian Neoplatonism most completely is the Frenchman Jean Trouillard.¹⁶ But just as the greatest historians, philosophers, and theologians in the service of the Thomist ontology were French — men like E. Gilson, J. Maritain, M.-D. Chenu, — so Trouillard is surrounded in France by a constellation of historians — des Places,¹⁷ Festugière,¹⁸ H.D.

14. Oxford, first edition, 1933, second, 1963.

15. Leiden, 1978.

16. Some important writings include *La procession plotinienne*, Paris, 1955; "L'Âme du *Timée* et l'Un de *Parménide*", *Rev. Inter. de Phil.*, 92,2 (1970); *L'Une et l'Âme selon Proclus*, Paris, 1972; "Théologie négative et auto-constitution psychique chez les néoplatoniciens", *Savoir, faire, espérer* (hommage à Mgr. Henri Van Camp), Bruxelles, 1976, pp. 307-321. The work of this school can be seen in *Études Néoplatoniciennes*, Neuchâtel, 1973 which he edited with others. A partial bibliography and consideration of the significance of his early work can be found in A. Charles, "La raison et le divin chez Proclus", *Rev. sc. ph. th.*, 53 (1969), pp. 458-482.

17. Iamblique, *Les Mystères d'Égypte*, texte établi et traduit par E. des Places, S.J., Paris, 1966.

18. Among much else, A.M.J. Festugière has edited in four volumes *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, Paris, 1944-54 and translated and annotated Proclus, *Commentaire sur la République*, I-III, Paris, 1970 and Proclus, *Commentaire sur le Timée*, I-V, Paris, 1966-8.

Saffrey,¹⁹ P. Hadot²⁰ — and philosophers and theologians like H. Dumery²¹ and S. Breton,²² who together represent a considerable force in contemporary French Catholic intellectual life. Among the Germans and the English the most notable advocates of the reconsideration of Neoplatonism for the purposes of Christian thinking are W. Beierwaltes²³ and A. H. Armstrong,²⁴ respectively. It is significant for the history of Thomism not only that these scholars are all Roman Catholics, but also, that some of them, e.g. Fathers Trouillard and Breton and Professor Armstrong, are clearly reacting against Thomism. Thus, Trouillard and Breton,

19. Fr. Saffrey edited Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, Fribourg-Louvain, 1954 and with L.G. Westerink, *Proclus, Théologie Platonicienne*, I-III, Paris, 1968-1978. His articles, "L'état actuel des recherches sur le *Liber de Causis*", *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter, Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, II, Berlin, 1963, pp. 267-281 and "Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le pseudo-Denys et Proclus", *Rev. sc. ph. th.*, 63 (1979), pp. 3-16, are very important.

20. His *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vol., Paris, 1968 is fundamental for establishing the tradition of Porphyry. Many articles of his are referred to below.

21. Of special interest for our purposes are his "Le néant d'être", *Les études philosophiques*, Juillet-Sept., 1973, pp.315-327 and "L'être et l'Un", *Miscellanea Albert Dondeyne, Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* XXXV, Leuven, 1974, pp. 313-350. Cf. Y. L'abbé, "Le problème de Dieu dans la philosophie de la religion de H. Dumery", *Rev. sc. ph. th.*, 55(1971), pp. 393-431.

22. He was editor with other members of l'Association des Professeurs de Philosophie des Facultés Catholiques de France of an important seven volume series "Recherches de Philosophie" published between 1962 and 1971 by Les Éditions du Cerf. His article in volume VI *Saint Thomas D'Aquin Aujourd'hui*, "L'idée de transcendantal et la genèse des transcendants chez saint Thomas d'Aquin" (pp. 45-74), anticipates M. Jordon's article cited above. His "Le théorème de l'Un dans les *Eléments de Théologie de Proclus*", *Rev. sc. ph. th.*, 58 (1974), pp. 561-583 and "Actualité de Néoplatonisme" in *Études Néoplatoniciennes*, pp. 110-126 are arguments for the contemporary viability of characteristic Neoplatonic positions. His *Être, Monde, Imaginaire*, Paris, 1976 is Heideggerian. Cf. Y. L'abbé, "Logique, métaphysique et théologie, deux ouvrages de Stanislas Breton" *Rev. sc. ph. th.*, 56 (1972), pp. 252-264.

23. Cf. *Proclus, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main, 1965 and *Identität und Differenz*, Frankfurt am Main, 1980.

24. The movement in Professor Armstrong's relation to the official theology of the Roman Catholic Church is evident in the various editions of his *Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* and in the articles collected in *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, London, 1979. He edited *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1967. Since *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, he has published "The Self-Definition of Christianity in relation to later Platonism" in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, I, ed. E.P. Sanders, S.C.M. Press, 1980, pp.74-99.

among others, are endeavouring to construct a henology to replace its ontological metaphysics.

In searching for a unique philosophical position in Thomas which would justify the peculiar authority he was given in the Roman Church, Thomists characterized his philosophy with remarkable unanimity²⁵ as an ontology. The primacy given to *esse* in his philosophy gave his philosophy of being a purity altogether unique. Because this philosophy alone escaped Heidegger's criticism that western philosophy had forgotten being, it was the remaining authentic fundamental philosophy.²⁶ For those who believed in a Christian philosophy²⁷ — itself supposed to be a philosophy of being — Thomas' ontology was to set the standard. On the other hand, of the various "essentialisms" opposed to this ontology of *esse*, henology appeared as the most dangerous, involving all the pantheistic and other errors of pagan Neoplatonism and its modern idealist counterparts. It is an extraordinary reversal then to find, immediately with the decline of the official ontological Thomism, an assertion of henology as a basis for Catholic theology. But more ironic yet, part of the appeal of henology is that it, not Thomism, is now conceived to be exempt from Heidegger's criticism of onto-theology.²⁸ Both sides accept the same standard; the question is what falls under it. Also henology, which understands the first principle as the One above being, seems able to lead men to worship a God, who as not being,

25. "The doctrine of *esse* has characterized Thomism — even constituted it in its uniqueness from the earliest days". M. Jordon, *art. cit.*, p.2. It is everywhere the doctrine of realists like E. Gilson (add to works cited above especially *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed., Toronto, 1952) as well as transcendental Thomists (cf. K. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, trans., London, 1968, p.163 or E. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, trans., New York, 1968, pp. 46-47).

26. Cf. Note 4 above to which one might add Coreth, *ibid.*, p. 16.

27. E. Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy*, Garden City, 1960; *idem*, *Being and Some Philosophers*, p. 30; *idem*, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, London, 1955; *idem*, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, London, 1961. F. van Steenberghen (and the Louvain school generally) oppose it e.g., *The Phil. Movement*, pp. 14ff and pp. 108ff, also *Introduction à l'étude*, pp. 283-332. For a discussion of the issues cf. M. Nedoncelle, *Is there a Christian Philosophy?*, London, 1960.

28. S. Breton, *Être, Monde, Imaginaire*, p. 10; *idem*, "Le théorème de l'Un. . .", pp. 580ff; J. Trouillard, "Théologie négative et autoconstitution. . ." pp.320-321; H. Duméry, "Le Néant. . .", p.315 all endeavour to get beyond the problems of onto-theology generally exemplified by Thomism or Thomas. P. Aubenque, "Plotin et le dépassement de l'ontologie Grecque classique", *Le Néoplatonisme*, CNRS, Paris, 1971, pp. 101-8 regards both the Plotinian and Porphyrian alternatives as escaping the Heideggerian critique of onto-theology.

satisfies what is sought in the contemporary phenomenon of Christian atheism. Further, since what is below the One is self-constituted, henology provides the room which ontology does not for modern freedom. This judgement that the priority of essence threatens freedom is also of course part of contemporary existentialism, but, perhaps it belongs more to the side of it seen in Sartre than that in Heidegger.

These considerations give some reason for looking at Thomas' relation to Neoplatonism. Nothing like a complete treatment is yet possible. Our tools are insufficiently exact for a judgement of the transformations the tradition received in reaching St. Thomas. We do not possess, for example, a proper critical text of his commentary on the *de Divinis Nominibus*²⁹ of the pseudo-Dionysius — the most authoritative source of the Proclan Neoplatonism for Thomas. (Dionysius' work had a quasi biblical authority as he was accepted throughout the Middle Ages as a disciple of St. Paul).³⁰ But, nonetheless, it may be that examining the two aspects of Thomas' thought which develop out of opposed traditions in post-Plotinian Neoplatonism will justify itself not only in bringing out his sources, but also, in manifesting the inner dialectic of his system giving us insight into its own peculiar character. Further, an investigation from this vantage point exhibits that Thomas' system is not simply the archetypical ontology. Rather the tension within it between the positions of the two opposed Neoplatonic schools coincides with a logical tension between the priority which ontology gives to being and the primacy henology gives to unity. Thomas may not be claimed for one or the other of the sides in this contemporary debate. His synthesis has perhaps a wider appeal than recognized, although it remains to be seen whether the tensions necessary to this breadth are genuinely held together within his thought.

II

The harshness of Iamblichus' attack on Porphyry once caused his historians to doubt that his *de Mysteriis* could have been written

29. There is S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, ed. C. Pera, Taurini-Romae, 1950.

30. On the influence of Dionysius cf. J. Durantel, *Saint Thomas et Pseudo-Denis*, Paris, 1919. Also for most of Thomas' life the *auctor libri* of the *Liber de Causis* had the authority of Aristotle. It is only in his exposition of the work, his last commentary, that he reveals his knowledge of its Arab and Proclan sources. On the date of the *Expositio* (after 1268) cf. Saffrey's edition and Sancti Thomae de Aquino *de Substantiis Separatis, Opera Omnia* (Leonine), XL, Romae, 1968, p.D6.

by Porphyry's pupil.³¹ Yet it seems it was, and that, within a generation of the death of Plotinus, his followers had divided sharply over the direction in which his development of the Platonic tradition should be carried. Moreover, because these differences reappeared in the Christian theologies which grew out of these Neoplatonisms — the later reflects the earlier scholasticism, — these same conflicts continued to emerge in western Medieval thought. Partly, this is because of the great authority of both Augustine and the pseudo-Dionysius. For Augustine's Plotinus is at least partially mediated by Porphyry and Victorinus and shares certain of the features of this Roman school,³² whereas objective and doctrinal connections between Dionysius and Proclus, the greatest systematizer of the direction Iamblichus gave Neoplatonism, are well established.³³

The Porphyrian Neoplatonism was the first to establish itself in the west³⁴ and even in the Middle Ages it was, as embodied in the Augustinians, the conservative position. It seemed also to have the power of self-renewal, for as late as Julian of Norwich,³⁵ we find

31. On the controversy, cf. P. Hadot, *op. cit.*, I, p.93.

32. A great dispute has raged since W. Theiler asserted that Augustine had no Plotinus except through Porphyry and the Porphyrian Victorinus. This claim seems unjustified, nor is it necessary for our argument. For a summary of the controversy cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24ff. For recent wider considerations of what Augustine's *libri Platoniorum* were and the nature of Platonism cf. C.J. Starnes, "Saint Augustine and the Vision of the Truth", *Dionysius*, I, (1977), pp. 104-5, n.46; J. A. Doull, "Augustinian Trinitarianism and Existential Theology", *Dionysius*, III, (1979), p.141, and P. Hadot, "La présentation du Platonisme par Augustine", *Kerygma und Logos, Festschrift für Carl Andresen*, ed. A. M. Ritter, Göttingen, 1979, pp. 272-79. E. zum Brunn, "La dialectique du 'magis esse' et du 'minus esse' chez saint Augustine", *Le Néoplatonisme*, pp. 373-380, sees his doctrine of God's being in a Porphyrian perspective.

33. H.D. Saffrey's "Nouveaux liens . . ." referred to above (n.19) sums up the current evidence connecting Proclus and Dionysius. Des Places, in his introduction to *Les Mystères d'Égypte*, pp. 24-5 gives a useful list of continuities between Iamblichus, Proclus and Dionysius.

34. "On a donc pu dire très justement que Porphyre était, à partir du IV^e siècle, le maître des esprits en Occident. C'est lui qui révéla le néoplatonisme aux philosophes latins", P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.*, p. 86. The quotation is from P. Courcelle, *Les Lettres grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, Paris, 1948, p. 394.

35. "Ryght as there is a bestely wyllle in the lower party that may wyllle no good, ryght so there is a godly wyll in the hygher party, whych wyllle is so good that it may nevyr wyllle evylle, but evyr good." *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*, II, ed. E. Colledge and J. Walsh, Toronto, 1978, Chapter 37, p.443, cf. also, I, 254, 1.10 and note, and pp. 109ff. and Chapt. 55, p.569, 11.54ff. where what is expressed first in the language of

reiterated a characteristic Plotinian doctrine which Iamblichus and his followers had explicitly rejected: the doctrine of the two parts of the human soul — the higher remaining in contemplative unity with God, the lower fallen into the temporal world.³⁶ The Augustinian illuminationist epistemologies have their source in this psychology transmitted to Augustine, for whom the human mind remains in touch with the Divine Truth.³⁷ In contrast, Aquinas unites Aristotle and Dionysius when he maintains that we know through reversion to the phantasm and that we can rise to the contemplation of the Divine only through sensible things.³⁸ In this Thomas has chosen the Iamblichan-Proclan tradition against Porphyry but in fact both Augustine and pseudo-Dionysius are of the greatest authority for him and his system is a synthesis of their divisions.

The doctrine characteristic of Porphyry's own special position which we find in Thomas is the primacy given to being and indeed the representation of the prime term by the infinitive — εἶναι in

will is spoken of in terms of "prevy inwarde syghte". Cf. also Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans. Colledge and Walsh, *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, New York, 1978, pp. 64-6 and 88-9.

36. Plotini, *Enneades*, (Henry et Schwyzer), Paris-Brussels, 1951-73, IV, 8, 8, 2-3; V, 1, 10. Cf. C.G. Steel, *The Changing Self. A Study of the Soul in later Neoplatonism*, Brussels 1978.

37. E.g., Augustine, *De Magistro*, XI, 38 (PL XXXII, 1216). Anselm follows him very faithfully at this point; cf. the opening lines of the *Proslogion*. For a list of texts from Augustine and an example of the illuminationist interpretations, cf. Bonaventura, *Quaestiones Disputatae de scientia Christi*, V, *Opera Omnia* V, Quarachi, 1891, pp. 17ff.

38. Consider this partial list of texts from Dionysius used in the context of his "Aristotelian" epistemology:

"Homines autem ad intelligibilem veritatem cognoscendam perveniunt procedendo de uno ad aliud", *Summa Theo.* I, 79,8 (*De Div. Nom.* VII,2; PG 3, 868). "Anima autem intellectiva . . . infimum gradum in substantiis intellectualibus tenet . . . oportet quod eam colligat ex rebus divisibilibus per viam sensus", *ibid.*, I,76,5 (*De Div. Nom.* VII,2; PG 3, 868). "Non est possibile humanae menti ad immaterialem illam sursum excitari caelestium hierarchiarum contemplationem, nisi secundum se materiali manuductione utatur", *ibid.*, I,88,2 obj.1 (*De Cael. Hier.* I,3; PG 3, 124). ". . . divina hominibus manifestari non possunt nisi sub aliquibus similitudinibus sensibilis", *ibid.*, I-II,99, 3ad 3 (*De Cael. Hier.* I,3; PG3, 124). ". . . homines vero percipiunt eas divinas illuminationes sub sensibilibus similitudinibus", *ibid.*, I,108,1 (*De Cael. Hier.* I,2; PG 3, 124). The list is from A.C. Pegis, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, II, Index of Authors, Random House, New York, 1945, p.1168. On the union of Platonist and Aristotelian elements in Thomas' theory of cognition, cf. J. Moreau, "Le Platonisme dans la *Somme Theologique*", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale, Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo Centenario*, I, Napoli, 1975, pp.238-247.

Greek, *esse* in Latin.³⁹ So much has been written about this aspect of Thomas' philosophy that little need be said to show that it is a feature of it. An adequate statement of his teaching can be found in the *Summa Theologiae* where, within the treatment of the divine simplicity, Thomas denies the composition of essence and existence in God. The simplicity of God requires that both be united in his *esse*.⁴⁰ A little later on, when he reflects on the knowledge of the divine substance attained in this *de divinis nominibus* and lays down the rules for applying names to God, Thomas tells us that *esse* is the highest of them: "this name *Qui est* . . . is the most proper name of God".⁴¹ No major revision of the usual description of Thomas' doctrine on this point is required.

However, the newly uncovered facts relating to the source and transmission of this doctrine overthrow the Thomist representation of the significance of his teaching. It is of revolutionary import that the anti-Christian Neoplatonist Porphyry, uniting the One and the first intelligible triad, identified the One and εἷναι⁴². It is also significant that he is the source of this doctrine in the Christians Victorinus, Augustine,⁴³ and Boethius⁴⁴ and that they held it well before Thomas. Indeed Thomas is only one in the long line of interpreters of the crucial early texts in Boethius which convey it to the Middle Ages.⁴⁵ Finally, it is important that it is Porphyry, not a common scriptural revelation, that stands behind

39. Cf. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.*, I, pp. 258ff. and 482ff. on Porphyry's originality.

40. "Est igitur Deus suum esse, et non solum sua essentia", S. Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, Piana, Ottawa, 1953, I,3,4.

41. ". . . hoc nomen *Qui est* . . . est maxime proprium nomen Dei", S.T., I,13,11.

42. Cf. P. Hadot, "Dieu comme acte d'être dans le néoplatonisme, à propos des théories d'É. Gilson sur la métaphysique de l'Exode", *Dieu et l'être*, Centre d'études des religions du livre, Paris, 1978, pp. 57-63; see also the "présentation" by P. Vignaux and P. Hadot, "L'être et l'étant dans le néoplatonisme", *Études Néoplatoniciennes*, Jean Trouillard et al., Neuchatel, 1973, pp. 27-39.

43. Cf. n.32 above. For endeavours to show that Thomas and Augustine share a similar doctrine of God's *esse*, cf. E. zum Brunn, "L'exégèse augustinienne de "Ego sum qui sum" et la "métaphysique de l'Exode" and "La métaphysique de l'Exode" selon Thomas d'Aquin" in *Dieu et l'être*, pp. 141-164 and 245-269, and J.F. Anderson, *St. Augustine and Being*, The Hague, 1965.

44. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.*, pp. 490ff. and "La distinction de l'être et de l'étant dans le *De Hebdomadibus* de Boèce", *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 2, pp. 147-153.

45. P. Hadot, "Forma Essendi, interprétation philologique et interprétation philosophique d'une formule de Boèce", *Les études classiques*, 38, (1970), pp. 143-156.

the similar teaching in Arab Neoplatonists like Avicenna.⁴⁶ Avicenna and Thomas both maintained that God was the simple act of being and that, in contrast, existence and essence were distinct in creatures.⁴⁷ Indeed Avicenna may be one of Thomas' sources of the Porphyrian tradition. If these considerations destroy the notions that Thomas' ontology — his philosophy of *esse* — is unique, or Christian, or a "metaphysic of Exodus", or reflects the Aristotelian rather than Platonist side of his thought, the historical investigations used to establish these views are not therefore useless. What served to distinguish Thomas from Aristotle in this regard — Thomas was thought to have been able to grasp the import of Exodus 3,14 because of the Aristotelian direction of his thought, though his "existential" philosophy of being was contrasted with Aristotle's "essentialism"⁴⁸ — in fact rather serves to distinguish his position as Neoplatonic as opposed to Aristotelian. Theology is one of the names of Aristotle's science of being as being,⁴⁹ but God is not distinguished by being εἶναι, nor is his activity without subject or object, indeed it is subject and object and their unity: ὥστε ταῦτόν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν,⁵⁰ and so Aristotle has not the difficulties of either Plotinus or Thomas about making predications of God.⁵¹ Also the characteristics stated above, meant to place Thomas and Avicenna together in the tradition of Exodus,⁵² serve to identify their common filiation from Porphyry.

46. Cf. P. Thillet, "Indices Porphyriens dans la théologie d'Aristote" and S. Pines, "Les textes Arabes dit Plotiniens et le courant "Porphyrien" dans le Néoplatonisme Grec" in *Le Néoplatonisme Grec*, pp. 293-302 and 303-313.

47. On the Arabic teaching cf. A. Rachid, "Dieu et l'être selon Al-Farabi; le chapitre de "l'être" dans le Livre des Lettres", *Dieu et l'être*, pp. 186ff. For a list of similarities and differences between the teaching of Thomas and Avicenna (according to Thomas) cf. G.C. Anawati, "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et la *Métaphysique* d'Avicenne", *Commemorative Studies*, I, pp. 458-9. There is also M.L. Colish, "Avicenna's Theory of Efficient Causation and its Influence on St. Thomas Aquinas", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino*, I, p.297, n.3.

48. É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 365 and his other works listed in n. 27 above. This is a very common theme for contemporary Thomists. A most useful piece of scholarship to emerge from this enterprise is J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, Toronto, 1951.

49. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1026a19.

50. *Ibid.*, 1072b21.

51. Cf. my "The Structure of Aristotle's logic and the knowledge of God in the *Pars Prima* of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas", Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress for Mediaeval Philosophy, Bonn, 1977, forthcoming.

52. Cf. É. Gilson, "Quasi Definitio Substantiae", *Commemorative Studies*, I, pp. 125-6.

Yet what is meant by Neoplatonic here needs some attention. Plotinus is said to initiate the Neoplatonic tradition in contrast to Middle Platonism by his teaching that the One is above νοῦς.⁵³ Porphyry, like Iamblichus and his followers, is attempting to reconcile Plotinus and the *Chaldean Oracles*, "a collection of Greek magico-mystical poems of late antiquity which . . . was elevated by the Neoplatonists to the rank of a scripture of holy revelation"⁵⁴ and which philosophically are Middle Platonist. To accomplish this Porphyry identifies the Father, or first principle with being in the triad being, life, thought.⁵⁵ But there is an essential feature of his doctrine of the identity of the first principle and εἶναι which marks its Neoplatonic context and this feature is common to the teaching of Boethius, Avicenna and St. Thomas. Namely, the first is called *esse* (or the equivalent) precisely to give it a form appropriate to the One: an activity without subject or predicate, a simplicity beyond the distinction of essence and existence.⁵⁶ What then constitutes the lower or created quality of what is other than the One-being is the division in it of existence and essence. Plotinus himself speaks of the first as this subjectless, predicateless activity, although not calling him εἶναι.⁵⁷ While Iamblichus and Proclus are reacting against Porphyry's debasement of the One in his "telescoping of the hypostases",⁵⁸ their teaching is characteristically more negative than that of Plotinus. They speak of his existence as ὑπαρξίς rather than εἶναι, but they deny ἐνέργεια of him,⁵⁹ and Proclus places his

53. "Le critère du véritable Platonisme depuis Plotin est la doctrine de l'Un conçu comme premier dieu. Une autre lignée de la tradition platonicienne, cherchant à harmoniser Platon et Aristote, faisant du premier dieu un intellect pur. C'est . . . Moyen-Platonisme . . . Il est aussi intéressant de remarquer le gout de Porphyre pour la tradition du Moyen-Platonisme antérieur à Plotin." H. O. Saffrey, "Plan des Livres I et II du de Mysteries de Iamblique", *Zetesis*, Album amicorum Prof. Dr. Emile Strijcker, Antwerpen-Utrecht, 1973, p.290, n.21.

54. H. Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy*, 2nd ed. M. Tardieu, Paris, 1978, p.xiii.

55. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.*, pp. 98ff., 286ff., 415ff., 482ff.

56. "Le commentaire de Porphyre "Sur le Parménide" est très explicite sur ce point: l'Être qu'est l'Un est un agir pur [In *Parm.*, XII, 25-6]. Cela veut dire que le "prédicat" (κατηγορημα) pris absolument représente à la fois le maximum d'indetermination et d'abstraction et le maximum d'activité . . . Donc . . . l'Être premier sera inconnaissable . . . Pour la première fois, dans l'histoire de la pensée, une théologie négative est appliquée à l'Être" *ibid.*, pp. 415-416.

57. *Enneades*, VI, 8, 20, 9. Cf. P. Hadot, "Dieu comme acte d'être. . .", p.62.

58. A.C. Lloyd in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, p.288.

59. Cf. e.g. Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, II, 4, p.31, 11. 7-8. "Existence

henads between the One and the noetic.⁶⁰ But in fact both sides are endeavouring to think how the first can both be transcendent and yet all things be in and derive from it as their source — though perhaps they are looking at this problem from its opposite ends.⁶¹ What is curious is that Thomas is actually able to derive his teaching by combining both traditions. For he⁶² follows the *Liber de Causis* and Dionysius — both most obviously derivative from Proclus⁶³ — in calling God 'being' because being is his first effect, and the divine is known and named from its effects. These are both Neoplatonic commonplaces. But there is in fact a feature of Thomas' teaching on being which is characteristically Proclan.

in the specific sense of ὕπαρξις must inevitably be prior to activity" (p.101). "It is a general term for 'existence (entity)' at various levels of reality, it is therefore applied right up to the One". S.E. Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΣ, Brill, Leiden, 1975, pp.32-3. On the history of "ὕπαρξις" cf. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.* p. 489-90. "L'originalite de la doctrine ontologique de Porphyre, c'est identifier l' ὕπαρξις avec l'εἶναι μόνον. . .", p.490.

60. ". . . L'inventeur de cette théorie des hénades divines est Syrianus . . . C'est un fait que nous trouvons chez Proclus la théologie des hénades divines dans cet état achevé" Saffrey and Westerink, Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, III, pp. LI-LII. Proclus is "le grand diffuseur de cette doctrine", H.D. Saffrey, "Nouveaux liens objectifs. . .", p.15.

61. Cf. n.203 below.

62. "Si alia causa nominetur a suo effectu, oportet quod principalius nominetur Deus per ipsum esse a primo effectu per quem omnia fuit; huiusmodi autem est ens; ergo principalius nominatur Deus per ipsum esse", *In de div. nom.*, V.1,636. Cf. also his comments on Propositions III, IV, IX, XII *In liberum de causis* where he uncovers the teaching of Proclus and the *auctor libri* that the characteristic effect of God is the being of things — see below n.65. "Ipsum enim esse est communissimus effectus primus et intimior omnibus aliis effectibus; et ideo soli Deo competit secundum virtutem propriam talis effectus: unde etiam, ut dicitur in lib. de causis [propos. IX] intelligentia non dat esse, nisi prout est in ea virtus divina". S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Quaestiones Disputatae* II, *De Potentia*, P.M. Pession, Taurini-Romae, 1965, III, 7; *ibid.*, VII, 2; *ST*, I, 105, 5, and I-II, 66, 5 ad 4. Studies of importance on the doctrine of the *Liber de Causis* include Saffrey's introduction to his edition and his article in *Misc. Mediaevalia* 2, also Leo Sweeney, "Doctrine of Creation in *Liber de Causis*", *A Étienne Gilson Tribute*, Milwaukee, 1959: "the *Esse creans* of the *Liber de Causis* makes everything simply to be by an act of genuine creation" (p.289). Studies of the relation between Thomas' teaching and that of Dionysius and the *auctor libri* include: C. Fabro, *Participation et Causalité selon St. Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 171-244; K.Kremer, *Die Neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden, 1966, pp. 299-313 and 300-396; F. van Steenberghe, *Introduction*, pp. 100-1; F. Ruello, "La mystique de l'Exode", *Dieu et l'être*, p.243.

63. Cf. notes 30,33, and 62 above and most recently J. Lowry, *The Logical Principles of Proclus' ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΣΙΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ* as *Systematic Ground of the Cosmos*, Amsterdam, 1980, introduction, n.4.

Thomas teaches not only that causing existence is what God specially does but that his causative power is not limited to what immediately derives from him, rather it is active at every level of creation.⁶⁴ This direct relation to the First of all which comes from him is a doctrine of Proclus and accords with the whole tendency of his school to which we now turn.⁶⁵

What comes to Thomas from the tradition of Neoplatonism originating in Iamblichus is much more multiform, though its provenance is just as indirect. Although Thomas did read Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (in William of Moerbeke's translation) when he was commenting on the *Liber de Causis* — itself largely excerpts from the *Elements* —, this was near the end of his life and after he had written his various treatises *de Deo*.⁶⁶ But through the works of Dionysius and through the *Liber*, both of which Thomas knew from his student days (indeed our first piece of Thomistic autograph is his notes of Albert the Great's lectures on the *de Divinis Nominibus*),⁶⁷ as well as through their generally diffused influence, Thomas came to know both the characteristic formal structures as

64. "Si autem consideremus virtutem qua fit actio, sic virtus superioris causae erit immediatior effectui quam virtus inferioris; nam virtus inferior non coniungitur effectui nisi per virtutem superioris; unde dicitur in lib. de Caus. [prop.1], quod virtus causae primae prius agit in causatum, et vehementius ingreditur in ipsum". *De Potentia*, III, 7. Cf. also *Summa contra Gentiles* III, 74 and *ST*, I,14, 11 ad 3 and I,44,2.

65. *Elements*, Prop. 57,101,138-140,157 and Dodds' comments pp. 230-2 and n.79 below.

66. Cf. n.30 above. The *Prima Pars* was written between 1266 and 1268 (J.A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, Oxford, 1974, p.361) On the date of the *Compendium Theologiae* see Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Compendium Theologiae, Opera Omnia* (Leonine), XLII, Roma, 1979, p.8 ". . . Le "De Fide" serait a peu près contemporain du "De Potentia" (1265-1267)".

67. Both Peter Callus (*Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis auctore Petro Calo*, D. Prümmer, *Fontes Vitae S. Thomae Aquinatis*, Fasc. 1, Tolosae, 1911, p.25) and William of Tocco (*Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis auctore Guillemo de Tocco*, Prümmer *op.cit.*, Fasc. 2, St. Maximin, 1924, p.78) tell that Thomas attended Albert's lectures on the *Divine Names*; cf. also A. Walz, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris, 1962, p.68. P. Simon in his *Prolegomena* to his edition of Albert's lectures (*Alberti Magni Super Dionysius de Divinis Nominibus*, Coloniae, 1972, pp.v-xx) traces the manuscript tradition back to the Codex Neopolitanus of which he writes: "Exceptis nonnullis versibus, f.89r et f.107vb manu scripturae septentrionalis legibiliter scriptis, totus codex litteris lectu valde difficilibus vel paene illegibilibus seu 'inintelligibilibus' scriptus est a scriba Italico, qui Thomas de Aquino iuvenis non temere putatur fuisse. Certe Thomas videtur codicem semper fere secum habuisse" (p.viii). For the influence of Dionysius on Albert cf. F. Ruello, *Les "Noms Divins" et leur "raisons" selon saint Albert le Grand commentateur du "de Divinis Nominibus"*, Paris, 1963. Eriugena is also influential through his translation of Dionysius cf. n. 23, pp. 72-73 and n.37, pp.19-20.

well as the doctrines of this tradition. So far as the content of his teaching is concerned we have referred already to how it affects his view of the character of the divine causality and of the place and nature of the human soul. Proclus' understanding of evil is also important, and we must see how all this coheres with Thomas' reception of their criticism of the identification of the One and being.

The pseudo-Dionysius is an authority for Thomas' holding to the Iamblichan-Proclan view of the situation and nature of the human soul fallen into the temporal process. No part of it remains above fixed and stable in the realm of *νοῦς*, illumined by the ideas and Divine Truth.⁶⁸ A result of such a psychology is that material means must be found from within the soul's contact with the sensible world for assisting its rise back toward the One through science and intellection. Among the pagans the means is theurgy, a word also found in Dionysius,⁶⁹ though with him we speak more generally of a symbolic theology.⁷⁰ The influence of this theology on the spirituality and aesthetic views of the Christian Middle Ages is profound⁷¹ — though because of its association with heterodoxy not fully appreciated.⁷² Its teaching that the soul can ascend to God by opening itself to the sensible rather than simply by turning inward away from it provides a counterpoint to the more Plotinian Augustinian psychology and spirituality throughout the period.⁷³ Secularized in the thirteenth century, its phenomena in Thomas are the things which Thomists speak of as his realism: his Aristotelian epistemology, his starting in the evidence of sense to prove God's existence, his interest in the physics of Aristotle, etc. Indeed one might say that his Aristotelianism should be seen within the context of his Neoplatonism. Certainly he generally reads Aristotle through Neoplatonic spectacles,⁷⁴ but, more

68. Cf. n.38 above.

69. On the objective links between Dionysius and Proclus based on Dionysius' use of the words *henads* and *theurgy* cf. H.D. Saffrey, "Un lien objectif entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus", *Studia Patristica*, IX (1966), pp.98-105, *idem*, "Nouveaux liens. . .", and I.P. Sheldon-Williams, "Henads and Angels: Proclus and ps.Dionysius", *Studia Patristica*, XI (1972), pp. 65-71.

70. Cf. I.P. Sheldon Williams on Dionysius in *The Cambridge History*, pp. 457ff.

71. Cf. W. Beierwaltes, "Negati Affirmatio", *Dionysius I* (1977), pp.127-159.

72. Cf. below n.117.

73. M.D. Chenu, *Man, Nature and Society in the Twelfth Century*, Chicago, 1968, pp.45ff., 63-4, 125. Also, R.D. Crouse, "Intentio Moysi", *Dionysius II*, (1978), pp. 153-5.

74. ". . . the fundamental philosophical notions of being, thing, substance, and accident are regularly related by him [Thomas] to the

significant is that the movement toward a more positive view of Aristotle is a feature of the later Neoplatonism and especially of its Christian adherents.⁷⁵ Nor is it exclusively a feature of the Iamblichian tradition; for Porphyry's view of the first principle is closer to Aristotle's than are the positions of either Plotinus or Iamblichus and his followers, and he is responsible for the assimilation of Aristotle's logic into Neoplatonism after Plotinus' critique. It is perhaps enough to mention that Porphyry, Boethius, and the Arabs provide the main western medieval sources for the knowledge of Aristotle until the time of St. Thomas.

If the soul is altogether fallen into the temporal world and is able to use that world to rise again to God — indeed can effect its rise in no other way, — the appearance of the sensible world will be very different from the picture which corresponds to Plotinus' psychology. Sensible matter will have a goodness relative to this human necessity which it does not have in Plotinus. It will not itself be evil;⁷⁶ indeed, the similarity between the top and the metaphysics of Avicenna, never to that of Aristotle. Inversely, of the 426 quotations of Avicenna in the complete works of Thomas Aquinas listed by C. Vansteenhiste, only twenty-five are found in the commentaries on Aristotle, eleven of which are in the commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Between the metaphysics of Aristotle and that of Thomas Aquinas, the metaphysics of Avicenna act as a kind of filter", É. Gilson, "Quasi Definitio Substantiae", p.125. Cf. also J.C. Doig, *Aquinas on Metaphysics*, The Hague, 1972, J. Owens, "Aquinas as an Aristotelian Commentator", *Commemorative Studies*, I, pp. 213-238, esp. p.224 and M. Jordon, *art. cit.* On a similar transformation of some of his conceptions of the Aristotelian physics and psychology cf. T. Litt, *Les corps célestes dans l'univers de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Louvain-Paris, 1963, esp. pp. 369ff., J. Peghaire, *Intellectus et ratio selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris-Ottawa, 1936, esp. pp. 285-6, and J. Moreaux, *art. cit.*

75. Boethius and Porphyry, as opposed to Plotinus, try to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, cf. on Boethius *De interpretatione* (C. Meiser, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1880, p.79), on Porphyry and later Neoplatonism: R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, London, 1972, pp. 24ff. On the Christians: André Tuilier, "La tradition aristotelicienne à Byzance des origines au VIII^e siècle. La formation de la scolastique byzantine", *Actes du Congrès de Lyon (Association Guillaume Budé)*, Paris 1960, pp. 186-197. Christian Neoplatonists in this tradition are comparatively more accepting of Aristotle than their pagan predecessors: because of their "belief that as long as God's transcendence is preserved the difference between various levels of creation diminishes in importance" (p.205), they have a "tendency to apply Aristotelian principles at all levels of the created world in contrast to the pagan approach in which such doctrines were confined in their application to the world of sense" pp. 235-6; S.E. Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, Leiden, 1978. On the congeniality of Dionysius' turn to the sensible and an Aristotelian perspective cf. Chenu, *op.cit.*, p.135; Thomas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, In *II Sent.*, d.14, q.1, a.2 and n.38 above.

76. Cf. D. O'Brien, "Plotinus on Evil", *Le Neoplatonisme*, pp. 113-146; A.

bottom of the cosmos will come out: prime matter and the One are in opposite ways both unspecified by form.⁷⁷ In common with Proclus, Thomas holds the notion that evil is not itself real but is rather privation.⁷⁸ And he stands with Proclus in opposition to Plotinus on two other points which cohere with this: "that the higher a principle, the further does its creative activity extend; and that matter therefore is a direct creation of the One, and not, as in Plotinus, a product of the partial soul".⁷⁹ In consequence, for Thomas, as for his pagan predecessors,⁸⁰ there is a positive character to the downward movement in reality which enables the development of a system with an equipoise between the upward and the downward. Perhaps this is a prerequisite for the creation

H. Armstrong, "Plotinus' Doctrine of the Infinite . . .", *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, V, p.50.

77. "The Platonic-Plotinian One and the Aristotelian-Plotinian Matter are alike simple . . ." Dodds, *Elements*, p.232. "Matter does not come within the province of being, and so the activity of the One which precedes Being and also includes Matter represents a wider range within which the activity of Being must fall". Gersh, *op. cit.*, p.180 where he refers to Syrianus in *Metaph.* 59, 17-18. Thomas finds this doctrine in Dionysius, cf. *In de div. nom.* IV,2, 296-8, and in the *Liber de Causis*, *Prop.* IV. He relates this doctrine to the primacy of the good over being as a divine name which doctrine he partially embraces, cf. below n.99. At S.T. I,3,8, Thomas considers the likeness of God and prime matter.

78. ". . . Dionysius dicit IV cap. de Div. Nom.: Malum est non existens neque bonum." S.T., I,40,1 sc. cf. *In de div. nom.* IV, 13-23. Dionysius has it from Proclus *De malorum subsistentia* cf. Pera's notes.

79. D. O'Brien, *art. cit.*, p.145. Cf. n.65 above.

80. "How positively Proclus understood the supreme Good's diffusion of itself can be seen from the following passage of the Alcibiades commentary: 'The Good from above — seated as it is beyond the intellectual nature — if it is lawful to say so, proceeds to the last limits, and illuminates all things and preserves and adorns all things and turns them towards itself' (181) . . . it would have shocked Plotinus, especially as Proclus goes on to make clear that by 'the last limits' he means formless matter" A. H. Armstrong, "Platonic Eros and Christian Agape," *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, IX, p. 117, note 16. Professor Armstrong is writing here about the downward moving and uniting force of *eros* in Proclus. Cf. also Gersh, ΚΙΝΗΣΙΣ, pp.123ff. Dodds' *Elements*, p.198 shows that Proclus regards Aristotle's teaching as deficient from a Platonic perspective because "the Aristotelian system affirms the upward tension towards . . . God . . . without tracing the downward chain of causal dependence." A. Charles, *art. cit.*, p.460 puts the difference between Plotinus and Proclus thus: "Plotin nous avait rendu familière la voie ascendante et réductrice par laquelle l'âme se rassemble autour de ce qui, en elle est le plus unifié, le moins corporel . . . Les "Éléments de Théologie" présentent un style de cheminement tout opposé. Il sagit bien d'une méthode synthétique, c'est-à-dire de composition. Au primat de l'interiorité se substitue le schème dominant de la causalité."

of explicit formalized system, in fact one of the contributions of this school of Neoplatonism to philosophy. There is no doubt a logical hierarchy in Plotinus but he does not develop this into an explicit formal system⁸¹ and the movement in his cosmos is "avant tout ascendante".⁸² Porphyry joins the lower to the higher soul by the upward movement of the former,⁸³ if anything strengthening the upward tendency, and his systematizing of Plotinus' writings is notorious for its total divorce between form and content: the form is merely a numerical scheme.⁸⁴ In Proclus⁸⁵ and in Thomas⁸⁶ the form penetrates the whole content. The system is total in that primary conceptions — like activity, being,⁸⁷ love⁸⁸ — have the movement which informs the whole as their own internal structure.

Finally, cohering with these doctrines, is the concern of this school to protect the transcendence of the One from any admixture with finitude. The careful distinction of all the elements of reality clearly belongs to their reaction against Porphyry's heterodox "telescoping of the hypostases", but even the emphasis on theurgy, the development of cultic and ascetical practice and the new thinking about evil, matter, and the divine action are concordant with its higher theological aims. For this school has not only a psychology radically different from that of Plotinus but also carries his negative theology further. Most obvious is the doctrine

81. ". . . he prefers to deal with individual philosophical problems rather than expound his thought in a formal system (cf. *Vita Plotini* 4.10-11) . . . [He had] an aversion to formal systems". R.T. Wallis, *op. cit.*, p.41.

82. J. Trouillard, *La procession plot.*, p.6. Cf. also p.85.

83. A. Smith, *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition*, The Hague, 1974, p.70 and *passim*.

84. Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books*, Plotinus, I trans. A. H. Armstrong, London-Cambridge, 1966, 4. 10-11; 24. 11-17 and Armstrong's remarks pp.xiv-xv and ix-xi.

85. E.R. Dodds', *Elements*, p.ix-xii and J. Lowry, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

86. Cf. pp. 153 f., below.

87. On the *exitus-reditus* structure of activity and being in Proclus cf. Gersh, KINHΣΙΣ: p.131, "the strictest definition of activity is 'the combination of procession and reversion in a single cyclic process'; p.4 and *passim*. On Thomas, cf. M. Jordon, *art. cit.*

88. On Proclus cf. Gersh, *op. cit.*, appendix I, pp.123-7: "ἔρωϛ as a cosmic process". "If love is an activity, it would be reasonable to conclude that love like activity manifests itself in two forms (i) as the complete cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion, and (ii) as the third element in such a triadic formation". p.124. Thomas collects this doctrine from Dionysius: love is a complete activity in God by which he moves himself: *In de div. nom.*, IV,7-12 esp. 369,390,439,444,455,460. So in the *Summa Theologiae* love carries God out of himself (I,20,2 ad 1) and is the unifying bond (I,37, 1 ad 3 and I,39,8).

of Damascius that the highest God is above the One.⁸⁹ But two features of Proclus' position might be appropriately adduced. First, whereas there is at least a suggestion in Plotinus (although a much disputed one) that there is a self-reversion in the One,⁹⁰ in Proclus, the logic of self-reversion, or more generally of *πρόοδος* and *ἐπιστροφή*, is just what distinguishes all else from the One.⁹¹ Second, it has now been shown that, while Proclus is not the originator of the henads interposed between the One and the intelligences, he is the great developer and diffuser of the doctrine.⁹² While it is perhaps fruitless to argue over whether they are meant to separate what is above and below them or to join these,⁹³ the need for them indicates the greater feeling for the transcendence of the One in Proclus than in his predecessors. This negative theology and the other features of Neoplatonism in the Iamblichan school belong together. For theurgy and the rest is necessary for the unification of the soul, altogether descended into the temporal world, with the God so highly elevated above what proceeds from him. His transcendence makes his grace⁹⁴ necessary. The view that the highest is the Good or One elevated above being is known to Thomas through Dionysius and others.⁹⁵ It has

89. Damascii Successoris, *Dubitiones et Solutiones de primis principiis*, A. Ruelle, Paris, 1889: I, 86, 3ff. Cf. discussions in Wallis *op. cit.*, pp. 158-9 and Hadot, *Porphyre et Victor*, p.258. Hadot sees Damascius as carrying on the negative element also found in Porphyry, cf. p.122.

90. *Enn.* V 1.6,18 and VI.7, 5-6. Henry and Schwyzer change their interpretation of the second passage between their Brussels edition and that in the OCT. Professor A.H. Armstrong discusses the matter in his note on the passage in his Loeb translation which is unfortunately delayed by the publishers.

91. Cf. n.186 below.

92. Cf. n.60 above.

93. Dodds, *Elements*, pp. 258-9 and Saffrey-Westerink, *Theo. Plat.*, III, pp. lvii-lviii, stress their function of joining the "real" or ontological with the One. H. Duméry, "Le néant d'être", p. 316 writes: "Proclus n'a pas renié la procession universelle à partir de l'Un, mais il a eu soin d'interposer les hénades, les unités modales, entre l'Un et le cycle de l'être pour que le premier n'eut pas à pâtir de la multiplicité naissante. . Il a maintenu l'Un intact, exempt de tout ce qui affecte un processus d'être où se mêlent un et non-un". Wallis, *op. cit.*, p.131 also stresses how intermediary terms keep the elements of the system apart.

94. On this context for grace in pagan Neoplatonism (though is it not the same in Dionysius?) cf. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p.110: "Grace is radically re-emphasized in Iamblichus beyond Porphyry, for whom the soul is ontologically lower in rank and nous is fallen, thus putting man at a lower level and increasing the necessity for divine aid".

95. "Quasi dicat quod Ipse, in quantum est unitas, est Principium super omne principium, habens in se suam proprietatem qua supra omnia existit". In *de div. nom.*, II,2,143. "Sic igitur bonum est universalior et altior causa quam ens quia ad

two effects. First, it conditions his doctrine of the divine being. God's being is not properly known to us — we have no vision of it.⁹⁶ While he does not teach with Dionysius and Eriugena that God's being is the being of his effects, for Thomas we can only know it through God's effects and thus inadequately,⁹⁷ God's

plura se extendit eius causalitas". *Ibid.*, III, u, 226. Also *ibid.*, V, 1, 629-30 and *In de Caus. Prop.* IV, and elsewhere.

96. We have no vision of God in this life (*S.T.*, I,12,12), but from effects we can know that God is *an sit* but not what he is *quid sit* (*ibid.* and I,2,2). At I,12,12 obj. 1 he cites Boethius: "*ratio non capit simplicem formam* (*De consolatione philosophiae* V,4. PL 63, 847) which he explains as follows: "*ratio ad formam simplicem pertingere non potest, ut sciat de ea quid est; potest tamen de ea cognoscere, ut sciat an est*" I,12,12 ad 1. This must be contrasted with Aristotle's teaching on knowledge of the simple: *Metaphysica* IX, 10,1051b30-33, *De Anima* III,6. Thomas understands this true immediate grasp of essences to apply only to the knowledge of the sensible things to which our form of cognition is suited. Thus his comment on *De Anima* III, 6,430b20. Aristotle is discussing our knowledge of points and units but Thomas adds: "*Et inde est etiam quod omnia quae transcendunt haec sensibilia nota nobis non cognoscuntur a nobis nisi per negationem: sicuti de substantiis separatis . . .*" (*In Aristotelis librum de Anima*, (Pirota), 4th ed., Marietti, 1959, III, 758, p.180). The root of the difference lies in their different conceptions of the relation of *ratio* and *intellectus* or divided and intuitive reason in man. For Aristotle, man may be characterized by practical intellect (cf. *Ethica Nico.*, VI, 2 1135b4-5). But practical intellect exists only in virtue of theoretical intellect and, while this belongs primarily to the gods, man shares in it (*ibid.*, X,7,1178a2). For Thomas, in contrast, man has this unified intellectual power only through a participation mediated by the angels, cf. *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* II, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine) XLII, Romae, 1969, X,xi, p.588, ll. 155-160; *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate* II, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine) XXII, Roma, 1975, XV, 1, pp. 479-480, ll. 312-319, 324-326, 346-351; *De Substantiis Separatis*, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine) XL (pars D-E), Romae, 1968, IV, p. D47, ll. 15-24 and J. Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, 1936. "Human reason (as opposed to that of intellectual beings) . . . must grasp unity in multiplicity rather than multiplicity in unity." This is what it means for man to be rational rather than intellectual: he begins on the side of multiplicity. A. Maurer, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, Toronto, 1963, p.xxxii. Cf. also *In de div. nom.* VII, 2, 711ff. What stands between Aquinas and Aristotle is the Neoplatonic teaching on the soul. Proclus teaches a strong distinction between reason and intellect e.g. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria* (Diehl), Lipsiae, 1903 B92D-93A, I, pp. 301-3.

97. ". . . tantum se nostra naturalis cognitio extendere potest, in quantum manuduci potest per sensibilia. Ex sensibilibus autem non potest usque ad hoc intellectus noster pertingere quod divinam essentiam videt; quia creaturae sensibiles sunt effectus Dei virtutem causae non adaequantes" *S.T.*, I,12, 12, The unknowability of God from effects is ultimately a consequence of the inferiority of effects to their productive causes. This principle Proclus states in Prop. 7 of the *Elements* on which Dodds comments: "This is the principle on which the whole structure of Neoplatonism is really founded".

being is by no means the common being of things.⁹⁸ It is known indirectly, negatively and abstractly. Second, Thomas also teaches that from a certain perspective Good is a higher name for God than being:

In causation then the good precedes the existent as end precedes form; and, for this reason, in any list of names designating divine causality, good will precede existent.⁹⁹

Thomas knows also the identification of the One and Good in Platonism¹⁰⁰ and we shall see that these two doctrines are of great importance in his structuring of theology, in which, as in Proclus' *Elements*, form and content are united.

At least as important for Aquinas as the content he derives from the Iamblichan school, its own peculiar teachings, its development of Plotinus' thought, and its critique of Porphyry, are its formalism and the theological literary genre it created. The movement toward a systematizing of the diverse dialogues and separate treatises of Plato and Aristotle respectively predates Neoplatonism¹⁰¹ but the encompassing of the whole circuit of reality within theology and its explicit formal ordering into one system is specifically the work of Proclus.¹⁰² Iamblichus arranged Plato's dialogues into a systematic schema,¹⁰³ but Proclus' *Elements of Theology* is an explicit formal system of reality beginning from the One and ending in the last of its 211 propositions with the soul altogether descended into the

98. Cf. S.T. I, 3,5 and 8; I, 8, 1. H. Duméry in "L'être et l'un", extracts "d'un ouvrage de jeunesse", attempts to assimilate Thomas and Neoplatonism. In the course of this he stresses that Thomas "refuse d'assimiler d'être transcendantal (déjà composé) à l'être divine". p.335.

99. "Et sic in causando bonum est prius quam ens, sicut finis quam forma; et hac ratione, inter nomina significantia causalitatem divinam, prius ponitur bonum quam ens." S.T., I,5,2 ad 1.

100. Thomas recognizes that "ipsum Unum et ipsum Bonum separatum" is the "summum et primum rerum Principium" for the Platonists cf. *In de Caus.*, Prop. III and Prop. IV, and treats them as identical in accord with Proclus Prop. 13 of the *Elements* (Cf. also Dodd's comment, pp. 199-200.). But he does not seem to know the doctrine of *Plat. Theo.* II, 6 that the First is One as principle of procession and Good as principle of reversion. For at *In de div. nom.* XIII, 3, 989 and elsewhere he treats the One as cause of return: *divina Unitas est virtuosior omni unitate, omnia relinquentes in ipsam convertimur; . . . finis enim et terminus ad rationem unius pertinere videntur.* The good is treated in a similar way e.g. *ibid.*, I,3,94. One and good are also thought of equally as belonging to God's character as source.

101. On Aristotle cf. M.L. Minio-Paluello, "La tradition aristotélicienne dans l'histoire des idées", *Actes du Congrès de Lyon* (Assoc. G. Budé) Paris, 1960, pp. 166-185.

102. Cf. Lowry, *op. cit.*

103. Cf. Wallis, *op. cit.*, pp.136ff.

temporal world. As already indicated, such a system is the form appropriate to the content we have described: a view of a spiritual world with its elements and levels carefully separated and subordinated, encompassing everything from spirit utterly transcendent and unmoved to a form which must turn toward sensible matter to perfect its life, and the whole requiring a powerful divine motion running downward and back to draw its dispersed parts back toward the unity from which they had come out. Plotinus shows no interest in such a formal system; his treatises begin very obviously from individual questions and even current problems and Porphyry is unable to unite form and content in schematizing Plotinus' works. It is Proclus' invention which the medieval *summa* recreates.

Thomas follows Iamblichus' school in the doctrines belonging to this literary development and he is imbued with its formalizing and systematizing spirit. In his Aristotelian and other commentaries, he not only looks at the content through Neoplatonic spectacles but, indifferent to its own form, he divides and restructures it into a systematic chain of arguments. The greatest fruit of this spirit in him is his *Summa Theologiae*. It is, like the *Elements* of Proclus, an explicit, consistently formalized system containing the complete circuit of reality. It begins by justifying itself because of the formal inadequacies of the available writings on the subject.¹⁰⁴ It proceeds to show how its object — God, in himself and as principle and end¹⁰⁵ — can be unified under one formal consideration — the *revelabilia*¹⁰⁶ — in order to produce a science.¹⁰⁷ The whole immense content is divided into components organized in a single form — the *quaestio* — itself a product of that same endeavour to both think and remain faithful to the conflicting authorities which characterizes our Neoplatonists after Plotinus.¹⁰⁸

104. "Consideravimus namque huius doctrinae novitios in his quae a diversis conscripta sunt plurimum impediri; partim quidem propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum; partim etiam quia ea quae sunt necessaria talibus ad sciendum non traduntur secundum ordinum disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi; partim quidem quia eorundem frequens repetitio et fastidium et confusionem generabat in animis auditorum" S.T., I, prologus.

105. *Ibid.*, I,1,7.

106. *Ibid.*, I,1,3.

107. *Ibid.*, I,1,2.

108. For the Neoplatonists cf. A.H. Armstrong, "Tradition, Reason and Experience in the Thought of Plotinus", *Plotinian and Christian Studies*, XVII; *idem*, "Pagan and Christian Traditionalism in the First Three Centuries A.D.", in *Studia Patristica* for the 1975 Conference, in press, and *idem*, "Philosophy, Theology and Interpretation, The Interpretation of

The work embraces every level of reality from God to prime matter, what is given to man in creation, what he does in his freedom, and what completes his freedom in grace. It includes time and eternity and time's beginning and end. Whether form and content are matched is a question on which more must be said but two preliminary considerations are appropriate here. First, an examination of the other theological systems Thomas wrote or began — the *Commentary on the Sentences*, the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Compendium Theology* — shows that this is really the culmination of his work, if he can be thought to be attempting to find an adequate form for his conception of theology's complete content. The earlier *Summa*¹⁰⁹ and the *Compendium*¹¹⁰ have, owing to their special purposes, neither the full content nor the proper form of pure theology. The *Commentary on the Sentences* is forced to follow the basic structure of Peter Lombard's work even where Thomas' conception of the matter obviously requires a new plan.¹¹¹ Second, there are those who maintain that the basic

Interpreters", for the Third International Eriugena Colloquium, Freiburg i. Br., August, 1979. See also p. 143 above.

109. Cf. n.12 above and n.4 in my "The Place of the Psychological Image of the Trinity in the Arguments of Augustine's *de Trinitate*, Anselm's *Monologion* and Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*", *Dionysius III*, (1979), pp. 99-110.

110. The *Compendium* shows its intention for piety not only by its organization around the virtues of faith, hope, and charity but also because it is meant for *Frater Reginald semper pre oculis . . . habere*. It imitates Christ, who compresses the divine immensity "*nostra brevitare assumpta*", "*propter occupatos sub brevi summa humanae salutis doctrinam conclusit*" (I,1,p.83). Thus the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed are important to its structure as Thomas indicates; his editors agree: *Compendium Theologiae*, I, cap.1 and introduction pp. 6-7.

111. There is a clear incompatibility between doctrine and structure in the *Commentary on the Sentences*. Although Thomas would wish to order theology from the divine unity (as the evidence in my article in *Dionysius III*, n.4 makes clear), he is unable to do this until the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Compendium Theologiae*. Lombard's own order (and perhaps the influence of Bonaventure's *Commentary*: cf. E.H. Weber, *Dialogue et Dissensions entre S. Bonaventure et S. Thomas d'Aquin à Paris (1252-1273)*, Paris, 1974, pp. 18,223) prevent this. Thomas' thinking at this point is already Dionysian; cf. F. Ruello, "Saint Thomas et Pierre Lombard" *San Tommaso, Fonti e riflessi del suo pensiero*, Studi Tomistici I, Roma, n.d., pp. 176-209. But it will not be until later that he can realize this Dionysian logic structurally. This runs counter to the view of T. Delvigne, "L'inspiration propre du traité de Dieu dans le *Commentaire des Sentences de saint Thomas*", *Bulletin Thomiste*, 1932(3), pp. 119-122, supported by M. Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, Chicago, 1964, pp. 274-275, that the *Commentary on the Sentences* is more Dionysian than the *Summa Theologiae*. E. zum Brunn reports this view (*op. cit.*, p.253), but holds rather that his use of

Neoplatonic structures of the work are inappropriate to its Christian content.¹¹² The former force all into idealized universal patterns, the latter is founded on the contingent and historical. This may be so but it is a reasoning which escaped Thomas who looked at history in the same universalizing way as did Aristotle and his hellenistic successors.¹¹³ Aquinas had not an existentialist's view of either history or Christianity.

All of this is not to deny that much stands between Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* and this will become clear at many particular points. In any case the *Elements* could not have been the direct inspiration of the *Pars Prima* of the *Summa*,¹¹⁴ which is what we will mainly consider. But there are connexions via Dionysius. Thomas had a direct knowledge of Dionysius and there is also the important influence of the *de Divisione Naturae*¹¹⁵ and the *de Fide Orthodoxa*¹¹⁶ of Dionysius' followers Eriugena and John of Damascus on the formation of the *Summa* as a theological literary genre for the High Middle Ages. Unfortunately the history connecting these has not been written — partly because of a Thomistic interest in keeping Eastern and Western theological traditions separate¹¹⁷ — but the literary evidence is too clear to be accidental.

Aristotle's ways to God's being through sensible effects already alters the Augustinian logic of the *Sentences* and "les voies dionysiennes sont intégrées à une épistémologie sui generis" (*ibid.*, pp.266-7). She makes a great deal of Thomas' reversal, after the *Sentences'* commentary, of Augustine's placing of immutability after eternity: this change is owing to Thomas' Aristotelian ascent to God as the unmoved mover (*ibid.*, p. 250-1).

112. Chenu, n.9 above.

113. Cf. A. Maurer, *St. Thomas and Historicity*, Milwaukee, 1979.

114. Cf. n.30 above.

115. Mainly via Honorius Augustodunensis on whom cf. M.-O. Garrigues, *L'oeuvre d'Honorius Augustodunensis: Inventaire critique* (PhD, diss. Université de Montréal, 1979). And see the evidence in my "The *de Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas", to appear in the Proceedings of the Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani, Pavia, 1980, for the influence of the *de Divisione Naturae* on the structure of twelfth century theology.

116. Cf. É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p.92.

117. *Ibid.*, p.113, J. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, London, 1960, p.50; A. Koyré, *L'idée de Dieu dans la philosophie de saint Anselme*, Paris, 1923, p.139; G. Leff, *Medieval Thought*, Chicago, 1959, p.63; A. M. Landgraf, *Einführung in die Geschichte der theologischen Literatur der Frühscholastik*, Regensburg, 1948 and its revision, *Introduction à l'histoire de la littérature théologique de la Scholastique naissante*, A.M. Landry, Montreal-Paris, 1973. G.R. Evans, *Old Arts and New Theology*, *idem*, *Anselm and a New Generation*, both Oxford, 1980 all neglect the Eriugenian influence even when (as in Evans) recognizing the role of Honorius. The first four are explicit about the

Proclus, mediated by Dionysius, also provides Thomas with a second genre — that for treating God in himself in the *Summa Theologiae*. For this treatise may be regarded as a *de divinis nominibus*.¹¹⁸ This form was Christianized by Dionysius but the very first tract *de divinis nominibus* is contained in the *Platonic Theology* of Proclus which Dionysius was imitating and transforming.¹¹⁹ The originality of Proclus has been discovered by the editors of the *Platonic Theology*, H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink. What they call a "*traité des attributs divins*" is an exposéé uncovering, enumerating and organizing the essential divine characteristics.¹²⁰ Such a treatise is not to be found either among the classical or Neoplatonic predecessors of Proclus.

A comparison of the treatises is too large a task to be undertaken here but a few points may be noted. For the three thinkers, the discovery of the names involves a dependence on authority. Proclus derives his from Plato's dialogues.¹²¹ Dionysius will not presume to speak or conceive of the Godhead anything which is not revealed in Holy Scriptures.¹²² The relation of Thomas' argument at different stages to different kinds of authority is complex — for him in principle the Trinitarian names are known only through scriptural revelation¹²³ — but the *quaestio* form involves the citation of both scriptural and other authority throughout. However, the form Proclus uses to relate his treatise to its sources means that he is more limited in arranging it logically than these successors. For "the attributes are classed according to the Platonic dialogues in which they appear".¹²⁴ No comparable principle confines Dionysius or Thomas.

unwestern character of Eriugena but a different reason for his absence in the other accounts is necessary.

118. Cf. T.C. O'Brien, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, V, Blackfriars, 1976, pp.xxiff.

119. Saffrey and Westerink, *Plat. Theo.*, I, p.1xiii, pp. cxci-cxcii.

120. *Ibid.*, p.cxc.

121. *Ibid.*, pp. 1xii-1xiii; p.clxxxviii.

122. "Καθόλου τοιγαροῦν οὐ τολμητέον εἰπεῖν οὔτε μὴν ἐννοῆσαι τι περὶ τῆς ὑπερουσίου καὶ κρυφίας θεότητος παρὰ τὰ θειωδῶς ἡμῖν ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων ἐκπεφασμένα." *de Div. Nom.* I,1 (PG 3, 585B).

123. The corpus of Thomas' treatment of our natural knowledge of the divine persons (S.T., I,32,1) begins "*Dicendum quod impossibile est per rationem naturalem ad cognitionem Trinitatis divinarum Personarum pervenire*," and ends by quoting Dionysius. On reason and revelation in Thomas' consideration of the Trinity in the *Summa Theologiae*, cf. R.L. Richards, *The Problem of an Apologetical Perspective in the Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, *Analecta Gregoriana*, 131, 1963, and my article in *Dionysius III*, p.104.

124. *Plat. Theo.*, I, p.lxii.

Aquinas exposes with great acuity the principles organizing Dionysius' treatise. He perceives that Dionysius begins with 'good' as a name¹²⁵ and employs an *exitus-reditus* structure in drawing the exposition back to its source by means of the names perfect and one.¹²⁶ As indicated above, Thomas knows the Proclan conception by which these names — 'good' and 'one' — are identified. He notices that the author moves from the more to the less generic in relating the names.¹²⁷ He calls these Platonic principles and in fact they are generally used also by Proclus. Thomas employs them in forming his own treatise, though not exclusively, and its structure has important differences from those of either Proclus or Dionysius, despite a fundamental formal continuity.

As if leaping over the intermediary, Thomas¹²⁸ begins like Proclus¹²⁹ — as opposed to Dionysius — by establishing the existence of his divine subject and in fact, for both, the first argument is from motion. (Our editors mistakenly state "*tout traité des attributs divins commence toujours par une ou plusieurs démonstrations de l'existence de dieu*".)¹³⁰ But there is a great difference between this aspect of Proclus' treatise and subsequent Christian ones. Proclus demonstrates τὸ εἶναι τοῦ θεοῦ,¹³¹ which is to be sharply contrasted with the ὑπαρξις of the One¹³² — if they were identified he would be following Porphyry not Iamblichus. The Christians and Arabs cannot make this distinction. One

125. ". . . in hoc libro intendit exponere divina Nomina quibus manifestantur processionem Dei in creaturas. Principium autem commune omnium harum processionum bonum est . . . Et ideo primo, agit in hoc 4^o de Bono", *In de div. nom.* IV, 1, 261. On the principles of order in Dionysius cf. E. Corsini, *Il trattato de Divinis Nominibus dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti Neoplatonici al Parmenide*, Torino, 1962.

126. Cf. n.100 because things return to their source, the last names are perfect and one. "*Sed circa ordinem rerum in finem, duo sunt consideranda, scilicet providentia gubernantis et ordinantis in finem . . . et ipse finis ad quem res per providentiam et gubernationem perveniunt et hoc pertinet ad 13^o capitulum, in quo agitur de perfecto et uno.*" *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 265.

127. Speaking of the name wisdom, which follows goodness, being, and life: "*Est autem considerandum quod semper in posterioribus priora salvantur. Bonum autem, secundum quod prius dictum est, quantum ad causalitatem est prius quam ens, quia bonum etiam ad non entia suam causalitatem extendit, ens autem ad plura se extendit quam vita et vita quam sapientia, quia quaedam sunt quae non vivunt et quaedam vivunt quae non cognoscunt.*" *Ibid.*, VII, 1, 697; cf. also IV, 1, 263; V, 1, 606-611, 635 etc. An extended discussion of his attitude to this Platonic teaching is found in *In de Caus.*, Prop. XII.

128. *S.T.*, I, 2.

129. *Plat. Theo.*, I, 14ff.

130. *Ibid.*, p.cxc.

131. *Ibid.*, I, 59, 18-19.

132. *Ibid.*, II, 3, 22-4, II, 4, 7-8 and 15-16. Cf. above n.59.

alternative is to avoid speaking of God as existing in himself. For Dionysius¹³³ and Eriugena¹³⁴ God's existence is not in himself but in his effects — this is the strong sense of naming through effects. The other alternative is to speak of God's own existence, but then this involves, as in Thomas, a fundamental shift from the Proclan theology toward Porphyry; even if, as also in Thomas, the other tradition negatively conditions the Porphyrian affirmation.

The two major divisions of Thomas' treatise *de deo* (qq.2-43) originate in the Dionysian mediation of Proclan Neoplatonism. The first is the distinction of the *de deo uno* (qq. 3-26) from the *de deo trino* (qq.27-43). The second divides the *de deo uno* between a consideration of God's substance (qq. 3-11) and his operations (qq. 13-27). Question 2, *de deo an sit*, is more a condition of beginning the treatise than a part of it; it is of significance that there is in fact no question on being as a name of God.¹³⁵ QQ. 12 and 13, on how we know and name God, are also exceptional and are considered below.

Thomas is said to be the originator of the fundamental structure of the *de deo* of his *Summa Theologiae*. Further, it is maintained that, if any tradition of theology underlies his dividing the treatise between the treatment of the names common to the unity of essence and those names proper to the distinct persons and beginning theology from the unity, it is Augustine's tradition.¹³⁶ In doing so he is accused of reducing the proper Christian understanding of God to the naturally known Platonic conception of unity.¹³⁷ In truth, Thomas is explicit (and correct) that he finds this distinction, and the reason for beginning from the divine as

133. "μᾶλλον δὲ οὔτε ἐστὶν ἀλλ' αὐτός ἐστι το εἶναι τοῖς οὐσι" (*de Div. Nom.*, V.4: PG, III, 817D). Cf. also *ibid.*, 955Dff. Gersh, *From Iamblichus*, pp. 153ff. esp. n.131, p.153.

134. "Non est igitur οὐσία, quia plus est quam οὐσία; et tamen dicitur οὐσία quia omnium οὐσιων, [id est essentiarum] creatrix est." *De Div. Naturae*, (PL 122, 464B). Cf. W. Beierwaltes, *art. cit.*, pp. 133-4.

135. E. Sillem, *Ways of Thinking about God*, London, 1961, p.43.

136. K. Rahner, "Remarks on the Dogmatic Treatise 'De Trinitate'", *Theological Investigations*, IV, Baltimore-London, 1966, pp. 82-87; E. Jüngel, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, God's being is in becoming*, *Scottish Journal of Theology Supplement*, Edinburgh-London, 1976, p.4. On this cf. my "The *de Trinitate* of St. Boethius . . ."

137. V. Lossky thinks this is the error of western theology which has taken this direction. Cf. his *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Cambridge-London, 1957, pp.23-66; *idem*, "Apophysis and Trinitarian Theology", *In the Image and Likeness of God*, St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1974, pp. 13-29; *idem*, *The Vision of God*, The Library of Orthodox Theology 2, London-Wisconsin, 1963, pp. 104-5 and 99-110.

one and good, in Dionysius.¹³⁸ For Dionysius separates the consideration of the undifferentiated and the differentiated names¹³⁹ and speaks of two treatises:¹⁴⁰ one, the *de Divinis Nominibus*, considers the names common to the divinity; the other, which does not now exist and may never have existed,¹⁴¹ deals with the names proper to the distinct persons. And he calls 'perfect' and 'one' the name most potent "καρτερώτατον"¹⁴² because goodness and unity are the highest names of God as cause. We have seen already that Thomas has recognized this argument as giving goodness a priority among names. But by the same reasoning, he sees that "*unum habet rationem principii*"¹⁴³ and so he imitates Dionysius almost exactly by beginning his own treatment of God's substance with perfection and goodness — which immediately follows simplicity — and ending it on the unity of God. The same reasoning no doubt determines the priority of the *de deo uno* over the *de deo trino*. This tradition for structuring theology is very fruitful in the Middle Ages. A line connects Dionysius, Eriugena,¹⁴⁴ Alan of Lille,¹⁴⁵ Honorius

138. ". . . in hoc II^o cap. intendit ostendere quod divina Nomina, de quibus in hoc libro agitur, communia sunt toti Trinitati . . ." *In de div. nom.*, II, 1,108. Cf. also *ibid.*, 126 and II,2,153. On beginning from unity of *ibid.*, II,2,135 and 143, and XIII, 2,135.

139. ". . . ἡ θεολογία τὰ μὲν ἠνωμένως παραδίδωσι τὰ δὲ διακεκριμένως. . ." *de Div. Nom.* II,2 (PG 3, 640 A).

140. *Mys. Theo.*, III, (PG 3, 1032D—1033A)

141. Lossky, "Apophasis . . .", p.26.

142. *de Div. Nom.*, XIII, 1(PG 3, 977B).

143. *In de div. nom.*, II,2,143.

144. Cf. M. Cappuyens, *Jean Scot Érigène, sa vie, son oeuvre, sa pensée*, Louvain-Paris, 1933, p.213 and Jean Potter, in John the Scot, *Periphyseon, On the Division of Nature*, Indianapolis, 1976, p.xxviii.

145. P. Glorieux, "La Somme 'Quoniam Homines' d'Alain de Lille", *Arch. d'hist. doct. et litt. au moyen âge*, 20 (1953), pp. 113-364: "Primo ergo de divine essentia unitate . . . in his nostre orationis ponamus exordium", p.121. "Propositis his que de divine nature unitate et simplicitate dicenda erant et in parte determinatis his que de nominibus essentialibus exponenda erant, consequenter agendum est de personarum pluralitate et de nominibus que ad personalem pertinent distinctionem", p.167. Cf. M.-T. D'Alverny, *Alain de Lille, Textes Inédits*, Paris, 1965, p.61. On his "monadology", cf. É. Gilson, *History*, pp. 172ff.

Augustodunensis,¹⁴⁶ Alexander of Hales,¹⁴⁷ Bonaventure,¹⁴⁸ Albert the Great,¹⁴⁹ Ulrich of Strasbourg¹⁵⁰ and perhaps Richard of St. Victor.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, Augustinians, like Abelard¹⁵² and Peter Lombard,¹⁵³ eschew such speculative radicalism and, like their master, treat the one and the three together.¹⁵⁴ As for the propriety of the Dionysian logic in Christian theology, Thomas thinks his beginning is only possible because of the divine

146. M.-O. Garrigues, "Honorius Augustodunensis, *De Anima et de Deo*", *Recherches Augustiniennes*, XII (1977), pp. 212-279. On his relation to Eriugena cf. R. D. Crouse, "Honorius Augustodunensis: Disciple of Anselm?", *Analecta Anselmiana*, IV,2; *idem*, "Honorius Augustodunensis: The Arts as *Via ad Patriam*", *Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge*, Montreal-Paris, 1969, pp. 534, 538-9.

147. A distinction is made within the *Libri Primi Pars Prima* of his *Summa Theologica* (Quarrachi, 1924) between the inquisition "*de substantia divinae Unitatis*" and that "*de pluralitate divinae Trinitatis*" and within the "*inquisitio prima*" of the "*Libri Primi Pars Secunda*" between the tract "*de nominibus essentialibus*" and that "*de nominibus personalibus*".

148. *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, *Opera Theologica Selecta*, IV, Quarrachi, 1966, pp. 296-313, caput 5 and 6. On the influence of Dionysius cf. E. Cousins, *Bonaventure, The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, London, 1978, pp. 25ff.

149. *Summa Theologiae sive de Mirabili Scientia Dei*, Coloniae, 1978; Proclus' *Elements* may be of direct influence here; for citations cf. *ibid.*, I, pp.xvi,xvii.

150. La "*Summa de Bono*", *Livre I, Introduction et Édition critique*, J. Daguillon, Paris, 1930 and "*Summa de Bono of Ulrich of Strasbourg, Liber III, Tractatus 2, Cap. I,II,III. Tractatus 3, Cap. I,II*", ed. F. Collingwood in *Nine Medieval Thinkers*, pp. 293-308. For his relation to the *Elements* and Albert cf. E. Massa, "Presentazione", in Bertoldo di Moosburg, *Expositio in Elementationem Theologicam Procli, Temi e Testi*, 18, Roma, 1974, pp. v ff.

151. He speaks of the division of his *De Trinitate* (Richard de Saint-Victor, *La Trinité*, ed. G. Salet, Sources Chrétiennes, Paris, 1959) thus: "*In his quae usque huc dicta sunt de divinae substantiae unitate vel proprietate, secundum quod nobis videbatur exsecuti sumus. De reliquo vero investigare proposuimus quid de divinarum personarum pluralitate vel proprietatibus sentire debeamus.*" (p.164). Père Salet notes that historians "*rejetent une influence même diffuse du Pseudo-Denys, au moins sur le De Trinitate*" p.11. But this is certainly not the view of M.-D. Chenu, *La Théologie au douzième siècle*. Paris, 1966, pp. 321-2.

152. *Theologia Christiana, Opera Theologica II, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis*, XII, Brepols, 1964; *Theologia 'Summi Boni'*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, xxxv, 2/3, Münster, 1939. For his following of Augustine cf. G. R. Evans, *Old Arts*, p.33. For his opposition to Neoplatonic features of Boethius as applied to theology in Gilbert of Poitiers, cf. L. Hödl, "Die Dialektische Theologie des 12 Jahrhunderts", *Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge*, pp. 137-147.

153. *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae I, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum IV, Grottaferrata*, 1971. Cf. F. Ruello, *art. cit.*, p.189: "*La Trinité manifestée est essentiellement la matière du Premier Livre des Sentences.*"

154. Cf. my article in *Dionysius III*.

revelation; it is precisely the privilege of sacred doctrine, as opposed to that theology which is part of philosophy, to begin with God.¹⁵⁵ And Thomas would be as surprised as the contemporary French enthusiasts of Proclus, the negative theologian, to think that to designate God as one is to reduce him to an impersonal graspable concept.¹⁵⁶ There can, for Thomas, be no adequate representation in creatures of the divine simplicity¹⁵⁷ (or for that matter of the trinity). Of course, the origins of the distinction between the *de deo uno* and *de deo trino* cannot be directly in Proclus: though his treatise on the divine names is, like that of Dionysius, on the names common to the divine¹⁵⁸. Further he, Dionysius, and Thomas share the distinguishing formal spirit at work here, and his henads represent a high development of this mentality and the desire to keep the highest consideration of God above all multiplicity.¹⁵⁹

The second division — that within the *de deo uno* — has its ultimate origin in Aristotle's distinction between the first and second acts of the soul¹⁶⁰, but has been considerably altered in its passage through the Neoplatonic filter.¹⁶¹ The formula Thomas uses for the structure of spiritual substances and which orders their treatment is "there are three things found in spiritual substances namely essence, power and operation"¹⁶² or "operation follows

155. *Ibid.*, p.100, n.3; *In I Sent.*, prol. I, 1; ScG II,4; S.T. I,1,7; S.T., I, 2, prol.; *In de div. Nom.*, VII, 4, 729; *Super de Trin.*, prologus and V,4 show that in beginning with God sacred doctrine order is contrary to that natural to man and participates in God's self-knowledge. Cf. also G.F. Van Ackeren, *Sacra Doctrina*, Romae, 1952, p.120.

156. The aim of his own work, as the aim he ascribes to Boethius, "*est ut occulta fidei manifestentur, quantum in via possibile est*". *Super de Trin. prologus*, p. 48, ll. 7-8.

157. "*Cuius unitatis et distinctionis sufficiens similitudo in rebus creatis non invenitur . . .*" *In de div. nom.*, proem., cf. also *ibid.* II, 2, 143 and n.123 above. Indeed, simplicity in creatures has the opposite significance of God's: S.T., I, 3, prol., "*simplicia in rebus corporalibus sunt imperfecta et partes*". "*Effectus Dei imitantur ipsum non perfecte . . . id quod est simplex et unum non representari nisi per multa*", *ibid.*, I,3, 3ad 2 and I,88,2.

158. *Plat. Theo.*, I, p.59.

159. Cf. above n.93.

160. "*ἄυτη [εντελέχεια] δε λέγεται διχῶς ἡ μὲν ὡς ἐπιστήμη, ἡ δ' ὡς το θεωρεῖν [ψυχῆ] φανερόν οὖν ὅτι ὡς ἐπιστήμη*" *De Anima* II, 1, 412a 22-23.

161. For Thomas' use of it in a form "*inconnue d'Aristote, . . . élaborée à l'aide de Denys: la perfection seconde, ou ultimé, toujours mise en parallèle avec la perfection première ou nature (ou essence)*" cf. E.H. Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 463-5.

162. ". . . *secundum Dionysium, XI cap. De Angel. Hier. tria inveniuntur in substantiis spiritualibus, scilicet essentia, virtus et operatio*." S.T. I, 75, prol. *In de Substantiis Separatis*, Cap. X, p.D79, ll.307-9 Thomas recognizes this doctrine as Proclus: "*Unde et Proclus dicit quod 'omnis intellectus in aeternitate*

power and substance"¹⁶³ and these he finds in Dionysius. That operation follows nature is a formula derived from John of Damascus.¹⁶⁴ These formulae imply a much wider gap between the two sides than in Aristotle's psychology. This remains so even if power is not represented structurally at this level of divinity, because of its greater simplicity¹⁶⁵ — it does appear as a characteristic of the Father at the level of the distinct persons.¹⁶⁶ The widening of the division shows itself in many ways in Thomas. For example, it produces his faculty psychology in which the acts of the soul do not inhere directly in its substance.¹⁶⁷ Here, in the *de deo uno*, it is manifest by the separation of two sets of names. The first begins in simplicity and ends in unity,¹⁶⁸ substance, being more simple than act, is centred around unity. The second begins in knowledge,¹⁶⁹ and passing through will and power, arrives at beatitude, which *significat bonum perfectum intellectualis naturae*.¹⁷⁰ That is, operation being more divided than substance is centred around intellect or νοῦς, which both for Thomas and his Neoplatonist predecessors is that by which multiplicity enters.¹⁷¹ Between the two come the questions on how

substantiam habet et potentiam et operationem". Cf. also *In de Caus.*, Prop. II, p.14, l. 25-p.15 p.1. The source is *Elements*, Prop. 169.

163. "*operatio sequitur virtutem et substantiam*." *De Pot.*, VII, 1, obj. 7.

164. ". . . sicut Damascus dicit in III libro, '*operatio sequitur naturam*'". *ST.*, III, 19, 2 sc.

165. "*Processiones in divinis non possunt nisi secundum actiones quae in agente manent . . . Potentia est principium agendi in aliud, unde secundum potentiam accipitur actio ad extra. Et sic secundum attributum potentiae non accipitur processio divinae personae sed solum processio creaturarum*", *S.T.*, I, 27, 5 resp. and ad 1.

166. "*Patri attribuitur et appropriatur potentia, quae maxime manifestatur in creatione; et ideo attribuitur Patri creatorem esse*". *S.T.*, I, 45, 7 ad 2 and *S.T.*, I, 41, 4. Power is modified in the personal relations *S.T.*, I, 42, 6 ad 3 and I, 45, 6.

167. "*Dicendum quod impossibile est dicere quod essentia animae sit eius potentia . . . Operatio autem animae non est in genere substantiae; sed in solo Deo. . .*" *S.T.*, I, 77, 1. Cf. comment *ad loc* and Appendix 6 by T. Suttor in *St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae*, II, Blackfriars, 1970. This "faculty psychology is already found in Proclus." C. Steel, *op. cit.* p.60ff. and *passim* for context of its development.

168. QQ.3-11.

169. Q.14.

170. *S.T.*, I, 26, 2; cf. also *Comp. Theo.*, I, 107. ScG, *Liber Primus* concludes with beatitude according to a similar reasoning.

171. "*Unde oportet dicere quod prima diversitas rerum secundum quam habent diversas naturas et virtutes, non sit ex aliqua diversitate recipientium sed ex causa prima, non quia in ea sit aliqua diversitas sed quia est diversitatem cognoscens, est enim agens secundum suam scientiam*." *In de Causis*, Prop. XXIV, p. 122, l. 27-p. 123, l. 1. Cf. also *In de div. nom.*, V, 3, 665 and VII, 3, 723ff. On the

we know and how we name God. These questions (qq.12 and 13) provide evidence that the treatise is a *de divinis nominibus* but this is not their structural justification. They come after the substantial names because in Aquinas' Aristotelian epistemology the knowledge of the mind which knows is reflexive upon its act.¹⁷² But, further they divide the substance from the operations in the stronger Neoplatonic way. An example of this widening of the difference which Thomas finds in the *Liber de Causis* (Prop. XXXII), and traces back to Proclus in his *Expositio*, is the notion of what has its substance in eternity and its activity in time, cf. Proclus' *Elements*, Propositions 106 and 107, and 191. While quite consistent with Proclus' philosophical principles, this is surely an outstanding example of his formalistic mentality and of the spirit and doctrine which enables Thomas to distinguish God's substance and his operation.

Enough has perhaps now been said to indicate the general structural principles of the *Summa Theologiae*. They are first a distinction of the simple from the multiple, which proceeds from unity as prior and most potent. This principle determines that God's substance, centred around unity, precedes his operations centered around intellect. Further, it requires that these processions, which involve only a conceptual distinction of subject and object¹⁷³ precede the procession into trinitarian personality, that this is prior to the procession into creation, and that, within creation and government, the treatment of pure spirit — angels — and matter precedes the complex of both, man.¹⁷⁴ For the trinity is

problems involved for the simplicity of God's knowing cf. Dodd's *Elements*, p.266 and L.B. Geiger, "Les Idées Divines dans l'oeuvre de s. Thomas", *Commemorative Studies*, I, pp. 175-209.

172. "Quod primo cognoscitur ab intellectu humano est huiusmodi objectum, et secundario cognoscitur ipse actus quo cognoscitur objectum, et per actum cognoscitur ipse intellectus, cuius est perfectio ipsum intelligere". S.T., I, 87, 3 and cf. J. Gervais "La place et le sens des questions 12 et 13 dans la *Prima Pars* de la *Somme Théologique*", *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 19, 1949, section spéciale, pp. 80*-84*.

173. "Sed actio ab agente non distinguitur in Deo nisi secundum rationem tantum"; S.T., I,41,4ad 3.

174. "Post haec considerandum est de distinctione corporalis et spiritualis creaturae. Et primo, de creatura pure spirituali, quae in Scriptura Sacra angelus nominatur; secundo, de creatura pure corporali; tertio, de creatura composita ex corporali et spirituali, quae est homo", S.T., I,50, prologus; cf. *ibid.*, I,75, prologus and 106, prologus. That what is more like the producer precedes the less is a principle of Proclus (*Elements*, Prop. 28 cf. Dodd's comment and citation of ScG I, 29 on p.216). That governance follows on creation in treating God, Thomas finds in Dionysius, *In de div.nom.* XII, u, 939. This is parallel to the priority of being over operations and follows from the primacy of the simple over the divided.

the development of real relation, opposition, and distinction¹⁷⁵ between the terms of knowing and willing, activities, the object of which remains in its subject.¹⁷⁶ In creation, the trinity as one is related through the extrinsic activity, power,¹⁷⁷ to what is of necessity unequal to its source — resulting in the multiplication and dispersion of the forms of goodness.¹⁷⁸ Finally man joins spirit and matter, but only by being more complex than either, and he is thus appropriately both the last element in the *exitus*, and the point from which the return takes place.

For the second general principle, and that by which the descending elements are connected to each other and reunited with their source, is the motion of *πρόοδος* and *ἐπιστροφή*, *exitus* and *reditus*, going out and return. Its circle binds together the substantial names, which flow outward from simplicity, perfection, goodness and infinity to arrive at the existence of God in things — overcoming by this motion the privative character of simplicity¹⁷⁹ — and return, through the denial of mutability and temporality — i.e. through immutability and aeternity — back into the divine unity. Similarly the circuit through the operations moves out from intellect through will — which adds desire to intellect's object and is described as ecstatic in love¹⁸⁰ — and power — the divine activity whose object lies outside its subject, back to intellect (and perhaps even to substance)¹⁸¹ in beatitude. Bernard Lonergan¹⁸² has shown how the *de deo trino* describes a great circle which begins in the processions, formed from the intrinsic operations, passes out to the plurality of the distinct persons and returns to its origin in the notional acts which are the same as the processions. Within this there is the lesser circle developed in the

175. S.T., I, 28; I, 29, 4 ad 1; I, 32, 3 ad 3.

176. Cf. n. 165 above and S.T., I, 14, *prol.*

177. S.T., I, 45, 6.

178. S.T., I, 47.

179. "*Et quia simplicia in rebus corporalibus sunt imperfecta et partes, secundo inquiretur de perfectione. . .*" S.T., I, 3, *prol.*

180. "*Scientia habetur de rebus secundum quod sunt in sciente, voluntas autem comparatur ad res secundum quod sunt in seipsis*" S.T., I, 19, 3 ad 6. Will is the equivalent of "*appetitus naturalis*" in God, *ibid.*, I, 19, 1; although, because he is his own good, he rests in himself, nonetheless "*cum voluntas Dei sit eius essentia non movetur ab alio a se, sed a se tantum, eo modo loquendi quo intelligere et velle dicitur motus. Et secundum hoc Plato dixit quod primum movens movet seipsum*" (*ibid.*, ad 3) and following Dionysius, speaking of God's love, he says he is "*extra se in amatum translatus*" (*ibid.*, I, 20, 2 ad 1).

181. Cf. n. 170 above. For an argument that the return is also to substance cf. E. Pousset, "Une relecture du traité de Dieu dans la *Somme Théologique* de saint Thomas", *Archives de philosophie*, 38 (1975), pp. 559-593.

182. *Verbum*, Notre Dame, 1969, pp. 206-7.

questions on the distinct persons and evolved in understanding the Spirit as unity of Father and Son.¹⁸³ Creation and government contain the dialectical movement involved in the notion of man as complex unity of the simple elements of spirit and matter.¹⁸⁴ Finally the *Summa*, as a whole describes a great circle. The *Prima Pars*, which treats God's being, his intrinsic acts — from which the Trinity develops, — and his extrinsic act — creation, and concludes with man, creation's sum, passes into the *Secunda Pars*, where man, as free and principle of his own works, displays his powers for good and evil. But the great circle is only closed in the *Tertia Pars* when Christ, the unity of God and man, restores the universe with and in man to the divine source from which it had come out.¹⁸⁵

What is significant for our purposes is that these two principles are the structural foundations of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*:

The total structure of the Στοιχείωσις θεολογική is that of μονή, πρόδος and ἐπιστοφή. This total structure is developed within the logical framework of one and many. One as principle is infinite and its structure as μονή is as conceived an infinite logic. Many as principle is finite and its structure as πρόδος and ἐπιστοφή is as conceived finite or phenomenal logic. Thus, the

183. This is the reason of his name S.T., I, 36,1. Father and Son are two hypostases with a single act of spiration: "*Si vero considerentur supposita spirationes sic Spiritus Sanctus procedit a Patre et Filio ut sunt plures; procedit enim ab eis ut amor unitivus duorum;*" *ibid*, I, 36, 4 ad 1. He "*dicitur esse nexus Patris et Filii inquantum est Amor;*" *ibid*, I,27, 1 ad 3. He is "*nexus duorum*", *ibid*, I,39,8. Aquinas quotes Augustine's designation of him as "*aequalitatis unitatisque concordia,*" *ibid*, I,39,8 obj. 2. In fact this understanding of the Holy Spirit through a Neoplatonic notion of return comes from Augustine, cf. B. de Margerie, *La Trinité Chrétienne dans l'histoire*, Théologie historique 31, Paris, 1975, p.164, P. Hadot, "Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'antiquité", *Museum Helveticum*, 36 (1979), p.212; and J. Châtillon, "*Unitas Aequalitas, Concordia vel Connexio*, Recherches sur les origines de la théorie thomiste de appropriations (*Sum. Theo.*, I, q.39, art. 7-8)" *Commemorative Studies*, I, pp. 337-379.

184. Thomas transforms a formula about soul — "*quasi horizon et confinium spiritualis et corporalis naturae*" — from Prop.2 of the *Liber de Causis*, into a doctrine of man as sum of creation's elements. The text is found in ScG, II, 68 and 81. Cf. F. Ruello, "Saint Thomas et Pierre Lombard", p.202. For man as gathering the aspects of the cosmos together cf. Proclus *In Tim.* I, 5. 7-21 and H.D. Saffrey, "Théologie et anthropologie d'après quelques préfaces de Proclus", *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, *Studia Gerardo Verbeke*, Leuven, 1976, pp.210-1. For references to the *Summa Theologiae* cf. *Dionysius III*, p.107, n.32.

185. Cf. the prologues to the *Pars Secunda* and *Pars Tertia* and to I,2. Also ScG, IV, 97 and *Comp. Theo.*, I,cc169-170.

movement of the total work is triadic while the principles of this totality are dual.¹⁸⁶

In forming the content of his *Summa* by means of these principles Thomas develops many matters differently from his sources in Proclus and his tradition. With Plotinus and Aristotle, he places life and providence under intellect.¹⁸⁷ With Dionysius against their pagan predecessors, Thomas reduces the separate hypostases to attributes of God.¹⁸⁸ Beyond Dionysius, in one direction he is clear that the predicates belong properly to God, in the other, he separates the operations from the substance and places them below it — thus securing a tighter step by step movement from unity to multiplicity and enabling the Proclan triad¹⁸⁹ which

186. Lowry, *op.cit.*

187. Q.18, *de vita Dei*, and q.22, *de providentia Dei*, follow q.14 *de scientia Dei*. On life: "unde Philosophus in XII Metaph. ostenso quod Deus sit intelligens concludit quod habeat vitam perfectissimam et sempiternam." S.T., I,18,3. So also Plotinus places life within νοῦς A. H. Armstrong, "Eternity, Life, Movement in Plotinus' Accounts of ΝΟΥΣ," *Plot. and Chris. Studies*, XV. In Proclan teaching, as more generic, life precedes intelligence cf. *Elements*, Prop. 101-3, Dodd's comments, pp.252-3, the order of *Caput VI, de Vita*, relative to *Caput VII, de Sapientia*, etc., of the *Divine Names* (also note 127 above) and S. Gersh, *From Iamblichus*, pp.83,87,113,115 etc. For the problems in Proclus' logic associated with this ordering cf. Lowry, *op.cit.*, chapter V. By ordering providence under intellect and will Thomas clearly rejects Proclus' doctrine in *Elements*, Prop. 120. Yet Thomas does maintain Prop.122, that God acts without relation to what he acts upon: *In de Caus. Prop.* XX, S.T., I,13,7 and I.45.3 *ad 1* Thus, Aquinas manages to maintain the point of Proclus' placing of providence above intelligence — that it is in virtue of their very being τῷ εἶναι (Prop. 120) and without themselves being moved or affected ἀσχετῶς ποιεῖ (Prop. 122) that the gods act — without accepting his structure ἢ πρὸ νοῦ ἐνέργεια (Prop. 120) and diminution of intellect. On Plotinus cf. Armstrong, *ibid.* and Dodds, *ibid.*, p.263. For the medieval, Aristotle's teaching on providence involved considering his reduction of chance to the rational in *Physics* II and whether God knows singulars according to *Metaphysics* XII: on the latter cf. *de Sub. Sep.* cc.XIIIff.

188. ". . . Platonici, quos multum in hoc opere Dionysius imitatur ante omnia participantia compositionem, posuerunt separata per se existentia . . . Haec autem separata principia ponebant ab invicem diversa a primo principio quod nominabant per se bonum et per se unum. Dionysius autem in aliquo eis consentit et in aliquo dissentit: consentit quidem cum eis in hoc quod ponit vitam separatam per se existentem et similiter sapientiam et esse et alia huius modi; dissentit autem ab eis in hoc quod ista principia separata non dicit esse diversa, sed unum principium, quod est Deus . . ." *In de div.nom.* V,1,634. Cf. Corsini, *op.cit.*; S.Gersh, *From Iamblichus*, p.11 and *passim* and A.H. Armstrong, "Negative Theology, Myth and Incarnation", *Mélanges Trouillard*, forthcoming.

189. Dodds, *Elements*, p.264: "Goodness, Power and Knowledge constitute the primary divine triad (*Th. Pl.* I.xvi.44), which prefigures in a seminal form the triad of the second hypostasis, Being, Life, and

constitutes the operations to supply a logical connection between them, the persons and the creation. The influence of the Greek Fathers¹⁹⁰ allows Thomas to make man as free the turning point, rather than as fallen, the end of his system. Much more could be said but not to our purpose. For our aim has only been to show how the Neoplatonism stemming from Iamblichus is operative in aspects of Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*. This established, it remains to consider the consequences of his also following the opposing Porphyrian tradition.

III

What is the net result of our investigation? Does Thomas' *Summa* have two opposed later Neoplatonic teachings about the nature of the first principle and a henologically biased structure? This would be an incorrect summary. For the two contrary logics are integrated in the *Summa Theologiae*. On the one side, God's being is never ordered above his unity. On the other, the structure of the finite — of *exitus* and *reditus* — is incorporated into the highest consideration of God. First, in the *Summa Theologiae*, and indeed in Thomas' other works, the specific character of God's being — that he is *esse*, that in him, and in him alone, existence and essence are one — follows from his simplicity.¹⁹¹ This is represented structurally by

Intelligence (prop. 101) — δὐναμις πάντων is already a standing definition of the One in Plot. e.g. V.iii.15). . . The Procline doctrine reappears in ps.-Dion., who devotes separate chapters of the *Div. Nom.* to the praise of God as προὐν, as αἰώνιος ζῶν and as κρυφία γνῶσις. One might say it extends to Thomas as well where a source is Augustine (S.T. I,39,8 obj. 3). See note 166 and I,3,8 as follows: "*Potentia enim habet rationem principii. Unde habet similitudinem cum Patre caelesti, qui est principium totius divinitatis . . . Sapientia vero similitudinem habet cum Filio caelesti, inquantum est Verbum, quod nihil aliud est quam conceptus sapientiae . . . Bonitas autem, cum sit ratio et objectum amoris, habet similitudinem cum Spiritu divino, qui est Amor.*" Recollect that the operations of reason and will form the personal processions of Word and Spirit and that power is manifest in creation.

190. Cf. S.T., I,93, 5 obj. 2; I,93,9 and the *Prologus, Secunda Pars*. Cf. G. Lafont, *Structures et méthode dans la Somme Théologique de saint Thomas*, Paris, 1961, pp.192ff; J. Pelikan, "*Imago Dei, An Explication of Summa theologiae, I,93*", *Calgary Aquinas Studies*, ed. A. Parel, Toronto, 1978, pp.27-48; P. Faucon, *Aspects Néoplatoniciens de la doctrine de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Lille, 1975.

191. Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *De Ente et Essentia, Opera Omnia* (Leonine) XLIII, Roma, 1976, cap.iv, pp. 375-377; *de Potentia*, VII,2; ScG, I,cc. 21-22; *Comp. Theo.*, I, cap.ix, "*Quod Deus est simplex*", cap.X, "*Quod Deus est sua essentia*", cap.xi, "*Quod Dei essentia non est aliud quam suam esse*", *de Sub. Sep.* ix, p.D57, ll. 107-9: "*Cum enim necesse sit primum principium simplicissimum esse, necesse est quod non hoc modo esse ponatur quasi esse participans, sed quasi ipsum esse existens*".

treating the being of God within the treatment of the divine simplicity. The fact that in the *Summa* the proof of his existence occurs in the previous question is not against this. *Quaestio 2, An Deus sit*, by the form of its title as well as by its content, is not a treatment of being as a name of God. Thus, although many of Thomas' Neoplatonic predecessors would not name God 'being' at all, Thomas has clearly done so within a Neoplatonic tradition and context: God's being is simple; it is not composed of existence and essence.

The second side, although a consequence of this identification of being with the first principle is in danger of destroying the very Neoplatonic thought patterns through which we are able to describe it. We have identified the two Proclan structural principles operating in the *Summa*: the logic of the One and the logic of the finite. The first keeps the ultimate ἀρχή above all multiplicity. The second, πρόοδος and ἐπιστροφή structures the finite, leads it out from the One, and draws it back again. In Proclus, the two meet in all that is below the One, giving reality its triadic structure. For, without the immanence of the One, the finite would not be. But no reversion, not even self-reversion, can occur in the One without destroying its essential simplicity. This is not so in Aquinas. The *exitus-reditus* form is found at all levels of his *Summa*. Recollect how it structures central concepts in the system as well as ordering its elements together. Though both of these features are found in later Neoplatonism, Thomas has moved beyond his predecessors. He has pushed the logic of the finite up into the divine unity itself. As described above, the questions on the divine substance are ordered so as to flow out from the simplicity and to return to the unity. This logic is effective in the content as well. God's being is self-relation.¹⁹² The highest is self-subsistence.¹⁹³

192. "... redire ad essentiam suam nihil aliud quam rem subsistere in seipsa," S.T., I,14,2 ad 1 cf. P.C. Courtes, "L'être et le non-être selon saint Thomas d'Aquin", *Revue Thomiste* LXVIII (1967), p. 360: "Là, dès le départ, la métaphysique de l'être se lie à la conversio ad seipsam, qui est la loi de la substance spirituelle pour saint Thomas comme pour l'auteur du "de Causis". Ce n'est donc pas une métaphysique du sens commun, purement et simplement. La métaphysique ne se constitue pas comme un discours sur l'être en soi; elle s'élabore dans la conscience de la jonction de l'être et de l'esprit." F. M. Genuyt, *Vérité de l'être et affirmation de Dieu, essai sur la philosophie de saint Thomas*, Paris, 1974, chapitre vii, pp. 139ff. discusses the *redire ad essentiam suam*: "L'être en soi est donc Réflexion sur soi" (p.150).

193. God is *per se agens*, and *per se forma* (S.T., I,32). "Sed illa forma quae non est receptibilis in materia, sed est per se subsistens, ea hoc ipso individuatur, quod non potest recipi in alio, et huiusmodi forma est Deus". (*ibid.*, ad 3). But contrast Proclus' *Elements*, Prop. 10: "Πάν τὸ αὐταρκες τοῦ ἀπλῶς ἀγαθοῦ καταδεέστερον ἐστὶ."

The movement upward has the same form as the movement downward; the structure of both informs the nature of God. The ways in the proof by which we rise to the knowledge of his existence¹⁹⁴ are ordered in a sequence never used by Aristotle.¹⁹⁵ Corresponding to his four causes,¹⁹⁶ they begin with the moving cause and, passing through the material and formal causes, they conclude with the final. In God these causes are identical.¹⁹⁷ Descending, the self-subsistent divine *esse* progressively unfolds its simplicity to reveal itself as knowing and willing, a Trinity of Persons and finally, as creator and saviour of the world. All these are forms of self-relation. This unification of the two Proclan logics in Aquinas' treatment of God is just what answers the criticism of those who cannot find what is Christian in his doctrine of God. Jesus, they think, ought to appear in the *Prima Pars* and not wait for his entry in the *Tertia Pars*.¹⁹⁸ The truth is that he appears in different forms in both.¹⁹⁹ The consubstantiality of the Father and

194. S.T., I,2,3; compare I,44. See my article "The Place of the Five Ways in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas" to appear in *The Thomist*, 46 (1982).

195. Compare *Physica*, II, 3,194b23-195a3 (*Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis, Opera Omnia*, II, Romae, 1884, L.II,c.iii, l.v) *Physica*, II,7,198a1-14 (*In Phys.* L.II, c.vii, 1.xi); *Metaphysica* I, 3, 983a24-32 (*In Meta.* I,iv, 70); *Metaphysica*, II,2, 994a2-11 (*In Meta.*, II,ii,300); *Metaphysica* II,2, 994a19-994b27 (*In Meta.* II,iii,301); *Metaphysica*, V,2, 1013a24-1013b3 (*In Meta.* V,ii,763-771).

196. Cf. A. Kenny, *The Five Ways*, London, 1969, p.36; J.Johnson, "Why Five Ways?", *Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge*, pp.1143-60; Sillem, *op.cit.*, Chapter V.

197. Perhaps most explicit in the relation of the first and fourth divisions of nature in Eriugena, i.e., "*quae creat et non creatur*" and "*quae nec creat nec creatur*"; *de Div. Nat.*, I,1 (PL 122,441). "*Prima namque et quarta unum sunt, quoniam de Deo solum modo intelliguntur; est enim principium omnium, quae a se condita sunt, et finis omnium quae eum appetunt, ut in eo aeternaliter immutabiliterque quiescant,*" *ibid.*, II,2 (PL 122, 526). The passage just following, which contains the same doctrine, was in the *Corpus Dionysium* used by Thomas; cf. H.F. Dondaine, *Le corpus Dionysien de l'université de Paris au XIIIe Siècle*, Roma, 1953, p.137. In any case the doctrine that God remains in himself when he moves upon himself in love and knowledge is found in Dionysius from whom Eriugena probably got it; cf. *In de div. nom.* IV,7,369; IV,8,390; IV,10,439; IV,11,444.

198. G. Lafont, *Peut-on connaître Dieu en Jésus-Christ?*, Paris, 1969. This is also the implication of the criticism of Thomas' trinitarian doctrine by Rahner, Jüngel and Lossky (nn.136-7 above).

199. "*En effet, la notion de mission du Verbe incarné, charnière des troisième et quatrième livres des Sentences implique les notions de Trinité et de creation mises en lumière par les deux premiers livres. Le système que nous voyons prendre forme se développe donc à partir du thème de l'émanation des Personnes en unité d'essence . . . donc à partir du dogme trinitaire, qui commande le thème de la*

the Son, of the ultimate source and the *Verbum*, forces the logic of the finite into the infinite. This is the Christian motive for "telescoping the hypostases". Thus, even in the Proclan Dionysius, the separate existence of the hypostases begins to be annihilated. The division between creator and creature comes to be more strongly felt than that between the One and the rest of the spiritual and material hierarchy.²⁰⁰ A similar change takes place among the Arabic Neoplatonists. Thomas and modern scholars are aware of the similarity of the philosophical positions of the *de Divinis Nominibus* and the *Liber de Causis*.²⁰¹ No doubt this can be connected to the motive force of Moslem monotheism.

There is, however, something further to be said about these developments. For this "telescoping" is not just a feature of Porphyrian heresy, or Christian orthodoxy or Arabic philosophy but it is also a necessity even for the Iamblichan tradition. E.R. Dodds comments on Proclus:

he has the interesting phrase *ἑαυτοῖς μὲν προελήλυθε μένει δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς*. If this be pressed, it must mean that the separateness of the lower is an illusion resulting from a partial point of view, and it follows that the sensible and intelligible cosmos are both of them appearance, and only the One fully real. This doctrine was never accepted by the Neoplatonists, but they often seem on the verge of falling into it.²⁰²

Further, the difference between Porphyry and Proclus may only be that of two mutually necessary perspectives taken separately:

*Il est précisément remarquable que Iamblique et Proclus, réfractaires aux initiatives de Porphyre, n'étudient pas la transition de l'Un à l'être sur la traject descendant qui va (en imagination) de l'unité pure à l'unité multiple; ils l'étudient à l'intérieur du processus par lequel la totalité s'autogénère en explicitant une unité qui lui est immanente, qui lui appartient, une unité qu'elle enveloppe pour la développer.*²⁰³

P. Hadot states it simply: Porphyry wishes to explain "la génération de l'Un-Étant par le premier Un". Iamblichus and his successors describe "l'autogénération de l'Un-Étant, c'est-à-dire le passage de l'Un à l'Étant dans la totalité Un-Étant."²⁰⁴

mission du Verbe devenu homme, c'est à dire ayant assumé en sa personne la nature humaine. La notion fondamentale d'une telle théologie est celle de principe". F. Ruello, *art. cit.* p.182. Ruello's excellent article shows the inner penetration of the two ends of the system.

200. Gersh, *From Iamblichus*, p.205 cf. n.75 above.

201. n.62 above.

202. *Elements*, p.217; the text quoted is from *in Tim.* I. 201.2.

203. H. Duméry, "Le Néant d'être", p.324.

204. P. Hadot, *Porphyre et Vict.*, I, p.484.

If these differences be really a matter of from which side we look at the generation of reality and its elements, Thomas is attempting to unite them both.

*Quia vero naturalis ratio per creaturas in Dei cognitionem ascendit, fidei vero cognitio a Deo in nos e converso divina revelatione descendit, est autem eadem via ascensus et discensus.*²⁰⁵

So finally, it seems that in diverse ways — each with its own special difficulties — Porphyry, Proclus and Thomas are all forced to identify unity and being and to elevate simplicity. There is in Thomas no clear choice between ontology and henology, between the primacy of unity or of being. We might do better philosophically and theologically if we were to ask if such a choice is possible rather than whether it seems necessary.

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205. Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Opera Omnia* (Leonine), XV, Romae, 1930, IV, 1, p.5.