Divine Henads and Persons: Multiplicity's birth in the Principle in Proclus and Aquinas[1]

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A. PROCLEAN SYSTEM IN AQUINAS' *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE*

Though a sharp reversal, it is now agreed that the overall structure of Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*, including the *Deus in se*, is Neoplatonic.[2] The other strongly present elements, from Aristotle, Augustine, Anselm, Avicenna, Averroes, Albert, and Bonaventure, some of them also sources of Neoplatonic notions, are contained within, and often assimilated to, Proclean systematizing forms and doctrines. Chronological considerations exclude certainty of a direct influence of Proclus on the formation of Aquinas' understanding of the Trinity. However, from early on, and for most of Aquinas' writing, Proclean Platonism, conveyed by the transmissions of texts, doctrines, structures, or logics, came chiefly,

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1   A version of this essay was presented to "Alterity in Neoplatonism: Christian and non-Christian," a panel for the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies meeting at the Dominican University College, Ottawa, 12-16 June, 2019, organized by Dr Hans Feichtinger and Dr Seamus O'Neill. I thank them and the other participants, many of them also my former students, for lively and helpful discussions. I acknowledge with gratitude the help given me with this paper by Edward Butler, Evan King, Timothy Riggs, and Andrew Griffin: "τὸ ἥδιστον καὶ ἄριστον."

2   The strongest indications of this reversal are, for me, the invitation to deliver, first, the "Conférence d'ouverture sur le plan de la *Somme de théologie* de saint Thomas d'Aquin" for the December 2015 Colloquium in Paris celebrating the 750th Anniversary of the beginnings of the *Summa theologiae,* and, then, a Lecture / Relazione on "Aquinas and Platonism" to the opening session of XIᵉ Congresso Tomistico Internazionale in Rome in September 2020. My "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism" for VIIIᵉ Congresso Tomistico Internazionale nel centenario dell' Enciclica "Aeterni Patris" di Leone XIII in Rome, September, 1980, published in *Atti dell' VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale*, 8 vol., ed. A. Piolanti, viii, Studi Tomistici 17 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982), 39–52, was a communication from the extreme margin.

and with great authority, from the quasi-biblical Dionysius, as St Paul's convert and disciple, and the *Liber de causis*, attributed to Aristotle, preeminently the Philosopher.[3] Having looked at Proclus in terms of the immediate connection of the One as Nothing by excess and Matter as Nothing by defect,[4] and treated Aquinas' *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* as Trinitarian and Incarnational because of its self-differentiating inclusivity,[5] I take another step in bringing Aquinas and Proclus closer by considering the primary differentiation in both: the divine Henads and the Persons of the Trinity. For both, the becoming of the multitude of beings is preceded by a multiplication of divinities within the First according to a different logic than governs what succeeds. Owing to difficulties in arriving at an account of the relation of the One and the Henads, either in Proclus or commentators, and in applying language from one set of structures to another, this must be a preliminary investigation and will raise as many questions as it answers.

I start with criticism of the last Neo-Thomism's dominant characterization of the identity of *Essentia* and *Esse* in God.[6] I

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3   My principal publication arguing for this is *God in Himself, Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the* Summa Theologiae, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford University Press, 1987), reprinted 2000 in the series Oxford Scholarly Classics. Most recently I have extended my argument with *Aquinas' Neoplatonism in the Summa Theologiae on God. A Short Introduction* (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 2019). For my latest arguments on how the Proclean influence was transmitted, see my "The Concord of Aristotle, Proclus, the *Liber de Causis* & Blessed Dionysius in Thomas Aquinas, Student of Albertus Magnus," *Dionysius* 34 (2016): 137–209. Although he did read Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, in 1268, or soon after, it has not been established that Thomas knew it while laying out the structure of the *De deo* of the *Summa theologiae*. The determinative Proclean influence for that was the *Divine Names* of Dionysius.

4   See my "Founding body in Platonism: Reconsiderations," for the Medieval and Renaissance volume, ed. Andrew LaZella and Richard A. Lee, Jr., of The Critical History of Philosophy Series, University of Edinburgh Press, in press; "Henri-Louis Bergson and Plotinus," *Plotinus' Legacy: Studies in the Transformation of Platonism from Early Modernism to the Twentieth Century*, Collective volume, ed. Stephen Gersh (Cambridge University Press, 2019), Chapter 10, 233–56.

5   My "The Conversion of God in Aquinas' *Summa theologiae:* Being's Trinitarian and Incarnational Self Disclosure," *Dionysius* 35 (2017): 132–70.

6   My "Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth

pass to the connection traced by Salvatore Lilla and Timothy Riggs between the Henads of Proclus and Dionysius' Trinity,[7] in order to move to Thomas' trinitarian processions and Persons. Separating himself from Albert, Maimonides, and others, Aquinas did not make an explicit use of the "*Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*" law for the emanation of unity from unity. Rather, for the emanation (or "procession") from the Divine essence, i.e., creation, he modifies this Peripatetic formula in a Dionysian and Neoplatonic way so that the greater the unity of the cause, the greater is its capacity to directly produce multiplicity.[8] However, Avicenna is the most important source of the *Ab uno* law for Latins, and his *necesse esse* is an authority when Aquinas treats as necessary and natural the emanations of the Persons within the essence. These are the basis of the emanation of creatures. Eric Perl gives us Proclus succinctly: "The henads … are not beings, but rather, as the unities or goodnesses in which beings participate

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Century Religious Revival," *Dionysius* 9 (1985): 85–127; see idem, "From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: the fate of Gilsonian Thomism in English-speaking North America," *Dionysius* 16 (1998): 157–88.

7   Salvatore Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases and the Christian Trinity," in ed. M. Joyal, *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition. Essays Presented to John Whittaker* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 127–89; Timothy Riggs, "Erôs, the Son, and the Gods as Metaphysical Principles in Proclus and Dionysius," *Dionysius* 28 (2010): 97–130.

8   Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 42 n. 8 [Textum Leoninum emendatum ex plagulis de prelo Taurini 1961 editum at Index Thomisticus, herein after *ScG*]: "virtus divina non limitatur ad unum effectum: et hoc eius simplicitati convenit; quia quanto aliqua virtus est magis unita, tanto est magis infinita, ad plura se potens extendere. Quod autem ex uno non fiat nisi unum, non oportet nisi quando agens ad unum effectum determinatur. Non oportet igitur dicere quod, quia Deus est unus et omnino simplex, ex ipso multitudo provenire non possit nisi mediantibus aliquibus ab eius simplicitate deficientibus." On the role of Dionysius and this doctrine, see my "*Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*: The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas' Doctrine of Creation," *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr Robert D. Crouse*, ed. Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten, Walter Hannam, Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 309–33 at 314, 316–17 and Gilles Emery, *La Trinité Créatrice. Trinité et création dans les commentaires aux Sentences de Thomas d'Aquin et de ses précurseurs Albert le Grand et Bonaventure*, Bibliothèque thomiste XLVII (Paris: Vrin, 1995), 261, 328, 393, 451–52.

and in virtue of which they are beings, are determinative and productive of beings."[9] Thus, an analogue of Proclus' henadic realm is reproduced in Aquinas' *De deo trino*; the divine Henads ground the ontological, just as Persons, each of them containing the whole divine infinity, do the coming forth of creatures. Proclus' polytheism is mirrored in Aquinas' monotheism.[10]

B. DIVINE *ESSENTIA* UNFOLDS: FROM SIMPLICITY TO TRINITY

Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*[11] begins with the simplicity of God where essence and *esse* are identical. The last Neo-Thomism was created one hundred fifty years ago to give philosophical foundation to the Roman Church's war against modernity's totalitarian secularity. Like much scholarship in the last century, it was largely determined ideologically, matching, for example, biblical scholarship,[12] Marxist theory, Radical Orthodox theology,[13] and the definition of the rational in Anglo-American "Philosophy."[14] In opposition to all idealisms: Cartesian, Hegelian, or Platonist, Thomists emptied Aquinas' divine *Esse* of essence; it became brute facticity. In contrast, Aquinas' treatment of divine simplicity comes to *esse* by way of *essentia* and simplifies them into identity.

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9   Eric D. Perl, "Neither One Nor Many: God and the Gods in Plotinus, Proclus, and Aquinas," *Dionysius* 28 (2010): 167–92 at 174.

10   My aim shares a good deal with Perl. His article just cited has a treatment of the Henads in which Trouillard, Guérard, Butler, and MacIsaac are well-balanced with each other, but Perl does not compare the Henads to Aquinas' Persons.

11   When treating Aquinas on the First Principle, I privilege the *Summa theologiae* because only in it does he achieve for "theology," in its proper sense, the conformity of structure and doctrine required for full explication, see *Summa theologiae* (Ottawa: Piana, 1953) [herein after *ST*], prologue and Hankey, "The Conversion of God": 138–39.

12   See my "The Bible in a Post-Critical Age," *After the Deluge, Essays Towards the Desecularization of the Church*, ed. W. Oddie (London: SPCK, 1987), 41–92.

13   See *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*, ed. W. J. Hankey and D. Hedley (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2005).

14   See my "9/11 and the History of Philosophy," *Animus* 11 (2006): 1–26. http://www2.swgc.mun.ca/animus/Articles/Volume%2011/Hankey.pdf

Question 3 establishes that God is entirely simple, without any composition.[15] The demonstrations depend on the "Quinque viae" to God's existence of the previous question.[16] Thus, God is not bodily because "immobile" and the "primum ens, esse in actu et nullo modo in potentia."[17] There is no composition of form and matter because God is "purus actus," "primo et per se forma," and "per essentiam suam forma."[18] Crucially, God is "sua essentia vel natura."[19] This God is like "formae per se individuantur," wherein the supposite and the nature inhering in it do not differ.[20] Only when what is its own essence is reached does Aquinas make that identical with *esse*.[21] The rest of the *Summa* is an unfolding, step by step, of the essence which is also *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*.[22]

One consequence of this identity, is that, as opposed to Plotinus or Proclus, there is no pre-noetic or super-essential for Aquinas. There is, however, a pervasive negative theology.[23] Much of this apophatic side is picked up from Plotinus and Proclus via Dionysius, so, for example, he writes of humans being joined to God as to the unknown,[24] and uses the

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15   *ST*, 1.3.7 & 1.3.8.

16   *ST*, 1.2.3; Hankey, *God in Himself*, 40–2, 54–6, 68–74, 139–42; idem, "The Conversion of God": 147–48; idem, *Aquinas' Neoplatonism in the Summa Theologiae*, 78–80.

17   *ST*, 1.3.1.

18   *ST*, 1.3.2.

19   *ST*, 1.3.3.

20   *ST*, 1.3.3.

21   *ST*, 1.3.4.

22   *ST*, 1.26, pr.: "ad divinae essentiae unitatem"; also *ST*, 1.2, pr.: "ad essentiam divinam."

23   See Thierry-Dominique Humbrecht, *Théologie négative et noms divins chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 2005); idem, *Trinité et création au prisme de la voie négative chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2011). These monographs extend the negative way in Aquinas beyond any region and find it obligatory and infiltrated throughout with everything else. However, Humbrecht correctly judges that, in Aquinas, the negative is subordinated to the positive and has become a correction to the mode of signification.

24   Aquinas, *In Librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus Expositio*, ed. C. Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1950) [herein after *In DDN*], XIII, iii, § 996, p. 370; idem, Aquinas, *Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum* (Mandonnet, Paris, 1919), [herein

language of touch,[25] which we associate with experience beyond knowledge. However, for Aquinas, these negations apply to the present conditions of human knowing. *In patria* humans will see the essence of God and know as they are known.[26]

The step by step unfolding is by Neoplatonic circles, or ellipses, of remaining, *exitus*, and *reditus*. *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* differentiates and reveals itself in processions or emanations ever more encompassing of alterity: 1) the names of the substance (qq. 3-11), 2) the activities of the essence (qq. 12-26), 3) the relations of the essence in and to itself, which are the Persons of the Trinity (qq. 27-43), 4) the emanation or procession from the essence, "creation" (qq. 44 ff). The third of these circles is the principal subject of this essay.

C. Proclus' Henads and Dionysius' Trinity

The minute philological researches of Salvatore Lilla showed that "Like Proclus, Dionysius regards the 'one' as the first of the henads."[27] He identified use of a common language when Proclus speaks of Henads and Dionysius hymns the Divine Names:

> the principle of 'unity-in-distinction and distinction-in-unity' governs not only the mutual relations between the three persons of the Trinity in Dionysius and the Cappadocians, but also those between the Procline henads, as some evidence found in the first pages of book VI of Proclus' commentary on the *Parmenides* clearly shows.[28]

More than a decade later, Timothy Riggs demonstrated continuities between the operation of *Erôs* in Proclus' Henads and in Dionysius' Trinity. These include the common use of a text from the Chaldean Oracles,[29] and a common structure for the role

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after *In Sent.*], lib. 1 d. 8 q. 1 a. 1 ad 4. See my "The Concord of Aristotle": 199–203.

25   *ST,* 1.43.3; see my "The Conversion of God": 166–68 and idem, *Aquinas' Neoplatonism in the Summa Theologiae*, 74–5.

26   See my "The Concord of Aristotle": 158–59, 164–65, 177–83.

27   Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases," 183.

28   Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases," 187; from the *In Parm*, Dr Lilla lists: 14.18-9, 14.24-15.1, 15.3-7, 14-17, 16.1, 16-17, 17.8-9, 19-20, 18.17-19.

29   Riggs, "Erôs, the Son": 117; see also Lilla, "Neoplatonic Hypostases," beginning at 168 using work of W. Theiler.

of love in reversion. With the latter, the community extends from Proclus, through Dionysius, to Aquinas' Trinity, and the way the Holy Spirit acts as *Amor*, a way which Gilles Emery identifies as particular to Thomas.[30] Riggs uses the work of Edward Butler on the Henads,[31] taking into account, in a compromise, the criticism of Butler's reduction of the One to the Henads by Gregory MacIsaac.[32] Because Butler reduces or eliminates the One before, or other than, the Henads, his account suits the correspondence of Proclus and Aquinas to which I am attending. The unity of the essence does not act except through the Persons for Aquinas. However, because Butler's approach to the relation of the One and the Henads has attracted credible scholarly criticism, much

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30   Riggs, "Erôs, the Son": 105–15, 122–29; on Aquinas, see Emery, *La Trinité Créatrice*, 390–402.

31   Edward Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold," *Dionysius* 23 (2005): 83–103; idem, "The Gods and Being in Proclus," *Dionysius* 26 (2008): 93–113. In *Dionysius* there is also idem, "The Henadic Origin of Procession in Damascius," *Dionysius* 31 (2013): 79–100. The first two and other essays are collected in Edward Butler, *Essays on the Metaphysics of Polytheism in Proclus* (New York: Phaidra, 2014). I quote from the *Dionysius* originals. Other treatments of the Henads in *Dionysius* which should be compared with Butler's are Tuomo Lankila, "Henadology in the Two Theologies of Proclus," *Dionysius* 28 (2010): 63–76, Christian Guérard, "La théorie des hénades et la mystique de Proclos," *Dionysius* 6 (1982): 73–82, Eric Perl, "Neither One Nor Many": 174–84. Also important is Stephen Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to The Renaissance,* ed. S. Gersh (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 80–108.

32   See D. Gregory MacIsaac, "The Origin of Determination in the Neoplatonism of Proclus," *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr Robert D. Crouse*, op. cit., 141–72 at 148. Riggs' compromise is: "I suggest that Proclus was, on the one hand, compelled by his own religious commitments to show how a 'many' could be the cause of the world, while, on the other hand, he was equally compelled by his commitments to the Platonic philosophy to explain this causality in terms of a procession from a 'one' to a 'many'. Thus, there is a certain tension between how the Gods are and how we can describe them. Conversely, Dionysius was compelled by his religious commitments to explain how a God who is one and three, but not 'many', could be cause of the world. As we shall see below, he found Proclus' henadological language to be useful for explaining the relations of the Trinity" ("Erôs, the Son": 103, note 39). Lilla's attention to the common use of the notions of unity-in-distinction and distinction-in-unity which bridge the Christian–pagan divide (including the Augustinian Latins) also tends to make "polytheism" and "monotheism" of questionable use as categories here.

work is left to be done before agreement on the analogical function of Proclus' Henads and Aquinas' Persons might be reached.[33]

From Butler, Riggs takes the distinction of the Henads "from noetic forms not only by the degree of their union with each other but also by their absolute distinction from each other, that is to say by the superlative degree of their identity in distinction."[34] There are different terminologies for the Henads and forms which distinguish two kinds of language. "The former are prior to, and are the sources of, Being,"[35] while the latter are particular beings. There are two different processions: by unity (henôsin) and by identity (tautotêta). "The latter is characteristic of the procession of beings from Being whereas the former is characteristic of the procession of the Henads from the One. The Henads are thus pre-ontological, absolute individuals which are

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33   Butler's henadology suits my purposes because it prevents the One existing over against the Henads and requires it to act through them. This would be parallel to the relation of the Divine Essence to the Persons in Aquinas. However, none of the other commentators on Proclus I use accept the consequences Butler draws from the non-being of the One. For example Lankila, "Henadology": 72, writes: "Since Butler's reading of Proclus emphasizes the affirmative pluralism of self-perfect henads and their radical individuality, he is inclined … to render not only the concept of the protological couple of principles, but also the One itself, as an analytical device for the comprehension of the unity of the Gods. In this view only the divine henads have a real existence; the One exists only as being all of the henads and each of them at the same time as each of the henads is the One. Thus there could not be a henadic series that is similar to the ontic series. I think that in his justified effort to resist the monotheizing readings of Proclus, which dissolve the reality of the henads as gods into aspects, functions, and attributes of the primal God, he goes too far and effaces the concept of the primal God in Proclus. This surely is not in agreement with the word of Proclus and probably not with Proclus' meaning either." See also Riggs in the Appendix.

34   Timothy Riggs, "Eros as Hierarchical Principle: A Re-evaluation of Dionysius' Neoplatonism," *Dionysius* 27 (2009): 72–96 at 83. Butler puts great emphasis on the super-essential or pre-noetic character of the Henads, accusing Jean Trouillard of important errors in this regard, owed to a monotheistic transcendence of the One with a consequent reduction of the gods. See Butler, "The Gods and Being in Proclus":93–5 & idem, "Polytheism and Individuality": 101–103. MacIsaac, Perl, and Gersh go along with Butler only in a limited way and Guérard follows Trouillard.

35   Riggs, "Eros as Hierarchical Principle": 83.

the origins of both universality and individuality in beings."[36] They "are the sources of all relationship, whether between Gods … or between cause and effect in the ontological realm."[37] According to Butler, these "unique individuals" are "the real agents of the causality attributed to the One."[38] Both the Trinity and the Henads cause beings without being related to them. Aquinas thinks in accord with this non reciprocal structure.[39]

Riggs finds Dionysius following Proclus when he applies terms such as "individuality (*idiotes*)"and "unitary" (*heniaios*) to the God beyond being and "likewise, he follows Proclus in using 'sameness' or 'identity' (*tautotes*), difference (*heterotes*) and essence or being (*ousia*) when discussing beings and their characteristics."[40]Another, related, difference in kinds of names carries over from Proclus and Dionysius to Aquinas. Timothy Riggs writes:

> Just as Proclus names the orders of Henads from the Being and beings which participate in them, so does Dionysius name the Godhead, both in its unity and in its distinction. Dionysius distinguishes between two categories of names: there are 'unified' names derived from *ta henomena*, or Being and its specifications, and which are attributed to the entire Godhead, and there are 'divided' or 'differentiated' names, *ta diakekrimena*, which are attributed to the supremely individual Persons of the Trinity and which are not interchangeable or universally applicable.[41]

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36   Riggs, "Eros as Hierarchical Principle": 83–4; Butler, "The Gods and Being in Proclus": 95: "Distinct organizations belong to the ontic and the supra-essential, and the ontic organization is emergent from the supra-essential through a dialectic immanent to the nature of the henads. The polycentric henadic organization, because it is an organization of unique individuals, is irreducible to ontology for the latter only treats of forms, that is, of universals. The independence of theology (that is, henadology) from ontology in Proclus is thus a matter of its structural difference."

37   Riggs, "Erôs, the Son": 112.

38   Butler, "The Gods and Being in Proclus": 94.

39   For Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 94, this applies to the Henads but differs for the "henads-beings." Aquinas, *ST*, 1.45.3 ad 1: "relatio in Deo ad creaturam non est realis, sed secundum rationem tantum. Relatio vero creaturae ad Deum est relatio realis … cum *De divinis nominibus* ageretur"; Hankey, *God in Himself*, 136 and 103, note 23; idem, "The Conversion of God": 169.

40   Riggs, "Eros as Hierarchical": 84.

41   Riggs, "Erôs, the Son": 120.

Aquinas believed that Dionysius devoted two distinct treatises to the unified and the divided names and follows him by dividing and ordering the treatise on God in the *Summa theologiae* into a *De deo uno* and *De deo trino*.[42] Also he begins the *Summa* with simplicity according to a Proclean principle he finds in the *Divine Names*: "unity has the nature of principle."[43] The circuit of questions on the names of the Divine substance moving from simplicity to infinity and the existence of God in things and back to unity is by the Proclean conversion of simplicity upon itself.[44] The circle of names is derived, with important modifications, from Proclus via Dionysius.[45]

D. PROCLUS' HENADS AND AQUINAS' TRINITY

Stephen Gersh opens a consideration of "Proclus as theologian" with a judgement which indicates the close analogy prevailing between the role of the Persons in Aquinas' philosophical theology and that of the divine Henads in Proclus: "In a manner comparable with that of the Christian doctrine already evolved by his own time, Proclus' theology is based on the twin sources of revelation and reason."[46] A like twinning is true of Aquinas.

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42   See Aquinas, *In DDN,* I, i, §§ 1–3; II, i, § 110, §121, §§126–7; II, ii, §141–2. W. J. Hankey, "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae,*" *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani*, ed. L. Obertello (Roma: Herder, 1981), 367–75 at 371; Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 46–7; Bernhard Blankenhorn, *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 2015), 322. Treating creatures, he is explicit that he uses a triad which structures spiritual beings he finds in Dionysius, and later identifies as Proclean. See Aquinas, *ST*, 1.75 pr.; idem, *De Substantiis Separatis*, Leonina 60 (Rome, 1968), cap. 20, D79, lines 304–10; Hankey, *God in Himself*, 3–12; idem, "Aquinas and the Platonists," *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, ed. S. Gersh and M.J.F.M. Hoenen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 279–324 at 319.

43   Aquinas, *In DDN*, II, ii, §143. See also, II, ii, §135.

44   Aquinas, *In DDN,* XIII, iii, §989; XIII, ii, §980; XIII, iii, § 986. Hankey, "The Conversion of God": 147, 151–54; idem, "Between and Beyond Augustine and Descartes: More than a Source of the Self," *Augustinian Studies* 32:1 (2001): 65–88 at 84–5.

45   See, for the modification by Dionysius of Proclus, Stephen Gersh, "Dionysius' *On Divine Names* Revisited: A Structural Analysis," *Dionysius* 28 (2010): 77–96.

46   Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 80. His note specifies: "The term

1) The Rational Way Up: In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas first approaches the Trinity by way of the activities of the essence. The *De deo trino* starts by asking whether there are processions in God.[47] There are because the divine essence has activities "ad intra."[48] Uniting Aristotle and Augustine, because there are two and only two such activities, knowing and loving, the number of the *processiones in divinis* is "taken" from these.[49] This procedure from processions to relations and from relations to Persons, "the order of our concepts *in fieri*," is one of two orders of the treatise on the Trinity described by Bernard Lonergan.

2) The Revealed Way down: The inverse order, "our concepts *in facto esse*,"[50] begins with the Persons as Persons, taken up individually and then compared to the essence. Aquinas precedes the second, longer, exposition, by showing that, because of the difference between the simplicity of the divine and the dividedness of the human mind, the Trinity cannot be demonstrated rationally starting from human knowing as its effect. The fact of subsistences in the divine must be revealed.[51]

Gersh observes that "The status attributed by the *Elements of Theology* to the Henads is ambivalent in that they are sometimes more closely associated with the One but sometimes more closely associated with beings."[52] The Trinitarian Persons of

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'theology' is used throughout this chapter in what I take to be the Proclean sense of the term: a study whose object is the gods and whose method depends on revelation. 'Philosophy' is a term for a more generic practice that includes the study of the gods and things other than the gods and that depends less heavily on revelation." For the comparable in Aquinas see my comment at Hankey, *God in Himself*, 132.

47   *ST,* 1.27, pr.: "utrum processio sit in divinis."

48   *ST,* 1.27.1 corpus.

49   *ST,* 1.27.5 ad 2: "cum processiones divinas secundum aliquas actiones necesse sit accipere, secundum bonitatem et huiusmodi alia attributa non accipiuntur aliae processiones nisi verbi et amoris, secundum quod Deus suam essentiam, veritatem et bonitatem intelligit et amat."

50   B. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. D. B. Burrell (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1967), 206.

51   *ST,* 1.32.

52   Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 93; this ambivalence is so important

Aquinas have a similar ambiguity. Gilles Emery has shown the side associated with created beings. Emanation of the Persons is the foundation of creation, the Persons are known from their characteristic effects.[53] Aquinas' order *in fieri*, occurring in the step by step self-differentiation of the Divine Essence, in the *ordo disciplinae* unique to the *Summa theologiae*, may seem to be a philosophical deduction of the Persons from created effects. Corresponding to this side is Gersh: "The function assigned by the *Elements of Theology* to the Henads is to initiate the causality of the universe by conferring on existent things distinctive properties and the interrelation between properties."[54]

There is, however, the opposed side. Then, in Proclus, the unitary character of the entire divine order is insisted upon.[55] The equivalent in Aquinas is the order "*in facto esse*" where the starting point is the Persons and their origin in the Father. Like the Gods of Proclus, Aquinas' divine Persons "are the most complete and absolute individuals and, at the same time, the most united in a union beyond the community of beings."[56] As with the Henads,

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Gersh develops a terminology to indicate it: "I will mark the ambivalent status of the henads by using the graphic form henad(s) to express their closer association with the One and the expression henads-beings to express their closer association with beings," (93). See Perl, "Neither One Nor Many": 174–84. Dr Timothy Riggs, in an email message to me on June 6, 2019, noted that Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, prop. 162, supports this ambivalence: "All that multiplicity of henads which illuminates (katalampon, literally 'shine their light down upon') is hidden and intelligible; hidden as conjoined to the One, intelligible as participated by Being" [Riggs translation].

53   Emery, *La Trinité Créatrice*, 280.

54   Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 93.

55   Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 93: "The assimilation of the henads to the One is suggested in a few passages where Proclus argues that the entire divine order is 'unitary' (ἑνιαῖος) and that everything divine is 'primarily and maximally' simple (ἁπλοῦν πρώτως καὶ μάλιστα), the clear assumption being that the henads are collectively as well as individually unitary."

56   Riggs, "Erôs, the Son": 102–103; Lankila, "Henadology": 66: "The second basic tenet of henadology is the notion that the henad exceeds any ontological form both in unity and individuality. Henads are, all in all and each in all in a way that is much more unitary than the self-identity of forms and community, based on the mutual relations of the participations between them. But henads also have absolute individuality in a way to which the difference which separates ontic forms on the ground of their distinctive characters cannot compare."

each of them contains the whole of divinity,[57] and inspired revelation is required to make them known. Thus the real order of knowing and action begins with their subsistence. Referring back to the identity of nature and supposite,[58] i.e., of nature and subject,[59] already demonstrated in Question 3, the *De deo trino* asserts the identity of essence and supposite (or, in other words, hypostasis, person, individuality, subject, substrate).[60] It is not as essence, but as supposite, or Person, that God acts, "actus sunt suppositorum," as Emery has shown.[61] The Persons as individuals match the Henads, "the real agents of the causality attributed to the One." In Aquinas only the divinity can create, but, as essence, it is not an agent, so also, in Proclus absolute unity itself is unparticipated, and is the universal cause on this account.[62] Lankila writes: "There is a henadic hypostasis in the sense that the One, self-perfect henads and irradiations of them form a Neoplatonic serialized multiplicity, but the henads themselves and alone could not form a hypostasis just because they are the participated One."[63]

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57   Compare Butler, "The Gods and Being in Proclus": 98–100, particularly "The supreme individuality, however, that possessed by henads, is such that not just the other henads, but all of Being too is present in each henad" (100). Aquinas, *ST*, 1.41.3: "divina natura impartibilis est. Unde necesse est quod pater, generando filium, non partem naturae in ipsum transfuderit, sed totam naturam ei communicaverit, remanente distinctione solum secundum originem," and the whole of *ST*, 1.42.

58   *ST*, 1.3.7 co.: "in eo sit aliud natura et suppositum."

59   *ST*, 1.3.6.

60   *ST*, 1.39.1 co.: "Ostensum est enim supra quod divina simplicitas hoc requirit, quod in Deo sit idem essentia et suppositum; quod in substantiis intellectualibus nihil est aliud quam persona."

61   Emery, *La Trinité Créatrice*, 309–11, 448, 457. He is quoting Aquinas, *In Sent.,* lib. I, d. 5, q. 1, a. 1, sol. See my *God in Himself*, 120, 126–29, 136–37; idem, "The Conversion of God": 162–70; *ST*, 1.33.2 & 3, especially, 1.33.3 ad 1.

62   Perl, "Neither One Nor Many": 176: "Every God, therefore, is a participated henad, i.e., is the constitutive unity of some being or beings. 'Every God is participated, except the One. …' (*El. theol.*, prop. 116)."

63   Lankila, "Henadology": 65. He cites Guérard, "La théorie des hénades": 76, which reads: "les êtres ne participeront pas à ce qui serait un unifié, mais bel et bien à des Uns. Dans une telle optique, il ne saurait être question d'un Un participé, ni de participation à un unifié. Il faut, au contraire, que la participation à l'un soit la participation à des Uns." And Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality": 102, which quotes Guérard.

The Persons emanate "necessitate absoluta"[64] and by nature.[65] The natural is ordered to only one result.[66] These processions are relations of identity,[67] in which the whole divine essence is related to itself. The Persons are nothing except the relations of the essence to itself as other to itself because given and received. That opposition makes the relations real, and productive of equal subsistences.[68] The necessary personal emanations necessarily produce equals.[69] Aquinas writes: "The first thing which proceeds from unity is equality and then multiplicity proceeds. And therefore, from the Father, to whom, according to Augustine, unity is proper, the Son processes, to whom equality is appropriate, and then the creature comes forth to which inequality belongs."[70] In contrast, the emanation of created unequals (both to the source and to each other) is voluntary, because the Trinitarian processions

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64   Aquinas, *In Sent.*, lib. 1, dist. 6, q. 1, art. 1.

65   Aquinas, *ScG*, lib. 4 cap. 11 n. 10: "ex necessitate oportet quod semper seipsum intellexerit." *ScG*, lib. 4 cap. 11 n. 17: "processio filii a patre sit naturalis, ex quo verbum Dei filius Dei dicitur, oportet quod naturaliter a patre procedat… Manifestum est autem quod Deus seipsum naturaliter intelligit, sicut et naturaliter est: suum enim intelligere est suum esse, ut in primo probatum est. Verbum igitur Dei seipsum intelligentis naturaliter ab ipso procedit. Et cum verbum Dei sit eiusdem naturae cum Deo dicente, et sit similitudo ipsius; sequitur quod hic naturalis processus sit in similitudinem eius a quo est processio cum identitate naturae. … Quae enim voluntate sunt, non naturalia sunt." *ST,* 1.41.2 ad 4 : "Conceptio Verbi divini est naturalis."

66   *ST,* 1.41.2: "natura determinata est ad unum."

67   *ST,* I.28.1 ad 1: "magis per modum ad aliud se habentis"; *ST,* I.28.1 ad 2: "assimilat relationi identitatis"; *ST,* 1.42.4 ad 2: "eadem enim est essentia et dignitas patris et filii, sed in patre est secundum relationem dantis, in filio secundum relationem accipientis." See my *God in Himself*, 118–31; idem, "The Conversion of God": 164; idem, *Aquinas' Neoplatonism in the Summa Theologiae*, 120–22.

68   *ST,* I.28.3: "Because relation in God is real, it is necessary that opposition is really there." *ST,* I.42.1, ad 3: "Although no motion is in the divine, however, there is receiving." See Hankey, *God in Himself*, 130; idem, *Aquinas' Neoplatonism*, 114–16; more fully idem, "The Conversion of God": 162–64.

69   Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de potentia*, q. 10 a. 2 ad 5. *ST,* 1.42.

70   *ST,* 1.47.2 ad 2: "primum quod procedit ab unitate, est aequalitas, et deinde procedit multiplicitas. Et ideo a Patre, cui, secundum Augustinum, appropriatur unitas, processit Filius, cui appropriatur aequalitas, et deinde creatura, cui competit inaequalitas."

make God by necessity knowing and willing.[71] The beginning of all emanation is the Person of the Father, *principium deitatis*,[72] absolute origin, not sent,[73] the *potentia generandi*, from which all within and outside the essence, both persons and creation, derives.[74] By a procession, first personal,[75] he generates the Person of the Son as Word, and, with the Son, breathes the Spirit as Love. The priority of the personal may have something in common with being a henadic paternal cause as described by Butler: "'paternal cause' is first 'for itself'," … Proclus states … "each [God] exists primarily 'for itself,' and in itself is united to the rest …. Such an entity … then, is non-relational, though productive of a relation'."[76] If, in fact, there is anything in common at this point between Aquinas and Proclus, we here also encounter a deep difference: the Persons are nothing except real relations: "relatio sit idem quod persona."[77] Moreover, the relation is that of identity. Both that they are relations and that they proceed by otherness and identity is denied of the Henads.[78] However, to return to likenesses, like the Persons, some Henads produce others.[79]

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71   Hankey, "The Conversion of God": 168–69; idem, "*Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*," 330–31.

72   *ST,* 1.33.1.

73   *ST,* 1.43.4.

74   *ST,* 1.41.5. See *ST,* 1.42.6 ad 3, 1.45.3, and 1.45.6; Hankey, *God in Himself*, 118; idem, "The Conversion of God": 168–69.

75   *ST,* 1.33.2.

76   Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality": 91.

77   *ST,* 1.40.1.

78   Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality": 90–4; Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, III, ed. C. Steel, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 1190.

79   Butler, "The Gods and Being in Proclus": 110: "Thus Proclus, characterizing procession in abstract terms, states that 'the One and Being generate a second henad conjoined with a part of Being,' and Being 'generates a more partial being suspended from a more partial henad,' this being the division, diairesis, of the One and the distinguishing, diakrisis, of the One and Being (*Plat. Theol*. III 26. 89. 22–26), the generation of a 'second henad' together with a more partial being referring to the emergence of specific levels of Being from the activities of the Gods."

For Aquinas, the return of the Persons to the essence is by way of a Person. "Spirit," naming both a particular Person and God, is the common between the Father and Son, really joining them.[80] The Spirit concludes the *De deo in se* with the highest state for humans *in hac vita*. The Spirit's sending of the divine Persons to humans and, by that grace, enabling humans to know in the Person of the Son, and love in the Person of the Spirit, makes humans possessors of the power of enjoying the Persons constituting divinity.[81] There is a corresponding union with the Henads in Proclus.

Christian Guérard sides with Jean Trouillard against Émile Bréhier and others in finding that the Henads in Proclus function as much religiously and mystically as for completeness of logical structure. We know the One by the one in us.[82] The One thus known (or unknown) is a Henad. Of the union Guérard writes:

> Puisque l'un de chaque réalité est participation au Divin, chacune possède par elle-même la puissance mystique de s'unir à Lui. Le centre de la religiosité inconditionnelle du monde proclien se trouve là, au point de contact de la procession et de la conversion.[83]

Finally, the Persons and the Henads have in common that their numbers are finite. However, the number of the Henads is indefinite and remains unknown to us. Because there are only two internal activities in intellectual beings, knowing and loving, the Trinity is fixed by their three relations.[84] The trinitarian conversion on itself of being, knowing and loving in Aquinas, is a form of the remaining, *exitus, reditus*, which structures all being for Proclus.[85] Thus, at this point, as well as many others, Aquinas' Neoplatonism draws the finite into the

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80   *ST,* 1.39.1, Hankey, *God in Himself*, 121–23; idem, "The Conversion of God": 165–66; idem, *Aquinas' Neoplatonism*, 122–25.

81   *ST,* 1.43.3 & 5, Hankey, "The Conversion of God": 166–68.

82   Proclus, *In Parmenidem*, III, 1081, 8.

83   Guérard, "La théorie des hénades" : 79.

84   *ST,* 1.27.5: "processiones in divinis accipi non possunt nisi secundum actiones quae in agente manent. Huiusmodi autem actiones in natura intellectuali et divina non sunt nisi duae, scilicet intelligere et velle."

85   See Gersh, "Proclus as theologian," 99–100; James M.P. Lowry, *The Logical Principles of Proclus' Stoicheiôsis Theologikê as Systematic Ground of the Cosmos* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980), 75–9, 86; Hankey, *God in Himself,* 153.

infinite, and the structure of human subjectivity into the divine.[86] Through this flattening, and by this mutual interconnection, his Trinity becomes a monotheism. Fatefully, what limits and characterizes its members is a subjectivity it shares with humans.[87]

The difference with which I have concluded is gigantic and requires much reflection, especially now that the culture which succeeded Hellenic Neoplatonism and drew it within itself is on the point of destroying the conditions of human life. Also requiring reflection are the similarities between the ways both theologians make the transition from unity to the many. More is at work here than mere influence. Have we to do with theological necessities, or Platonic ones, or both? Must multiplicity begin within divinity itself? Robert Crouse explicates Augustine's assertion of this requisite,[88] and judges the matching Proclean modes as incapable of success.[89] Aquinas' inclusion of Augustine within a Proclean structure must from this point of view be regarded not only as unnecessary but, indeed, as mistaken. However, if as Jean Trouillard[90] and others judge, the move to Proclus beyond what they regard as Augustine's anthropomorphic Trinity is necessary to protect the Divine transcendence, then is not the necessity in a different place?[91] There are few questions more urgently in need of investigation than these.

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86   See Hankey, *God in Himself*, 16, 147–48 & 153–58.

87   Hankey, "The Conversion of God": 172.

88   Robert D. Crouse, "*In multa defluximus*: *Confessions* X, 29–43, and St. Augustine's Theory of Personality," in H. Blumenthal and R. Markus, eds., *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought: Essays in Honour of A.H. Armstrong* (London: Variorum, 1980), 180–85 at 182–83.

89   Robert D. Crouse, "*Paucis mutatis verbis*: St. Augustine's Platonism," in *Augustine and his critics,* R.J. Dodaro and G.P. Lawless, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999), 37–50 at 41; idem, "*Primordiales Causae* in Eriugena's Interpretation of Genesis: Sources and Significance," in G. Van Riel, C. Steel, J. McEvoy, eds. *Iohannes Scottus Eriugena, The Bible and Hermeneutics* (Leuven University Press, 1996), 209–220 at 214. See W.J. Hankey, "*Memoria, Intellectus, Voluntas*: the Augustinian Centre of Robert Crouse's Scholarly Work," *Dionysius* 30 (2012): 41–76 at 53–4, 58–60, 63–6.

90   Jean Trouillard, "Pluralité spirituelle et unité normative selon Blondel," *Archives de philosophie* (janvier-mars, 1961): 21–8 at 24.

91   W.J. Hankey, "Augustine's Trinitarian Cosmos," *Dionysius* 35 (2017): 63–100 at 95–100.

APPENDIX

Dr Riggs sent me this by email on June 6th: "About Butler's desire to eliminate the One as a principle: I wonder now if Butler's argument isn't put into question by the Platonists before and after Proclus? Do any of them give any sense there are just Gods, and no prior principle, the One? Then why would Iamblichus and, especially, Damascius add a principle prior even to the One? It is hard to read Damascius' account of the Ineffable as just the way the One is which in turn is just the way the henads are. For one thing, Damascius argues that the One is an object of knowledge by the Gods, even if it is so by some kind of unitary cognition (*Dub*.26, vol. 1, p.68, L-W). If they were not somehow other than the Ineffable, and the Ineffable was just the designation for the ineffability of the nature of the Gods, then the Gods would both know themselves and not know themselves, since the Ineffable is unknowable by even the Gods (*Dub*.7, vol.1, p.19, L-W). Wouldn't Damascius' critique of Proclus' metaphysics have to have been fundamentally different if he thought that Proclus didn't consider the One to be a principle prior to the henads?" This conforms with questions raised during several discussions at the Ottawa Conference.