

AMSTERDAM STUDIES IN JEWISH THOUGHT

AQUINAS AND
MAIMONIDES ON THE
POSSIBILITY OF THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

AN EXAMINATION OF THE
QUAESTIO DE ATTRIBUTIS

by
Mercedes Rubio

 Springer

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Amsterdam Studies in Jewish Thought

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Moses Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* is pervaded by a permanent tension regarding the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God by a created intellect, which lies at the roots of the 13th century controversy over Maimonides' writings. While Maimonides asserts that "its purpose is to give indications to a religious man for whom the validity of our Law has become established in his soul and has become actual in his belief,"¹ one of its early opponents, Meshullam ben Solomon, writes referring to him: "Those who deny the proper attributes of God speak out until faith has been drained out of man."² He will instead claim to be "determined to know the God of my fathers and my thoughts are continuously of Him".³ Meshullam understands that despite Maimonides' interest in preserving his readers' faith, he leads them to skepticism by denying the possibility of any positive knowledge of the essence of God.

There is a basic agreement among scholars regarding the difficulty of correctly interpreting the *Guide*, since he acknowledges that he intends to expound the truth about the matters pertaining to divine science in an obscure and disordered manner. He himself provides some reasons for this method, such as the fact that he wishes "that the truths be glimpsed and then again be concealed, so as not to oppose that divine purpose ... which has concealed from the vulgar among the people those truths especially requisite for His apprehension."⁴ At other times, alternatively, the cause of these apparent contradictions is due to the necessary steps that a teacher follows in order to make the disciple understand difficult or complicated matters.⁵ This is, in his

¹ *The Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. S. Pines, 5.

² Cf. H. Brody, "Poems of Meshullam b. Solomon Da Pierra", 113, No. 48, v. 9.

³ *Ibid.* 55, No. 24, v. 49.

⁴ *Guide*, 6-7.

⁵ *Ibid.* Intro., 17-18.

opinion, the reason for the divergences occurring in the books of the philosophers, “or rather of those who know the truth”.⁶ Actually, it can be assumed that Maimonides considers the *Guide* a philosophic work only in a restricted sense, because he asserts that the *Guide* is composed for “one who has philosophized and has knowledge of the true sciences, but believes at the same time in the matters pertaining to the Law”.⁷ As a consequence, when Maimonides writes about natural sciences, metaphysics, or cosmology, the reader should not think that he intends only to investigate the true reality of that particular philosophic notion:

For these notions have been expounded in many books, and the correctness of most of them has been demonstrated. I only intend to mention matters, the understanding of which may elucidate some difficulty of the Law.⁸

Maimonides defines this passage as “a preface which is like a lamp illuminating the hidden features of the whole of this Treatise, both of those of its chapters that come before and of those that come after”. He further explains: “My purpose in this Treatise ... is only to elucidate the difficult points of the Law and to make manifest the true realities of its hidden meanings, which the multitude cannot be made to understand because of these matters being too high for it.” Therefore, philosophical training is a requirement for understanding the *Guide* but not its goal. The *Guide* does not offer exhaustive explanation of the philosophical answers reported. The reader must figure them out by himself or herself, trying to fill in the blanks. In some places, Maimonides refers to himself as giving only the “chapter headings” of the difficult matters.⁹

Maimonides’ complex method inspired diverse and sometimes contradictory interpretations throughout the centuries.¹⁰

⁶ *Ibid.* 19.

⁷ *Ibid.* 9-10.

⁸ *Ibid.* II, Intro., 253-254.

⁹ E.g. I, Intro., 6, and I, 35, 81; cf. T.B. Hagigah 13a.

¹⁰ On the character of the *Guide* as a philosophic work, cf. L. Strauss, “The Literary Character of the Guide of the Perplexed”. Cf. also J.A. Buijs, “The Philosophical Character of Maimonides’ Guide — A Critique of Strauss’ Interpretation”. W.Z. Harvey reviews and reinterprets this discussion in “Why Maimonides was Not a Mutakallim”. Cf. also A. Ravitzky, “The Secrets of the *Guide to the Perplexed*: Between the Thirteenth and Twentieth Centuries”, 165-177.

More recently scholars have suggested that Maimonides had severe doubts about the legitimacy of *Metaphysics*¹¹ and about the validity of the intellectual faculty for the knowledge of God.¹² In any case, the purpose of explaining the difficult points of the Law by means of a partial explanation of philosophical doctrines should be taken into account when trying to attribute any given doctrine to Maimonides; it makes the study of his interpreters and scholars who use the *Guide* an essential part of Maimonidean studies.¹³

In this context, Thomas Aquinas receives particular attention as one of the outstanding 13th century Latin scholars who shows sustained interest in the contribution of Maimonides to the philosophical discussions of his time.¹⁴ The large number of quotations of the *Guide* in his works witness this interest and have been repeatedly surveyed. Studies in this field developed a two-way search, attempting to understand both the contribution of Maimonides to Aquinas' thought and the latter's interpretation of Maimonides' position. In general, scholars agree in considering the problem of the knowledge of God the common interest of both philosophers, their point of agreement being the proofs for the existence of God and the issue of the divine attributes, the core of their disagreement.¹⁵

¹¹ S. Pines stressed the puzzling consequences of Maimonides' position, which in his opinion leads to the impossibility of any knowledge of God and to maintaining two opposite metaphysical systems. Cf. "The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to Al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Maimonides".

¹² W.Z. Harvey points to Maimonides' version of the proofs for the existence of God as an example of his mistrust in the rational capacity of man. Cf. "Maimonides' First Commandment, Physics, and Doubt". Cf. also *Physics and Metaphysics in Hasdai Crescas*, 59.

¹³ A. Ravitzky, op. cit.; also, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon and the Esoteric Character of the Guide of the Perplexed".

¹⁴ W.Z. Harvey, for example, notes that Aquinas follows Maimonides (and Averroes), and not Avicenna, in his own version of the Avicennian proof as his Third Way. Cf. *Physics and Metaphysics*, 76.

¹⁵ For instance, E. Gilson notes Thomas Aquinas' success in achieving a synthesis with elements that were already found in the thought of Maimonides in a rather inconsistent way. Cf. *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*. W.Z. Harvey stresses the central role of Aquinas in assimilating the Aristotelian philosophy into his own Latin tradition. Cf. "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible", 76. A. Wohlman extensively analyzes the agreements

The brevity and partialness of most of Aquinas' references to Maimonides, and the fact that they are scattered in works composed under different circumstances and motivations, makes a comprehensive view difficult. As S. Feldman puts it:

When we turn to Thomas Aquinas we encounter several difficulties, textual and philosophical; for the various passages where Thomas discusses Maimonides' theory of attributes are not internally consistent, or at least not entirely similar. Each text therefore deserves separate treatment.¹⁶

Research in this field has so far suggested that Aquinas had a progressive understanding of the position of Maimonides. This would mean that the earlier texts need to be read in light of the later ones and that the references have dissimilar value depending on their chronology. In this context, H. Wolfson attempts an explanation for the different versions of Aquinas' interpretation of Maimonides' doctrine of the divine attributes based on the chronology of his works:

In his *Commentary on the Sentences* (I Sent. d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3), written between 1254-1256, St. Thomas mentions both Avicenna and Maimonides as using the negative and the causative interpretations of attributes, and under each of these interpretations he gives two forms of the interpretation, which we shall designate as Form I and Form II and this Form II can be shown to reflect more closely the interpretations used by Maimonides. In *De Potentia* (q. 7, a. 5), written between 1265-1267, he mentions only Maimonides as using these two methods of interpretations and under each one of these two interpretations he gives only what corresponds to Form II in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, thus indicating that when he mentions only Maimonides as the user of these two methods of interpretation he ascribes to him only Form II. Now in *Summa Theologica* I, c. 13, which part was written between 1266-1268, practically during the same time as *De Potentia*, for the negative interpretation he gives Form II, which in *De Potentia* he ascribes to Maimonides, whereas for the causative interpretation he gives Form I, which in *De Potentia* he does not ascribe to

and disagreements between them. Cf. *Thomas d'Aquin et Maïmonide, un dialogue exemplaire*; and *Maïmonide et Thomas d'Aquin, un dialogue impossible*. D. Burrell compares the conceptions of both philosophers on the divine nature. Cf. *On Knowing the Unknowable God*. I. Dobbs-Weinstein focuses on the limits of reason in the two philosophers from an ethical perspective. Cf. *Maimonides and St. Thomas Aquinas on the Limits of Reason*.

¹⁶ S. Feldman, "A Scholastic Misinterpretation of Maimonides' Doctrine of Divine Attributes", 32.

Maimonides. This, then, is the reason why here in the *Summa*, the negative interpretation is ascribed to Maimonides, whereas the causative interpretation is not ascribed by him to Maimonides.¹⁷

N.A. Stubbens accepts Wolfson's chronological solution for the differences between the texts and thus disqualifies the earliest reference of the *Commentary on the Sentences*:

A causal interpretation of divine predicates is attributed to Maimonides in the *Commentary on the Sentences* (I Sent., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3). There, Aquinas reports Maimonides as saying God is said to be good because he produces goodness in his creatures. ... If an argument from silence could be made, we would conclude that Aquinas recognized his mistake since in his later works Aquinas did not attribute this view to Maimonides, to the best of my knowledge.¹⁸

Feldman reproduces Wolfson's conclusions regarding the differences between the texts in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and in the *Summa Theologiae* and Aquinas' alleged misinterpretation of the position of Maimonides in the earlier passage. However, he notes that it is nevertheless an interesting passage.¹⁹

Against this solution, studies unrelated to Maimonides have argued that the article in question did not exist in the original text of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, but was added around 1265-1266, which makes it contemporary with *De Potentia* and Part I of the *Summa Theologiae*.²⁰ Therefore, the theory of a contradiction between these texts should be discarded. This study intends to show that, contrary to what has been suggested so far, *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 contains Aquinas' final reading of the *Guide* on the issue and his most complete interpretation of the possibility of the knowledge of God according to Maimonides, with elements that are absent from Aquinas' earlier references to him. The reconstruction of the historical circumstances surrounding the composition of this article shows that Aquinas assigned exceptional importance to it, and reveals the background of Aquinas' renewed interest in Maimonides' position on

¹⁷ H. Wolfson, "St. Thomas on Divine Attributes", 28.

¹⁸ N.A. Stubbens, "Naming God: Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas", 233.

¹⁹ Cf. Feldman, *op. cit.*, 34.

²⁰ Particularly the studies of A. and H.-F. Dondaine, B.M. Lemaigre, L.E. Boyle, and J.F. Boyle, which are reviewed in Chapter 1, 1.

the knowledge of God. The analysis of the text and its references to other places unveil Aquinas' comprehensive approach to the *Guide* and the place of this work in his thought. Moreover, it reveals the role of faith as a — thus far — unknown aspect of the contribution of the *Guide* to Aquinas' doctrine on the attributes, and the reasons behind Aquinas' failure to mention Maimonides' name when introducing his Ways for the knowledge of the existence of God.

This systematic examination of the texts has led to a fresh reading of the dialogue between Aquinas and Maimonides.

In the context of a study of this nature, between two scholars the first of whom died some twenty years before the second was born, some remarks regarding the methodology are necessary. A work of research in the form of a dialogue must find its place while avoiding two possible extremes. On the one hand, one may be tempted to consider all of Aquinas' references to Maimonides bluntly either as "borrowed material" to elucidate an issue if the reference is successfully incorporated into his own organic teaching, or as one of the "positions rejected" in order to introduce Aquinas' own answer to the matter. This is what we could call the work of the historian. On the other hand, one finds their discourse on the different philosophical matters so close and parallel that there may be an inclination to compose an imaginary dialogue, regardless of an existing interaction between the texts.

Be that as it may, no one has ever questioned the fruitfulness of investigating Aquinas' interests in the authorities found in his writings. My point of departure has been to define the criteria for the selection of the texts that could avoid these two extremes. First, I have discarded texts on the different issues in each author in which I could not find an external textual or historical reference to the other, even if they were doctrinally relevant. Second, I have discarded, or relegated to the category of "supportive material", references too restricted in content that could only provide a "borrowed material" or "position rejected" type quotation. Third, finding a fresh presentation of Aquinas' insight into Maimonides in the *Quaestio de attributis*, I have chosen to focus on the period of its redaction and prior to it, realizing that, by pulling that thread, it was possible to follow a lesser-known path than that of previous studies. My feeling is that the period

immediately after the *Quaestio* — marked by the redaction of the *Summa Theologiae* — has offered so much illumination to scholars, that it has somewhat obscured the preceding one, in which Aquinas' dialogue with Maimonides is still in the making and offers more explicit insights into the *Guide*.²¹

One of the aims of the present study is that of bringing to light texts in Aquinas' works that have received little scholarly attention and which contain excellent material for a comprehensive understanding of his position. The *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles* provide — as their name indicates — a summary of Aquinas' position in the different issues. In this respect, the *Quaestio* provides references that contain, in addition to the same references to Maimonides as *S. Theol.* I, q. 13 and *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, Aquinas' fully developed explanation of Maimonides' position and his answer to him. We may say, in Maimonidean fashion, that these texts are the “chapter headings” for the full-length explanations that we find in the *Quaestio* and its related texts. And it is understandable that this may be so, since Aquinas composed *De Potentia* contemporary to the *Quaestio* and the *Summa* immediately after, and there would have been little point in repeating what he had just written.

The choice of this alternative reading of Maimonides leads to a shift from the attention traditionally paid to the role of analogy in Aquinas' answer to Maimonides' position on the knowledge of God. Aquinas had already developed his doctrine of analogy at the earliest stage of his academic life, and he probably saw it by that time as an answer to Maimonides' solution. This doctrine is found for the first time in *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2., the article preceding the *Quaestio*. The present study supports the view that what provoked Aquinas' review of Maimonides' position on the knowledge of God was not a renewed concern for Maimonides' controversial answer to the problem, but a

²¹ J.-P. Torrell pointed to the fact that Aquinas' earlier works are more explicit and helpful for understanding his position on the issue than later ones. Cf. “La vision de Dieu per essentiam selon Thomas d'Aquin”, p. 49 : Pour autant que j'aie pu m'en rendre compte, il n'y a pas d'évolution sensible en passant d'une oeuvre à l'autre, mais il arrive que les oeuvres antérieures soient plus explicites que les oeuvres plus tardives, de sorte qu'elles sont aussi plus éclairantes pour un premier contact. Cela se vérifie particulièrement pour sa théorie générale de la connaissance de Dieu.

much closer concern, that is, the need to criticize and at the same time justify his colleague Peter of Tarantasia's writings on the matter. It also shows that Aquinas' review of Maimonides' *Guide* at this critical stage led him not in the direction of an enhancing of the role of analogy — the notion is paid little attention in the *Quaestio* — but in that of searching for a comprehensive explanation of why our knowledge of God is so scarce in this life, and the hints we find for a future, clear knowledge of God in the world to come.

Moreover, the *Quaestio* successfully links Aquinas' interest in the *Guide* with his interest in the doctrine of the beatific vision, something that could not be perceived in other texts. Finally, the existing scholarly consensus — voiced by Gilson and supported by Wohlman —²² regarding Maimonides' role in shaping Aquinas' doctrine on the most proper name of God is somewhat modified after an examination of the Latin translation of the *Guide*, which confuses “being” and “existence” in several places, shows that Aquinas could not have known Maimonides' real position on this matter.

The importance of honoring the transcendence of God above the world emerges at the background of this dialogue between Maimonides and Aquinas.²³ The present study contributes to the key articulation found in Aquinas' writings, which is central in the *Quaestio*, distinguishing between the levels of reality, thought and language. Thomas develops an epistemology that successfully safeguards the divine transcendence while preserving also the possibility of a human knowledge of God in this world in Aristotle's distinction of the meanings or manners of being. The meanings of being provide also the basis for the Thomistic doctrine of the degrees of being and for the doctrine of participation, securing a causal relation Creator-creatures that safeguards God's transcendence and His ontological priority, while providing logical and ontological grounds for a language about God.

²² Cf. A. Wohlman, *Thomas d'Aquin et Maïmonide, un dialogue exemplaire*.

²³ Some authors, like D. Burrell, have reinterpreted this transcendence in terms of a “distinction” between God and the world. Although some of Maimonides' explanations may, if taken to their logical consequences, open the way for such a conclusion, I do not believe that he really intended to go that far, as other places of the *Guide* acknowledge the possibility of certain knowledge of God. I have definitely found no grounds for this notion in the works of Aquinas.

At the epistemological level this priority is reflected in the naming of created perfections after divine ones, and this epistemological relation secures the knowledge of God by linking the created world with its transcendental Cause. Although Maimonides affirms the existence of a causal relation, Aquinas reveals in the *Quaestio* that his way of stating it inverts the natural causal order. Maimonides' ontology reverts on his epistemology, in which the subject who knows is the one who has the priority for verifying the truth of the proposition instead of placing it on the reality named. In Aquinas' view, Maimonides' discourse about God is that about God's existence and the nature of such discourse is modal, with a mingling of the ontological and logical levels.

Summarizing, I shall defend here three points: the centrality of the issue of the divine attributes in Aquinas' interest in the *Guide*, the importance of *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 (*Quaestio de attributis*) for understanding Aquinas' reading of the *Guide* on the issue of the knowledge of God, and the place of the *Guide* in Aquinas' explanation of the role of faith and in his Five Ways for the existence of God.

The Texts

The texts relevant for this study are the totality of Aquinas' references to Maimonides on the knowledge of God, explicit and implicit, and the related passages in the *Guide*. Their evaluation demands taking into account both their location and their quality.

Regarding the references' locations it is worth noting that the scholar inquiring about Aquinas' position regarding any issue or author has to cope with a huge number of works, many of them not easily available, or not yet published in reliable editions. The Collected Works of Thomas Aquinas amount to some 8,700,000 words. Two of his best-known works, the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*, represent less than a quarter of the total. There have been 14 attempts to edit the whole of the *Corpus Thomisticus*, but none of them has so far succeeded.²⁴ The selection

²⁴ Cf. E. Alarcón, "Una cuestión de método. Consideraciones previas a la interpretación de Santo Tomás de Aquino", 388. A list of the most reliable editions of every work of the entire *Corpus* is available in his Doctoral Dissertation, *Evolución léxica y cronología del Corpus Tomista*, 15-27.

of all the texts relevant to the issue of the knowledge of God demanded a solution only provided by the publication of the *Index Thomisticus* in CD-ROM. This edition contains the entire *Corpus Thomisticus* — up to 118 works — plus some other contemporary or related pieces and allows exhaustive search by forms and *lemmae*.²⁵ I rely on the chronological table of the *Corpus* given by E. Alarcón for the ordering of the texts.²⁶

Regarding their quality, it should be taken into account that quotation guidelines for scholars in the 13th century are less strict than today's. Sources are often used without explicit reference. Sometimes the book is not available and the writer quotes it from memory. This limitation frequently leads to inaccuracy in the interpretation, as the role of the source is mostly to provide a useful idea for the argumentation. Moreover, the usage of the time dictates avoiding quoting by name any living author, for that inserts him into the Tradition as an *auctoritas* even if the quotation is meant to oppose his views.²⁷ In this respect, Aquinas is one of the most accurate citers of authorities. The editors of the critical edition of the works of Aquinas devoted a whole volume to listing his references to authors and writings in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*. In these two works, he quotes Aristotle 4130 times, St. Augustine 3179 times, Averroes 81 times, and Maimonides 21 times.²⁸ Aquinas usually provides a new and original interpretation of the source that contributes in a significant way to expressing his own position and supplies a direct or indirect critique and analysis of the position of the author quoted. He also adheres strictly to the rules and avoids quoting by name any contemporary author. This does not apply to Maimonides, however, because Aquinas was born some two decades after he died and could therefore quote him *nominatim*. His name appears 78 times in the entire *Corpus*

²⁵ *Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia cum hypertextibus in CD-ROM auctore Roberto Busa S.J.*

²⁶ Cf. *Evolución léxica*, 377-379. A brief catalogue of Aquinas' works can be found in J.A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino. His Life, Thought, and Work*.

²⁷ For instance, Aquinas does not mention one single time the name of Albert the Great, his teacher and one of the authors who most shaped his thought.

²⁸ Cf. *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia. Indices auctoritatum et rerum occurrentium in Summa Theologiae et Summa contra gentiles*, vol. XVI, 177-227.

Thomisticus.²⁹ Sometimes Aquinas simply refers to Maimonides as an authority supporting his view. On other occasions he judges Maimonides' position insufficient or even wrong, but he always takes him into account as a relevant source.

The central text of this study is the so-called *Quaestio de attributis* (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3). I have also used relevant quotations from other works concerning the knowledge of the essence of God and the knowledge of God through faith to complete Aquinas position. Aquinas does not mention Maimonides in the context of the Five Ways for the existence of God. However, scholars have seen an influence of Maimonides' proofs in *Guide*, II, Intro. and c. 1 on Aquinas' two versions of the Ways in the *Summa Theologiae* and in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, and therefore they will also be brought into the discourse. Other texts are reviewed for their connection with these ones.³⁰ Since the chronology of Aquinas' works plays a central role in this research, I provide in Appendix I a list of the ones relevant to this study with their years of composition. Appendix II makes available the complete Latin text of the *Quaestio* with my English translation.

The references to Maimonides in the works of Aquinas on other issues will not be reviewed in this study. They represent most of the matters treated in the *Guide*, like the number of spiritual substances (souls and angels), the matter of the heavenly spheres, and divine providence in the world.³¹ Others are related to the interpretation of biblical language,³² the precepts of the Law of

²⁹ Five times in *In I Sent.*, 11 times in *In II Sent.*, 4 times in *In III Sent.*, 7 times in *In IV Sent.*; 3 in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (one in each of the 3 first books); 8 times in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, 10 in the *Prima Secundae*, 10 times in *De Veritate*, 11 in *De Potentia*; twice in the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima*; and once in: *In librum Boethii de Trinitate*, *In Symbolum Apostolorum*, *In Psalmos*, *In Threnos Hieremiae*, and *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*. Twice Aquinas wrote his name and then crossed out the paragraph, cf. *Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia, Autographi deleta*.

³⁰ I have made a complete survey of Aquinas' works through the IT, but have added to the Bibliography of Sources only the ones quoted in footnotes.

³¹ Cf *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, Resp.; d. 39, q. 2, a. 2; *In II Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6; d. 2, q. 2, a. 3; d. 3, q. 1, a. 1; a. 3; *In III Sent.*, d. 12, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4; *In IV Sent.*, d. 48, q. 2, a. 3, ad 6; *De Pot.* q. 5, a. 7, arg. 17; q. 6, a. 7, Resp.; *De Veritate* q. 5, a. 9, sc 5; ad 4; *Summa Theol.* I^a, q. 22, a. 2; ad 5; q. 50, a. 3; *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 8, arg. 16; *Q. Disp. De Anima*, a. 3, arg. 6; *C.G.* II, c. 92; III, c. 97; *In Threnos Hier.* 3, 13.

³² *In II Sent.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 1; ad 2; a. 2, ad 2; a. 5; *Summa Theol.* I^a, q. 66, a. 1, ad 5; q. 68, q. 1, ad 1; q. 69, a. 1, ad 5; q. 74, a. 3, ad 3; ad 4; *Q. Disp. De Anima*, a. 8, ad 19; *In Psalmos*, 18; *De Pot.*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 2; ad 5; ad 15.

Moses,³³ and prophecy.³⁴ Maimonides' name is usually found in the frame of a group of relevant authorities, whose answers Aquinas collates. Regarding philosophical matters whose explanation is difficult, Maimonides' position is accepted or rejected according to its level of correspondence with that of the authorized Christian interpreter that seems most likely to Aquinas.

To the best of my knowledge, from all of Maimonides' works Aquinas knew only *The Guide* and therefore all the quotations examined here are from this work, unless otherwise noted.

Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* or *Dalālat al-Hā'irīn* was written in Arabic in Cairo in the 1190s. It was translated twice into Hebrew as *Moreh ha-Nebukhim*. Samuel Ibn Tibbon composed a literal translation in c.1204, the year of Maimonides' death. A less literal but more literary translation was made shortly after by Judah Al-Ḥarizi. Both translations were done in Provence. The Latin translation known to Aquinas, *Dux neutrorum*, seems to have been made originally from the Al-Ḥarizi translation in the first half of the 1200s, with later corrections based on the Arabic original and Ibn Tibbon. I provide in Appendix III a summary of the previous research on the origins of *Dux neutrorum* and a critical edition of *Dux I*, 33 (*Guide I*, 34), *Dux II*, Incipit and c.2 (*Guide II*, Intro. and 1), and *Dux II*, 18 (*Guide II*, 17) with an examination of the genesis of the text through a collation with the two Hebrew translations and the Arabic original.

All translations from Latin texts are mine. The quotations of the *Guide* meant to present Maimonides' original position are from S. Pines' English translation, modified occasionally in order to preserve uniformity of terminology and on the basis of the Arabic text, whereas those in footnotes used to show Aquinas' reading of the *Guide* are from my edition of *Dux neutrorum* from three Latin manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Lat. 15973, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Université 601 (both from the 13th century), and Saint Omer, Bibliothèque publique 608 (14th century). To facilitate collation of the Latin text I also provide references to the 16th century edition of *Dux neutrorum*, which usually coincides with the chapter numeration in mss. B and C (E does not have

³³ *In III Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 5, sc 2; Resp.; *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 3; a. 5; d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3; d. 40, q. 1, a. 4, Resp.; d. 42, q. 2, a. 2, Resp.; d. 48, q. 2, a. 3, ad 6; *Summa Theol.* I^a-II^{ae}, q. 101, a. 1, arg. 4; a. 3, ad 3; q. 102, a. 3, ad 4; ad 6; ad 11; a. 4, ad 2; a. 5, ad 4; a. 6, ad 1; ad 8; q. 105, a. 2, ad 12.

³⁴ *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2; *De Veritate* q. 12, a. 2, arg. 6; ad 6; a. 5, Resp.; a. 12, arg. 6; ad 6.

chapter numbering). The reader will notice that the *Dux* has a different chapter division than Pines' edition.

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Key of Abbreviations

a.	articulus
arg.	argumentum
Compendium Theol.	Compendium Theologiae
d.	distinctio
De 108 articulis	Responsio de 108 articulis
De Pot.	Quaestiones disputatae de potentia
De Trinitate	Super Boetium de Trinitate
De Ver.	Quaestiones disputatae de veritate
Dux	Dux neutrorum seu dubiorum
fol.	folium
Guide	The Guide of the Perplexed
In [] Sent.	Commentum in librum [] Sententiarum Petri Lombardi
IT	Index Thomisticus
l.	line
ll.	lines
q.	quaestio
Quaestio	Quaestio de attributis
Resp.	Respondeo, Responsio
Roman C.	Roman Commentary on the Sentences
Sc.	sed contra
SCG	Summa contra Gentiles
Sol.	Solutio
S. Theol.	Summa Theologiae
Super ad Eph.	Reportatio super epistolam ad Ephesios
Super ad Rom.	Commentarium super epistolam ad Romanos
T.B.	Talmud Bavli

CHAPTER ONE

THE DISPUTE ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Aquinas' Commentary *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 provides one of the most comprehensive explanations of his position on the divine attributes. Aquinas himself stresses the importance of this text:

Wisdom, Goodness and all suchlike are absolutely one and the same thing in God but differ according to their ratio, and this ratio is not only on the part of the one apprehending but also due to the quality of the thing itself. To make this clear and so that it will be carefully explained, since the whole understanding of what is said in the 1st Book depends on this, it is necessary to examine four [questions]. First, what this ratio is according to which we say that attributes differ. Second, in which sense it is said that the ratio is or is not in something. Third, whether the diverse rationes of the attributes are in God or not. Fourth, whether the multiplicity of these rationes is only on the part of our intellect or is in some way also on the part of the thing [God Himself].¹

The author asserts that the understanding of the whole first Book of his *Commentary* depends on this article, a Book that is devoted to the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God. This in itself is enough for the reader to pay special attention to what follows, and even more so for someone looking for Aquinas' insights into Maimonides, since the answer to the third question, "Whether the *rationes* are diverse from the attributes or not" contains one of Aquinas' most complete evaluations of Maimonides' position. He reviews it along with Avicenna's, Dionysius Areopagita's, and St. Anselm's; these four philosophers being for Aquinas the most representative scholars on the issue of the knowledge of God. After explaining each position, Aquinas strikingly asserts:

These opinions, although they may seem superficially diverse, are nonetheless not opposed to each other, if we base the rationale of their statements on the speakers' positions.²

¹ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Respondeo.

² *Ibid.* ad tertium, in fine.

Now to compare the positions of the Greek mystic, the Latin saint, the Muslim philosopher, and the Jewish rabbi and plainly say that their differences are so only to a superficial observer, is certainly a bold assertion. An extensive explanation of Aquinas' interpretation of their positions and his own explanation of the divine attributes completes the article. Surprisingly, scholars neglected this passage and gave more credit to other texts because it is located at the very beginning of Aquinas' first work, classifying it too premature to be conclusive. This chapter demonstrates that this text indeed represents one of Aquinas' most complete evaluations of Maimonides' teaching on the knowledge of God. It contains a comprehensive analysis of the latter's position on the divine attributes and provides keys for the interpretation of other references in Aquinas' works in a way that testifies to sustained attention to the *Guide*. It refutes the objection of the transitory value of the text through the study of the history of the article, showing that it does not belong to the original Parisian *Commentary on the Sentences* but was composed and inserted a decade later. It also allows for an understanding of the motivations that prompted Aquinas' deepest insight into Maimonides' position and the importance of the doctrine expounded in the article. Finally, it shows the doctrinal origins of the article, revealing the influences of other authors and the parallel texts that complete Aquinas' position on the issue in this period. All this aims at demonstrating the reliability of the doctrine contained in the article for an analysis of Aquinas' acquaintance with Maimonides' work.

Accordingly, the chapter is divided into three sections: the first deals with the chronology of the text and shows its historical and doctrinal relation to a dispute on the multiplicity of attributes in the divine essence and to other works written in the same period. The second reviews the texts and doctrinal elements involved in this dispute. The third focuses on the structure and contents of the article and Maimonides' place in it, analyzing Aquinas' revision of the problem of the divine attributes in this text and in the parallel works that complete it.

1. *Chronology of In I Sent., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3*

The chronology of Aquinas' *Commentary* is beyond doubt: He commented on the four Books during his first stay in Paris,

between 1252 and 1256, receiving the title of *Magister* in the Spring of 1256 when he was not more than 30 years old. This text represents therefore his first major work. Of all of Aquinas' works, however, the *Commentary on the Sentences* poses particular difficulty because no critical edition of the text exists.³ Moreover, the different existing editions disagree with each other in several parts, a fact that testifies to its obscure manuscript tradition.⁴ In particular, the manuscript tradition of article 3 of the first question of distinction 2 suggests a different place and date of composition. The following is a summary of previous research on this issue, which began when A. Dondaine called attention to a short note that the editors of the critical edition of the works of Aquinas found, in 1932.⁵

The note is a colophon to an isolated copy of the article in ms. Vat. Lat. 784, fol. 249r that reads:

Thomas disputed this question and completed it in Rome, and it should be inserted in its proper place, that is, in the second distinction of the first Book of the Sentences, to be the third question of the second distinction.⁶

Aquinas was sent to Rome in 1265 to establish a *Studium* where the young Dominicans of the Province would receive their philosophical and theological training.⁷ He taught in Rome only during two academic years, from September 1265 to July 1267, and probably remained there (or in Viterbo) until 1268.⁸ If this note is trustworthy, the article was composed in these years and later inserted into the *Commentary*.

³ Cf. C.H. Lohr, *St. Thomas Aquinas' Scriptum super Sententiis: an Index of Authorities Cited*. In his Preface, Lohr stresses this difficulty and suggests the following partial editions: P. Mandonnet and M.F. Moos (Paris, 1929-1947) for Books I-IV, until dist. 22; for Book IV, dist. 23-49, E. Fretté *Opera Omnia*, Vol. XI (Paris, 1874).

⁴ My references to this article will be according to the S.E. Fretté-P. Maré text, ed. Vivès: *Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, Vol. VII, 35-40. There is another 19th century edition: *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Commentum in quatuor libros sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, Vol. I. Ed. P. Fiaccadori (Parma, 1856).

⁵ Cf. A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas a-t-il disputé à Rome la question des Attributs Divins? (I Sent., dist. 2, qu. 1, art. 3)".

⁶ Hanc quaestionem disputavit Thomas et determinavit Rome, et debet collocari in suo loco, scilicet, distinctione secunda primi libri sententiarum, ut sit questio tertia secunde distinctionis.

⁷ Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica, 22 (Rome, 1949), 32.

⁸ Cf. A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas a-t-il ...", 181*.

Dondaine demonstrates that the information provided by early manuscripts and tables of the *Commentary* could also suggest a later insertion of the article. Most of the ancient indexes or tables ignore it and it is missing in some of the older manuscripts. One contains a copy of the article in an annex.⁹ The article is found isolated in other manuscripts and some that have the *Commentary* without the article have marginal notes that could be references to a missing part.¹⁰ In addition, there are external witnesses who support the same hypothesis. Hannibald of Hannibaldis, a friend of Aquinas who was teaching in Paris around 1260 or 1261 and who closely follows the latter's *Commentary* in his own, comments on articles 1, 2, 4, and 5, but fails to mention article 3.¹¹ However, Bombolognus of Bologna who also follows Aquinas' *Commentary* in his own, dated between 1265-1270, already mentions all the five articles.¹² Following him, all the commentators seem to be acquainted with Aquinas' article 3. William of La Mare devotes a *quaestio disputata* to the article and severely criticizes it. The date of William's *quaestio* has been placed for certain before 1277 and perhaps even as early as 1270.¹³ Finally, when Gilles of Rome comments on the *Sentences* around 1276, he strongly criticizes the author of that dispute in two places: *I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 3, a. 2, ql. 2; and q. 3, a. 3.¹⁴ The location of the critique corroborates that Gilles already has the complete version of Aquinas' second distinction. Summarizing, there does not seem to be an awareness of the article around 1260 or 1261, but it is already well known and clearly attributed to Aquinas, in the appropriate place of his *Commentary*, after 1265.

According to the information given in the colophon above, the date of the redaction or insertion of the article into the text would be 1265 or shortly after. This fully complies with the information of the external witnesses, which suggest that it

⁹ Ms. Bruges, Bibl. de la Ville, 202.

¹⁰ Cf. B.M. Lemaigre, "Perfection de Dieu et multiplicité des Attributs Divins. Pourquoi S. Thomas a-t-il inséré la dispute des Attributs Divins (*I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3) dans son Commentaire des Sentences?" 200.

¹¹ Cf. A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas a-t-il disputé ...", 173*-174*.

¹² Cf. A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas et la dispute des Attributs Divins (*I Sent.*, d. 2, a. 3). Authenticité et origine", 257-258.

¹³ Cf. B.M. Lemaigre, "Perfection de Dieu ...", 201-204.

¹⁴ Cf. A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas et la dispute ...", 256.

should be dated between 1260 and 1270. Furthermore, a lexicographic analysis of the text dates it as being contemporary with the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* and *De Potentia*, namely in 1266.¹⁵

Three conclusions can be drawn from these data: that *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 was composed during Aquinas' sojourn in Rome and placed in its current location at least a decade after the composition of the *Commentary*; that the revision of this work leads him to reformulate or complete his explanation of the doctrine of the divine attributes; and that he deems the new text inserted extremely important for the comprehension of the rest of the Book.¹⁶ Therefore, if a reference to Maimonides in this article is found to be somewhat different from quotations of the *Guide* in other places of the same work, it should be given preference as a more final evaluation by Aquinas than the others. Moreover, as will be later demonstrated, this particular reference to Maimonides is decisive for understanding Aquinas' comprehensive approach to the *Guide*. Its analysis in the frame of the article proves that the year 1266 can be considered a point of reference in Aquinas' use of the *Guide*.

Now, it behooves us to review the historical reasons for Aquinas' renewed interest in the issue of the divine attributes in general and for the composition of the article in particular. It is clear that the text testifies to careful reflection and represents indeed a faithful and complete explanation of Aquinas' position on the issue, but it is not immediately evident what the reasons were that prompted the author to compose it. A. Dondaine explored two explanatory hypotheses. According to the first one, it would be the only extant part of a second *Commentary on the Sentences* that Aquinas would have also composed during his sojourn in Rome.¹⁷ Ptolemaeus of Lucca provides the single testimony we have about this second version of the work:

¹⁵ I owe all information related to lexicographic analysis reported in this study to E. Alarcón, who has developed this method for the chronology of the works of Aquinas.

¹⁶ A. Dondaine verified the coherence of the article with the position of Aquinas on the same issue in other works. Cf. "Saint Thomas et la dispute ...", 254-255.

¹⁷ A. Dondaine, "Saint Thomas a-t-il disputé ...", 181*-182*.

Already a Master, [Thomas] wrote at the time he was in Rome a Commentary on the first Book of the Sentences that I saw in Lucca, but after removing from there I never saw it again.¹⁸

Ptolemaeus describes Aquinas behaving in an unusual fashion. A written commentary on the four Books of the *Sentences* was the requisite for the reception of the degree of Master. After that the Master would never comment on it again, but appoint one of his advanced students to the task. By the time he was in Rome, Aquinas had already finished his *Commentary* and held that position for nearly ten years. The new redaction understandingly puzzles Ptolemaeus, who stresses “already a Master”. However, there must have been few copies of this second *Commentary*, since Ptolemaeus did not see it again after leaving the Dominican priory of Lucca. Thomas must have had his reasons for commenting again on the *Sentences*.

The works of the Leonine Commission for the critical edition of the works of Aquinas uncovered an unknown text in the margins of the manuscript. Oxford, Lincoln College Lat. 95.¹⁹ The manuscript, from the end of the 13th century, contains Aquinas’ *Commentary on the Sentences* with the *Quaestio de attributis* in its proper place. The text in the margins is a different but very similar version of the *Commentary*, which ends in d. 18 and adds four new articles to d. 23. H.-F. Dondaine edited 15 articles of this text but considered it a collection of notes from a disciple. L. E. Boyle later established the authorship of Aquinas and demonstrated that this text is in fact the *Commentary* that Ptolemaeus mentions.²⁰ From now on I will refer to it both as the Second Commentary or as the *Roman Commentary* to distinguish it from the first, also called the *Parisian Commentary*.²¹

¹⁸ Scripsit etiam eo tempore quo fuit Romae, de quo dictum est supra, jam magister existens, Primum super Sententias, quem ego vidi Lucae; sed inde subtractus nusquam ulterius vidi.” Ptolemaeus Lucensis, *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, Book XXIII, ch. 15, in fine, Cf. p. 155. Bernard Gui recalls this testimony in his *Vita sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, ch. 53.

¹⁹ Cf. H.-F. Dondaine, “Alia lectura fratris Thome? (Super I Sent.)”.

²⁰ L.E. Boyle, “Alia lectura fratris Thome”.

²¹ I follow J.F. Boyle in this. Boyle is currently preparing the critical edition of the text. I am grateful to him for allowing me to use his provisional working text parallel to the *Quaestio de attributis*: Utrum nomina de Deo dicta significant unum in Deo vel multa (fol. 9v-10v).

Despite the evident doctrinal connection it is clear that the *Quaestio de attributis* is not a part of the *Roman Commentary*. Both are rather a product of the same concern that seems to have been a top priority in the work of Aquinas during his stay in Rome.²² The two works date from the year 1266. The texts are so close that it is probable that while writing one, Aquinas had the other at hand. For instance, he asserts in the *Quaestio de attributis* that the unity of the attributes in God and the plurality among themselves needs to be expressed carefully, “since the whole understanding of what is said in the first Book depends on this.” This remark finds an echo in the parallel text of the *Roman Commentary*: This needs to be explained accurately, since most of the first Book of this Treatise depends on it.

The fact that Aquinas wrote a second *Commentary* without any academic obligation to do so and composed at the same time a new article for the old one, instructing its insertion in a precise place and stressing that the whole *Commentary* cannot be understood without it, signals a careful revision of his original explanations on the issue. However, neither the *Roman Commentary* nor the *Quaestio de attributis* reveal the reasons for it.

A. Dondaine himself rejected the possibility that the article was part of this *Commentary* even before the authentic text was discovered.²³ According to his second hypothesis the *Quaestio de attributis* would be related to yet another work composed in the same period, the *Responsio de 108 articulis*.²⁴ In fact, if the three texts were composed close together in time and deal with similar issues, it is reasonable to think that whatever compelled the author to write one also influenced the composition of the others. Indeed the *Responsio de 108 articulis* does offer hints needed to understand the historical and doctrinal reasons for their composition.

The oldest manuscripts are not very explicit on the nature of the *Responsio*. The manuscript Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat.

²² Cf. J.F. Boyle, “The Ordering of Trinitarian Teaching in Thomas Aquinas’ Second Commentary on Lombard’s *Sentences*”, 125.

²³ Cf. A. Dondaine, “Saint Thomas et la dispute ...”, 259.

²⁴ H.-F. Dondaine summarized his brother’s research on this issue in the Preface to the critical edition. Cf. *Responsio ad magistrum Ioannem de Vercellis de 108 articulis*. Cf. 263-294.

14546, dated from the end of the 13th century, introduces it with the following title: “explanatio dubiorum de dictis cuiusdam edita a f. T. de aqui.” The manuscript Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek 197, dated around 1461, adds one more piece of information: “incipit declaratio facta a fratre Thoma de Aquino super quibusdam articulis fratris Petri de Tarantasia”.²⁵ The *Tabula aurea* of Peter of Bergamo (1473) gives its most complete title:

Response to John of Verceil, Master General of the Order of Preachers, on the 108 articles taken from the work of the lord Pope Innocent V, who was friar Peter of Tarantasia of the Order of Preachers.²⁶

The articles under dispute belong to Peter of Tarantasia’s *Commentary on the Sentences*. Tarantasia taught in Paris towards 1256 or 1258 at the latest, since in 1259 he had already received the title of Master.²⁷ The *Responsio de 108 articulis* is subsequent to 1267, the year of the election of John of Verceil as Master General of the Dominican order. According to lexicographic analysis the work can be dated around 1268, that is, at the end of Aquinas’ stay in Paris. The text lacks a dedicatory note or salutation and Aquinas always refers to the articles’ author as “the writer” (*scribens*) and to a certain “objector” (*obiiciens*), without ever mentioning the name Tarantasia. This points to the technical and confidential character of the work.²⁸ We can deduce from the tone of the answers that Aquinas did not like the accusations of the objector, whom he sometimes rebukes for deliberately changing the meaning of the *scribens*’ words.²⁹

The nature of this work suggests that an anonymous objector extracted a number of propositions from Tarantasia’s *Commentary*

²⁵ Cf. E. Alarcón, *Evolución léxica ...*, 356.

²⁶ Responsio ad magistrum iohannem de uercellis. generalem magistrum ordinis predicatorum de .108. articulis sumptis ex opere domini innocentii pape quinti qui fuit frater petrus de tarantasia ordinis predicatorum.

²⁷ Cf. O.P. Martin, “Quelques premiers maîtres dominicains de Paris et d’Oxford”, 564-565.

²⁸ Cf. H.-F. Dondaine, *Responsio de 108 articulis*, Preface, 264.

²⁹ Cf. a. 16: calumniatur obiiciens non intelligens quod dicitur. ... Similiter, quod dicitur cum praecisione, idest nullo addito, non bene intellexit. Intellexit enim scribens, quod esse cui nihil additur, sed est esse purum subsistens, est proprium Deo; a. 18: Quod vero decimo octavo ponitur, ratio creandi, ut est in creaturis, est invariabilis, et dicitur aeterna a carentia variationis, non recte impugnat obiiciens.

that could imply some deviation from the faith and submitted the list to the Master General of the Dominicans, with the purpose of having them condemned. The latter consulted with Aquinas on this matter, asking him to evaluate the contents of these propositions and the validity of the accusations. If, as seems to be the case, this work was intended to be a piece of evidence in a doctrinal process against Tarantasia, it is understandable that the text has reached us surrounded with such discretion in the details regarding its redaction. Tarantasia later became Pope with the name of Innocent V. Moreover, he was a colleague and close friend of Aquinas, and both worked together in 1259 as part of a special commission appointed by the Master General and headed by Albert the Great to draw up the *ratio studiorum*, a plan of studies for the Dominican order.³⁰ In any case, Aquinas' handling of the matter contains one more element to be taken into consideration: Tarantasia had based his *Commentary on the Sentences* mostly on Aquinas' own. The first 90 articles under accusation are taken from the *Commentary* to the first Book, which is entirely devoted to the nature and knowledge of God and the Trinity. Aquinas had therefore an understandable personal interest in finding out whether these propositions had indeed something misleading about them.

The accusations against Tarantasia's words about the divine attributes suggest that he was teaching real multiplicity in the divine essence. Aquinas carefully examines his statements and this revision leads him to the following conclusion: some of the articles have an ambiguous appearance, but this is not due to Tarantasia's faulty or mistaken comprehension of the issues. Rather, it is due to a lack of accuracy in the use of some terms and to an obscure writing style.³¹ In article 51, Peter asserts that the divine essence is really one but it has a multitude of attributes, which differ in God only according to their notions (*differentium in Deo sola ratione*). But he says also that these attributes differ from each other really — or

³⁰ The commission also included Bonhomme Brito and Florent of Hesdin. Cf. H. Denifle-E. Chatelain eds., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, I, part 1, n. 335, p. 385-386. Cf. J.A. Weisheipl, "Thomas d'Aquino and Albert his Teacher," 12.

³¹ Cf. a. 51: Quod vero quinquagesimo primo ponitur ... falsum est, et improprie dictum, secundum quod sonant verba. Contradicit enim sibi ipsi, si stricte verba discutiantur. ... Haec autem falsitas contingit non ex malo intellectu scribentis, sed quia nimis truncate scripsit.

in the real thing, i.e., in God — (*in se ipsis vero re*) according to both their nature and their notions. Aquinas notes that this is wrongly expressed and strictly false if we look at the meaning of the words, because it is contradictory. This contradiction — concedes Aquinas — is not due to a wrong understanding of the issue by the writer, but rather to his abrupt literary style, with a tendency to write extremely short or truncated sentences.

The problems under discussion are indeed difficult and demand very careful wording in order to avoid even the slightest possibility of interpreting — wrongly — that to acknowledge the existence of divine attributes implies a real multiplicity in God. Aquinas explains the obscure places and corrects the inaccurate terms, exposing their different meanings and pointing to the most appropriate among them.³² There is no further documentation of a case against Tarantasia. It seems that the Master General accepted Thomas' evaluation and ordered the case closed, and it is even possible that Tarantasia never knew about this consultation, given its confidential character.

The attack against Tarantasia was not isolated, but one more chapter in a long history of public debate on various doctrinal issues that often evolved in the form of personal accusations. In fact, in 1241, the Chancellor of the University of Paris and Alexander of Hales, *Magister* of the University at the time, published a list of ten erroneous philosophical and theological propositions.³³ According to Matthew of Paris, these propositions were taught among others by some young Dominican teachers.³⁴ Following this condemnation, the Chapter General of the Dominican order of 1244 admonished the Dominican teachers not to teach "new doctrines" but only the most common and

³² For a detailed analysis of Aquinas' interpretation of the position of Peter of Tarantasia on the divine attributes in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*, cf. B.M. Lemaigre, "Perfection de Dieu. ..."

³³ Cf. *Chartularium universitatis parisiensis* I, part 1, no. 128, p. 170-172. On the doctrinal disputes in this period, cf. H-F. Dondaine, "Cognoscere de Deo 'quid est'".

³⁴ Matthaeei Parisiensis, *Chronica majora: A.D. 1240 to A.D. 1247*, vol. 4, 280-283 [ad 1243]. Cf. 280: Incipiebant magistri Theologiae, praecipue tamen praecipui Praedicatorum et Minorum lectores, disputare et disserere subtilius et celsius, quam decuit aut expedivit. Qui non verentes tangere montes, a gloria Dei opprimendi, nitebantur secreta Dei investigabilia temere perscrutari, et iudicia Dei, quae sunt 'abyssus multa', nimis praesumptuose indagare.

accepted.³⁵ St. Albert the Great must have suffered some of these accusations of teaching novelties, for he bitterly complains in his Commentary to the Epistles of the Pseudo-Dionysius about some who object to the use of philosophy “like irrational animals, blaspheming about that of which they are ignorant.” Young Thomas was a student in Paris and Albert’s secretary at the time, and all this must have left a deep impression on him.³⁶

This widespread atmosphere of mutual accusations of teaching heretical doctrines was fueled by the irruption of a vast body of philosophical and scientific literature of Arabic and Greek origin, newly translated and previously inaccessible to the Christian West, that reached the Arts and Theology Faculties of the University of Paris and prompted the ecclesiastical authorities to take some defensive measures until the contents of these works could be assessed.

Thomas taught as Master of Theology at Paris University during the period 1252-1259, and after his brief sojourn in Italy he was summoned back to teach in 1269-1272. During these two periods he himself was involved in the fray. In 1268 he composed *De 108 articulis* to defend Tarantasia. In 1270 he wrote *De unitate intellectus* against a specific movement in the Faculty of Arts led by Siger of Brabant and later known as Latin Averroism or Radical Aristotelianism. The Bishop of Paris condemned the theses taught by this movement in the same year.

Finally in 1277 Bishop Tempier condemned publicly another list of propositions taught by various Arts and Theology Masters. Some of these propositions targeted also Aquinas’ views. It seems that this new condemnation marked the triumph of a highly conservative group of theologians within the Theology Faculty who disagreed with the new doctrinal developments.³⁷ Wielockx has

³⁵ Cf. *Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis praedicatorum* I, 29, ll. 5-6 [Bononiae ad 1244]: Item. Monemus lectores, quod novas opiniones non inveniant, sed communiores et magis approbatas sequantur. Cf. P. Mandonnet, “Thomas d’Aquin, novice prêcheur, IV”. E. Alarcón, “Una cuestión de método ...”, 396-397.

³⁶ Cf. Alberti Magni, *Super Dionysii Epistulas: Epistula septima*, Opera Omnia, vol. 37/2, 504, ll. 28-32: Quidam, quia nesciunt, omnibus modis velint impugnare usum philosophiae, et maxime in praedicatoribus, ubi nullus eis resistit, ‘tamquam bruta animalia blasphemantes in his quae ignorant’ [*Iud.*, 10].

³⁷ Cf. J.F. Wippel, “Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277”, 239, and “The Condemnations of 1270 and 1277 at Paris”. Cf. also, Van Steenberghen, “Thomas Aquinas and Radical Aristotelianism”.

offered evidence to the fact that Bishop Tempier initiated a third inquiry specifically against Aquinas around March 1277, and then suspended it under the advice of some Roman Cardinals.³⁸

This belligerent atmosphere explains Aquinas' pains in reviewing his own early writings, particularly the parts dealing with the most controversial issues. One of the doctrines condemned in 1244 was the assertion that God is not seen directly in Heaven, but known only through a created form.³⁹ Aquinas never endorsed this view, but it was important to find a formulation of that difficult issue that satisfied all the parties. While considering the issues under discussion, Aquinas would have reviewed his own *Commentary* to Book I of the *Sentences*. The collation of his text written more than ten years before and the current debates may have prompted Aquinas to undertake a new redaction — the *Roman Commentary* — in order to clarify and improve the difficult parts.⁴⁰ As J.F. Boyle suggests, Aquinas probably abandoned this project once it became clear to him that the ordering of the articles that the structure of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard demanded was unsuitable for his own conception of an organic teaching of Theology. He undertook then the redaction of the *Summa Theologiae*, with a structure that fully met this goal.⁴¹ Aquinas, who had probably disputed the *Quaestio de attributis* orally around the period of composition of the *Summa's* 1st Book, took care that it be inserted into his first *Commentary* in order to have any doubts regarding the orthodoxy of his own old work dispelled.

³⁸ R. Wielockx, *Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia* III, 1. Apologia, p. 92-96 and 215-224.

³⁹ Cf. Matthaëi Parisiensis, *Chronica majora*, vol. 4, 281: Primus eorum error erat, quod divina essentia in se nec ab homine glorificato nec ab angelo videtur nec videbitur. Ad hunc praelati: Huic errorem prohibemus, et assertores ejus et defensores excommunicamus. Firmiter enim credimus et asserimus, quod Deus in sua essentia vel substantia vel natura videbitur ab angelis sanctis et ab homine glorificato. Cf. P.M. De Contenson, "La théologie de la vision de Dieu au début du XIII siècle"; H.F. Dondaine, "L'object et le 'medium' de la vision béatifique chez les théologiens du XIII siècle"; J.-P. Torrell, "La vision de Dieu per essentiam selon Saint Thomas D'Aquin".

⁴⁰ It has been suggested that Peter of Tarantasia also wrote a second Commentary himself. Cf. D.O. Lottin, "Pierre de Tarentaise a-t-il remanié son Commentary sur les Sentences?" However, this hypothesis has since been rejected. Cf. H.-D. Simonin, "Les écrits de Pierre de Tarantaise", 195; cf. also Lemaigre, op. cit., 205, note 49.

⁴¹ Cf. "The Ordering of Trinitarian Teaching ...", 126.

Aquinas mentions Maimonides by name neither in the *Responsio de 108 articulis* nor in the *Roman Commentary*. However, the texts related to the divine attributes in these works can be considered the framework for his explicit revision of Maimonides' position in the *Quaestio de attributis*. An explicit reference in this context constitutes a key for a correct evaluation of his place in the thought of Aquinas that illuminates the previous and subsequent quotations on the issue. The unique value of his explanation of the problem in this period results from its character of self-examination, since he reviews his former explanations in the light of current would-be accusations of having suggested misleading doctrines and seeks an improvement of his first expressions of the problem. The circumstances of the composition of these three texts suggest that Aquinas struggled for an accurate explanation of his view and sources on the issue. Moreover, an evaluation of this reference to Maimonides should be consistent with parallel ones in works composed at the same time, such as *De Potentia* and the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*. If differences are found, the texts must be considered complementary.

The next two sections review the elements involved in the dispute that ends in the redaction of the *Roman Commentary* and the *Quaestio de attributis*. The explanation takes into account the chronological order of composition of the texts while outlining the organic development of the discussion from the most general enunciation of the original *Parisian Commentary* to the most elaborated one of the *Quaestio de attributis*. These two texts describe the nature of reason and its capacity for the apprehension of a notion of God, whereas the parallel article of the *Roman Commentary* reflects on the nature of the language about God. This is the general scheme:

Aquinas' *Parisian Commentary*, d. 2, q. 1 (omitting 3 and 4):

- a. 1: On the unity of God.
- a. 2: Whether a plurality of attributes can be found in God.

Tarantasia's *Commentary*, d. 2, q. 1:

- a. 1: Whether God is one by essence or more.
- a. 2: Whether there is a multiplicity of attributes in God.
- a. 3: According to what do attributes differ.

Aquinas' *Responsio de 108 articulis* (a. 1-3)

Aquinas' *Quaestio de attributis* (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3): "Whether the diversity of *rationes*, by which attributes differ, is only in the intellect or also in God."

This article is divided in the following questions:

1. What this *ratio* is according to which we say that attributes differ;
2. In which sense it is said that the *ratio* is or is not in something;
3. Whether the diverse *rationes* of the attributes are in God or not;
4. Whether the multiplicity of these *rationes* is only on the part of our intellect, or is in some way also on the part of the thing.

Aquinas' *Roman Commentary* (9v-10v): "Whether the names said of God signify one or many things in God".

The answer is divided in three parts, according to the following questions:

1. Whether the divine names mean one or many [things] in God;
2. Whether they are synonyms;
3. Whether they differ only according to our apprehension or also in God.

2. *The Reasons for the Dispute*

This section reviews Aquinas' first explanation of the issue in the *Parisian Commentary* (d. 2, q. 1, a. 1 and 2) and Maimonides' place in it, Tarantasia's expansion of the original question with the addition of a. 3, and Aquinas' refutation to the objections against it in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*. We do not have the list of the 108 articles as Aquinas received it but can only count on his responses, through which it is possible to conjecture what the objections were. I focus on the first three, which deal with the problem of the divine attributes and their multiplicity. Objection 1 in the list of accusations is taken from d. 2, q. 1, a. 2. Objections 2 and 3 target the doctrine contained in Tarantasia's article 3.

(a) *Aquinas' In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1

Aquinas' original distinction 2 begins the reflection on the nature of God, with the description, in article 1, of the divine

essence as the unique origin of everything and a detailed explanation of the divine unity. Article 2 confronts the question of the compatibility of a plurality of attributes in God with that unity. The second part of the distinction (a. 3 and a. 4 before the insertion of the *Quaestio de attributis*) is devoted to the divine Persons.

The articles are enunciated as follows:

- a. 1: On the unity of God.
- a. 2: Whether a plurality of attributes can be found in God.
- a. 3: Whether that unity is compatible with a plurality of Persons.
- a. 4: If compatible, whether that plurality is a real one, or just in our intellect.

Article 1 follows Dionysius Areopagita's assertion that any multiplicity proceeds from a unity, describing the divine being as the origin and end of the whole creation. The universality of things necessarily originates in and gravitates towards the principle of everything, God, and this — adds Aquinas — “is assumed by faith and demonstrated by reason.”⁴² The unity of God and the creatures' attraction towards Him according to their nature is a *suppositum* of Aquinas' reflection on the issue of the human knowledge of God. The fact that faith also proposes these truths does not mean that they are above the reach of created intellects, it only confirms the natural data and eases the way. Reason apprehends in the world perfections, which are presupposed by each other, leading up to one single principle that contains all. Each one is the foundation for the other, with life included in intelligence and being (*esse*) presupposed in life. Despite their multiplicity in the world, perfection as such entails unity and the cause displays more perfection than the effects. Therefore, the First Cause is necessarily the utmost perfection, one and simple, according to the principle that what is one in the cause is multiple in the effects. The Creator is consequently attributed several notions (*rationes*) of perfections like “wisdom”, “life”, and so on, according to the different perfections found in the plurality of created beings.⁴³

⁴² *In I Sent.* d. 2, q. 1, a. 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.* ad 1.

Article 2 focuses on the compatibility of a multiplicity of attributes with the unity of the divine essence. Aquinas stresses that the origin of all created perfections is God, meaning that all of them are really in God but according to a more excellent way, i.e., as in their cause. Any created perfection originates in the Creator and any imperfection in the limitation, i.e., partial nonbeing, of the creature itself. The perfection as it is found in God, is in Him “in a most noble way and devoid of any imperfection” because God is the cause of the perfections found in creatures. Its multiplicity is real among creatures, and the same perfections are found in their most true meaning and nature in the divine essence. They all refer to God’s simple nature, as the exemplar of every created perfection, not only as regards His knowledge of the perfections that He has created in the world, but also in the sense that these are really found in God’s nature. Being multiple in the created world they are one in God because they are found in Him as in their most excellent fulfillment “for the same reason that they are diverse in creatures”.⁴⁴

But an objection stands in the way: if the divine being is absolutely simple and the diverse attributes are in fact one with the divine essence, it could be that the issue is just about names instead of about a real multiplicity of attributes. This would easily preserve the unity of the divine essence. Thomas answers that each divine perfection is in fact the same divine essence and that all of them are really one and the same in God. However, each perfection has a *ratio*, i.e., some notion or reason by which it differs from the others. Each perfection is in God according to its own *ratio*. If the differences among perfections are based on their *rationes*, this diversity cannot be due only to the intellect that apprehends them, but also to the nature of God himself.

The only possibility of truly knowing God seems to be knowing the perfections as they exist in the created world, which the intellect apprehends as effects of the divine perfection. Inasmuch as God is the cause of the created beings the divine essence contains the innermost signification of the attributes. The possibility

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* a. 2, Solutio: Unde oportet quod omnes nobilitates omnium creaturarum inveniantur in Deo nobilissimo modo et sine aliqua imperfectione: et ideo quae in creaturis sunt diversa, in Deo propter summam simpliciter sunt unum.

of grasping the true essence of each created perfection and of truly attributing it to God demonstrates that God can be neither an equivocal nor a univocal cause of things. In fact the effects are similar to God but they are not divine, because the similarity is found in the community of *rationes* of the perfections between God and creatures, but the analogy between them preserves the infinite distance between their way of being in the cause and the effect. St. Thomas' preference is again for the doctrine of analogy of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

Aquinas concludes two things: first, what causes the created perfections to be multiple is the nature of created beings, whereas what causes the divine perfections to be one is the nature of the divine being. Every name of a perfection corresponds to something in reality, whether it be found in the cause or in the effect. On the other hand, the very essence of each perfection is exclusive to that perfection and that is what makes it different in reality from the rest and common to the cause and to the effect. This is clear in the created world because multiplicity is one of its basic and most universal properties. The created intellect grasps these perfections, since it is natural for it to apprehend limited and multiple things. By doing so the intellect is faithful to their nature, since they are really diverse among themselves. Therefore, he asserts that the way for all divine perfections to exist in the simplicity of the divine essence is by "all of them being one because of God" (*sunt unum re*). If their real differences were to be denied the very essence of all of them would be lost, thereby compromising the possibility for the intellect to apprehend any perfection, created or uncreated. Both the nature of perfections and the nature of God prompts the intellect to acknowledge this but after this the created intellect stops, because it cannot apprehend how this unity can be.

Aquinas also analyzes two prior answers to the problem. The first one reduces the real diversity between the attributes to the ones found among creatures, i.e., at the ontological level of the created world. This interpretation which "some" uphold — he explains — is unacceptable because it overturns the nature of the relation of causality, according to which the cause owns the precedence for any natural property found in the effect. There is a hierarchy in the way two terms of a relation of causality are considered. In this kind of relation, it is the cause which is the origin of the

name attributed to the effect and not the effect that originates the attribution of an essential name to the cause. Thus, there is wisdom in the world because the cause of that wisdom is essentially wise, and not the other way around. This can be understood by considering that it would be unreasonable to think that God is said to be wise, good, and so on only as long as there are creatures that are wise, good, etc. According to the other solution, the different names applied to God would be synonyms. Their diversity would be reduced to that of names, i.e., at the linguistic level only. This cannot be either, because it contradicts the real difference perceived between their meanings in the created world. Both at the ontological and at the linguistic level the preference is to be given to God, as the origin of all perfections and of their names. The fact that He is the cause of things validates the attribution of these names not just as a concession to linguistics but as the most proper use of these names and in reference to the most appropriate holder of these perfections.⁴⁵

The first opinion is that of Maimonides, as Aquinas confirms ten years later when he inserts the new article with an explicit analysis of Maimonides' position. In fact, in *Guide* I, 53 the latter rejects the position of those who acknowledge some kind of divine attributes different from the divine essence in order to explain the different notions of God. He proposes instead reducing all attributes to God's actions in the world and their multiplicity to that of the created beings:

Rather have these attributes and names been thought of as proof of the diverse operations between God and the things created by Him. ... Thus it has become clear to you that these attributes too are not to be considered in reference to His substance, but in reference to the things that are created.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2, Solutio: Quidam autem dicunt, quod ista attributa non differunt nisi penes connotata in creaturis, quod non potest esse; tum quia causa non habet aliquid ab effectu, sed e converso: unde Deus non dicitur sapiens quia ab eo est sapientia, sed potius res creata dicitur sapiens in quantum imitatur divinam sapientiam. Tum quia ab aeterno creaturis non existentibus, etiamsi nunquam futurae fuissent, fuit verum dicere, quod est sapiens, bonus, et huiusmodi. Nec idem omnino significaretur per unum et per aliud, sicut idem significatur per nomina synonyma.

⁴⁶ *Guide* I, 53, 122; *Dux*, I, LII, fol. XXr: Dispositiones autem et nominationes cogitaverunt in probationem diversarum operationum inter creatorem et sua causata. ... Sic ergo probatur tibi quod istae dispositiones non conveniunt ei cum intendimus in substantiam eius, sed cum intendimus in creata ipsius.

Maimonides demands a complete detachment between the created perfections and God, as a way to preserve the divine transcendence and unity. Aquinas acknowledges this need but also the importance of preserving the possibility of a rational apprehension of God. This can be assured only if the divine attributes contain a real reference to God's essence, whose nature Aquinas is trying to define, and not just to His effects.

Summarizing Aquinas' answer to the problem of the divine attributes in these two articles: the unity of God is a fact that is not only asserted by faith but can also be demonstrated by reason, which means that the knowledge of the divine nature is somehow natural to the human intellect. The plurality of beings in the world is precisely the way to prove the existence of the single Cause or First Principle, since the multiplicity in the world can be explained only if there is a First Principle of everything that is the source of every perfection in the world. This is demonstrated through the nature of created perfections: each one presupposes those that apply to a wider fringe of reality, up to the one that comprises the universality of things: the perfection of being itself. The summit of the hierarchy of perfections encompasses all and transcends them, inasmuch as it contains them in a perfect unity and simplicity, devoid of any fragmentation or division. The only way to explain the presence of perfections in creatures is to acknowledge that these perfections have a real presence in God, the cause of creatures. Acknowledging only an equivocal relation and therefore denying a link between the cause and the effects contradicts the experience of other causal relations in the world, in which the effect always displays qualities of the cause, and would compromise the possibility of knowing the cause itself. God as cause, is therefore, the foundation for the intellect's capacity for a natural knowledge of His nature through His effects, i.e., through the world, and the real multiplicity of perfections in the world is the foundation of the real plurality of divine attributes.

However, several questions arise: how can attributes differ not only in the intellect but also in God and preserve at the same time God's simplicity and oneness? What does it mean that attributes are different in the intellect or in God? In what sense are they different? What is it that allows attributing the same perfections and their names to God and to creatures?

Aquinas does not address these questions here but is forced to review them in the wake of the accusations against Tarantasia, who tries to answer them in his own *Commentary on the Sentences* after a thorough study of Aquinas' second distinction. Considering that Aquinas' brief explanation on the meaning of *ratio* is not enough, Tarantasia concludes that the issue is worth a whole new article. In fact, the existence of this notion explains the diversity among attributes and how the intellect is enabled to acknowledge the existence of a multiplicity of attributes in God and still preserve the unity and simplicity of the divine essence.

(b) Tarantasia's Commentary and Aquinas' Responsio de 108 articulis

In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Tarantasia divides Aquinas' original *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1 into two *quaestiones*, devoting the first one to the unity of God and the divine attributes and the second to the Trinity of Persons, with the following articles:⁴⁷

- a. 1: Whether God is one by essence, or more.
- a. 2: Whether there is any multiplicity of attributes in God.
- a. 3: According to what are attributes diverse.

The second question deals with the multiplicity of Persons in the Trinity, and it is divided into the following articles:

- a. 1: Whether there is a plurality of Persons in God.
- a. 2: Whether the plurality of divine Persons is only the Trinity.
- a. 3: Whether the Trinity of Persons is a real one, or only in the intellect.

These six articles are clearly an expansion of Aquinas' four in the *Parisian Commentary*. Article 3 of the first question elaborates on the source of the multiplicity of the divine attributes and their presence in God. Aquinas had dealt with this issue in article 2 by simply asserting that each one is in God according to its innermost *ratio* (*secundum sui verissimam rationem*).

The contents of Aquinas' article 2 have already been analyzed in the previous section. According to the article's title, the question only concerns the presence of a real multiplicity

⁴⁷ Innocentii quinti pape qui antea Petrus de Tarantasia dicebatur In IV libros Sententiarum Commentaria, *In I Sent.* d. 2, q. 1-2.

of attributes in the divine essence. This is the problem's traditional formulation, to which Maimonides understandingly answers in the negative, since real multiplicity is only perceived in the created world and this notion openly contradicts the divine simplicity as it is apprehended by natural reason. Aquinas approaches the problem at the ontological level and solves it by appealing to the experience of causal relations in the world, which require that whatever is present in the effect be also in the cause. In general terms, it is appropriate to say that the multiplicity of created perfections is also found in God, though according to the divine way. This answer guarantees the possibility of certain knowledge of God by a created intellect.

Tarantasia, however, demands a further definition of the problem. The divine attributes are not a problem exclusively ontological. In fact, the reality of the divine essence is an issue far from controversial, since all coincide in acknowledging God's utmost simplicity and perfection. The main point at stake is at the epistemological level, i.e., how can the human knowledge of God be explained without distorting the correct notion of the divine nature. Therefore, he develops the explanation of the nature of the human notions of God already inchoate in Aquinas' teachings. The collation of the two versions of a. 2 shows that Tarantasia gives a summarized account of Aquinas' explanation and cuts it short in order to expand the argument in the new article 3:⁴⁸

⁴⁸ These texts in the two Commentaries have been collated and analyzed by H.-F. Dondaine, *Responsio de 108 articulis*, Preface, 265; and B.M. Lemaigre, cf. 206-207.

Thomas Aquinas:

Anything that is positive and good in creatures is all from the Creator. Any imperfection is not from Him but comes from creatures, inasmuch as they are *ex nihilo*. Whatever is the cause of something owns it in a more excellent and noble way.

Therefore, it behooves that all perfections found in creatures be found in God in an excellent way and devoid of any defect. And for the same reason that [perfections] are diverse in creatures, they are one in God, due to His eminent simplicity.

Therefore we ought to say that there is wisdom, goodness, and so forth in God, and that each one of them is the same divine essence, thus all of them being one because of God (*sunt unum re*).

And because each one of them is in God according to its own innermost *ratio* (*secundum sui verissimam rationem*), and the *ratio* of wisdom is not the *ratio* of goodness according to each one's own meaning, it remains that they are notionally different (*sunt diversa ratione*) not only on the part of the intellect that apprehends them but also on the part of

the thing's own nature. And therefore God is not at all an equivocal cause of things: because He produces effects similar to Himself, in His own likeness, not univocally, but analogically.

Peter of Tarantasia:

Any perfection found in a creature is also found in its first cause according to a more perfect way, which is the way of a cause that is without a cause itself. Any perfection that is found in a creature is originated in God. Matter or nothingness, however, originates imperfection.

Any perfection found in creatures is found in God most truthfully, but according to the divine way. Every perfection is in God most truthfully.

Since one thing is the true notion (*ratio*) of wisdom, and another the true notion of goodness, it behooves that these attributes differ in Him due to their notions (*ratione*), because they are truly simple in Him according to the divine way, being the same in Him (*idem in re*). And this because being diverse in creatures, they are in God as in one, inasmuch as they are in Him in a more excellent way.

Aquinas asserts in article 2 that each perfection is in God “according to its innermost *ratio*” and remains different from the others on the part of the intellect and also on the part of the divine nature. Tarantasia’s article 3 answers the demand for a further clarification in order to preserve the divine simplicity and inquires what determines the distinction between the attributes. The article begins with a reference to Averroes’ doctrine on the divine attributes, who writes in his *Metaphysica* that the multiplicity of perfections is in God only according to their notions as they are grasped by a finite intellect. Averroes concludes that the *rationes* according to which the divine perfections differ from one another are nothing in God (*in re*) but exist only in the intellect.⁴⁹ Tarantasia rejects the explanation because this would mean that every perfection is attributed to God and to creatures in an equivocal way and none of them would have anything in common with the divine perfection. The problem of an alleged multiplicity in God is thus solved, but an at least equally serious problem takes its place: it would be impossible to know the divine perfections from the created ones. Since the created world is the only way for the creature to know the Creator and neither univocality nor equivocality apply to both, Tarantasia concludes that the *ratio* of every perfection is the same in God and in the creatures in an analogical way and that the explanation of the apparent multiplicity in God relies entirely in a correct explanation of the nature of the *ratio*.⁵⁰

He defines the *ratio* as “the intention of the perceivable by the intellect that is signified by the name of a thing or by its definition.”⁵¹ This notion of the thing apprehended by the intellect is the *conditio sine qua non* for the imposition of a name to a thing. It is the element in the intellect that matches the name orally given and the thing’s essence itself that is both

⁴⁹ Cf. Tarantasia *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, obj. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* sc. 4: Si aequivoce diceretur sapientia de creata et increata, nec esset aliquo modo una secundum analogiam ratio utriusque, non duceret sapientia creata in cognitionem sapientiae increatae; similiter nec bonitas duceret in cognitionem bonitatis divinae; ducit autem; ergo aliquo modo una est ratio utrobique secundum analogiam; ergo vera ratio horum est in Deo. Sed veris rationibus differunt; ergo, etc.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Respondeo: Ratio proprie dicitur intentio intellectu perceptibilis, quae per nomen rei alicuius, vel per eius definitionem significatur.

named and apprehended. The *ratio* is what the intellect apprehends of the real thing, and can be produced in three different ways:

1. It can be founded totally upon the thing itself, and in this case the *ratio* is the similarity of the thing in the intellect, e.g., the notion of “man”, which perfectly matches the real man;
2. It can be founded totally upon the intellect, as it is the case with the *ratio* of “chimera”, which does not have any equivalence in reality;
3. It can be founded partly upon the thing itself and partly upon the intellect, as in the case of the universals.

The divine perfections belong to the third case. In the given example, the universals are founded first of all upon the multiplicity of beings that belong to the same kind, but they also owe their existence to the community of essence, which the intellect perceives among the individuals of that kind.⁵² The apprehension of the perfections in the created world and their attribution to the Creator according to the divine nature is explained as follows: the notion of each perfection is founded partly upon the nature of God and partly upon the human intellect. God is the first source of the created perfections, as long as He is absolutely perfect and the source of every perfection. But they are in Him as in one single and simple reality, which is a kind of reality that far surpasses the human way of apprehending. Attributes are also founded upon the human intellect, which is limited and depends on the *species* or forms of created beings for its apprehension. These attributes are multiple in the created world because creatures are multiple, being one in God because of the supreme perfection of the divine nature. Since the perfection of the divine essence cannot be apprehended in one single notion by a created intellect, it has to be expressed according to different

⁵² *Ibid.* Huiusmodi vero conceptio tripliciter sit, aut enim totaliter fundatur supra rem, ita quod intellectus rei accipit similitudinem, ut ratio hominis; aut totaliter super intellectum, ut ratio Chimerae; aut partim super rem, partim super intellectum, ut ratio universalis. Universalis enim natura fundamentum primum habet super multitudinem, vel similitudinem essentialium individuum; fundamentum vero proximum, a quo accipit unitatem, super intellectum accipientem in pluribus aliquid, ut unum, quod tamen secundum rem in illis est plurificatum.

notions, which correspond to the different ways that creatures have of participating in the same divine perfection.⁵³ Only in this way it is possible to attribute perfections apprehended in the created world to God. The solution to the problem, according to Tarantasia, consists of distinguishing between the roles of the real thing and of the human intellect in the production of the notion apprehended. The perfections are both in reality and in the intellect, but in a different way. The multiplicity of notions that express the divine perfection is in the intellect, but the cause of their verification is in the thing itself, i.e., in God. It is in God that the notions of perfection find their truth.⁵⁴ This is — notes Tarantasia — contrary to what happens with the universals, which exist only in the intellect, but the cause or their verification is in the multiplicity of the individuals that belong to the same kind.⁵⁵ Considered globally his achievement is remarkable, but his particular expression of the problem earns the accusations of an anonymous objector and Aquinas must hasten to his defense, collected in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*.

The objection to Tarantasia's article 2 claims that by referring to the divine essence as the true foundation of that multiplicity, he advocates multiplicity for the divine essence. However — argues the objector — a simple essence cannot be the foundation for any multiplicity. The issue is considered at the ontological level only, and in Aquinas' opinion this objection can be easily

⁵³ *Ibid.* Dico ergo, quod ratio qua differunt attributa divina partim fundatur super rem, partim super intellectum. Super rem quidem, quia in Deo, cum sit perfectissimus, est universaliter veritas omnium perfectionum, sed in ipso est ut unum per modum simplicem, qui excedit intelligentiae nostrae modum; super intellectum vero, quia intellectus noster imperfectus est, et creaturam speciebus immixtus, in quibus haec sunt diversa secundum rem: ideo omnes divinae perfectionis modos, qui in Deo sunt unum, non potest sub una similitudine apprehendere, sed sub diversis, sicut et creaturae diversimode participant esse divinum.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* ad 4: diversitas rationis bonitatis et sapientiae, dicitur fundari in intellectu nostro, ut in subiecto, quod praestat fundamentum et causam sui esse, quia accidens habet esse per subiectum; in Deo vero sicut in obiecto, quod praestat fulcimentum et causam sui veritati, quia pluralitati istarum rationum respondet aliquid in Deo.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* in fine: Ipsa ergo multitudo rationum in intellectu est; sed causa verificationis multitudinis in re ipsa; sicut e contrario unitas universalis in intellectu est, sed causa verificationis illius unitatis in singularibus.

refuted by recalling that the key to the solution is in explaining the nature of the intellectual notions. The objector wrongly interprets these words when he understands them as an argument in favor of the existence of a real multiplicity in the divine essence because, although the way Tarantasia expressed the idea could be taken in such a fashion, this is not the mind of the writer. When he writes that they “differ *in God* according to their notions,” he means that the perfections differ among themselves according to the different concepts apprehended by our intellect, and this diversity remains when they are *said* (i.e., predicated) of God. These concepts represent the one single divine essence, though imperfectly and through multiplicity. The multiplicity of attributes in God is therefore *ratione*, due to their notions, and should not be considered to be in God.⁵⁶

Aquinas fully subscribes to Tarantasia’s explanations and devotes the first *quaestiones* of the *Responsio de 108 articulis* to elaborate on the issue. Aquinas’ response to the anonymous objector points to his bad reading or understanding of Tarantasia’s words. He even suggests the possibility of an intention to distort their meaning in some places. Aquinas also blames Tarantasia for the wrong interpretation but, again, due to his hasty literary style rather than to a theological flaw in his position. However, the study of the articles has given Aquinas the opportunity to focus on a crucial distinction for his doctrine of the divine attributes: that between the ontological level of the perfections as they exist in creatures and in God and the epistemological-linguistic level of their apprehension and naming. He draws the following conclusions, already implicit in his previous review of the problem.

First, the notion of *ratio* is defined as “the apprehension of the intellect signified by the name,” and represents the key issue in the articulation between the levels that enables certain knowledge of God in this life.⁵⁷ The origin of the difficulty is God’s

⁵⁶ *Responsio de 108 articulis*, a. 1: Calumpniöse autem contra hoc obicitur quod ipsa differentia sapientiae et bonitatis in Deo sit et non solum in intellectu creato; non enim hoc intellexit scribens, sed quod in Deo, (idest) cum de Deo dicuntur, differunt ratione, (idest) secundum diversas conceptiones intellectus nostri, quae unam divinam essentiam representent, licet imperfecte.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* nomina autem sunt signa intellectualium conceptionum, unde ratio uniuscuiusque rei significata per nomen est conceptio intellectus quam significat nomen.

infinite nature, which cannot be comprehended, nor contemplated by a limited intellect *in statu viae*. He cannot be grasped in His limits, which he does not have, comprehension meaning not merely the apprehension of a reality, but its complete understanding. Therefore, it is not possible to give a definition of the divinity, since to define entails perceiving the limits of a thing. However the created things' limited perfections tell us something about the uncreated perfection of the divine being.⁵⁸ Inasmuch as a creature possesses a certain perfection, e.g., wisdom, power, or will, it displays similarity with God. They participate in the divine perfections in different degrees and therefore represent in their limitation the infinite divine perfection. This ontological community of perfections in God and creatures is thus incomplete: the way of perfections in God is in an eminent manner because the divine essence is absolutely simple, whereas limited perfections are present in the created world according to multiplicity.⁵⁹ Therefore, everything that is said of God is related to a multiplicity in the created world, but its meaning corresponds to a reality in the divine essence.

Second, the *ratio* of each perfection is really different from that of the others, and while being attributed to God, every perfection is considered according to that which is proper to it and makes it different from the rest.⁶⁰ Therefore, God is really represented ontologically by creatures — though in different degrees — and epistemologically by the apprehensions of created perfections, called *rationes*. This means that the ontological and intellectual dimensions of the attributes are intrinsically

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Intellectus autem noster Deum comprehendere non potest, nec ipsum in sua essentia videre in statu viae, sed aliquo modo ex rebus creatis ipsum cognoscit.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Diversae autem perfectiones rerum creaturarum, puta sapientia, voluntas et huiusmodi, repraesentant quidem imperfecte divinam perfectionem. Ex hoc enim quod aliqua creatura est sapiens, aliquo modo accedit ad divinam similitudinem; et similiter ex hoc quod est potens, et ex hoc quod est volens: ita tamen quod quicquid perfectionis seu nobilitatis competit creaturae, secundum haec diversa eminentius competit Deo secundum simplicem suam essentiam.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Sic igitur bonitas, sapientia et potentia, et si quid aliud huiusmodi de Deo dicimus, differunt ratione propter diversas conceptiones intellectus nostri, sed sunt idem re, quia essentia divina est una et eadem quam intellectus noster diversis conceptionibus repraesentat, sicut etiam diversae res repraesentant essentiam divinam diversis formis.

dependent on one another, intertwined due to the fact that the *rationes* are of an intellectual nature, being in the intellect but truly corresponding to something in reality, which is the thing represented by the notion. Aquinas introduces here a slight correction to Tarantasia, who had asserted that the notions are in the intellect as in their subject and in God as in their object. This terminology could induce the reader to pay attention only to the epistemological dimension and miss the ontological aspect of the *rationes*. Thus, Aquinas prefers to say that this apprehension is found in God “as in the thing represented.”⁶¹

Third, the intellect must issue a judgement about the truth of the apprehension’s reference to the reality represented. If the notion in the intellect cannot be assimilated to the real thing, then it is not a true notion of that thing and the apprehension of the intellect would be false. In the case of the knowledge of God, the divine essence is represented according to the limited, imperfect way of an intellectual creature, which is the single cause of the multiplicity of notions attributed to God, but it is nevertheless a true apprehension.⁶²

Finally, all the perfections apply to the divine essence, but this does not justify their being reduced to one as the divine essence is one because each one expresses something different about the divine perfection. God is necessarily the foundation of all the true conceptions of the intellect about Him just as his being is also the foundation of all the created beings. Therefore, what is one and single can in fact be the foundation for a multiplicity and this is so both at the intellectual and the ontological levels. God is represented not only by the intellect but also by the created nature in the multiplicity of beings, notwithstanding the divine unity and simplicity. Moreover, the multiplicity of notions

⁶¹ Aquinas writes “repraesentantes essentiam suam suo modo” or “repraesentatur per unamquamque conceptionem intellectus nostri”. Cf. Lemaigre, *supra*, 214.

⁶² *Responsio de 108 articulis*, a. 2: Ex praemissis etiam patet quod sanum intellectum habere potest quod secundo ponitur, scilicet: “ratio qua differunt divina attributa partim fundatur super rem, partim super intellectum”. Oportet tamen intelligi quod aliter et aliter fundatur super utrumque. Nam rationes quibus attributa differunt, fundantur in intellectu nostro quia sunt in eo sicut in subiecto; fundantur autem super rem quia sunt similitudines quaedam repraesentantes essentiam divinam suo modo: sic enim dicitur ratio lapidis fundari super rem in quantum conceptio intellectus repraesentat lapidem.

is correctly expressed by a diversity of divine names, which are thus properly attributed to Him without offense to the divine simplicity.⁶³

Aquinas concludes that the multiplicity is not an inherent aspect of the perfections but a consequence of their limited existence in the created world. This multiplicity is also an aspect of the nature of the intellect, which produces the notions of God's perfections. It is possible to say that God is the foundation of the multiplicity of perfections and their names in the sense that they all truthfully express the divine perfection, the divine essence being the cause of the verification of every perfection, of every notion, but not of their multiplicity.⁶⁴ Several *quaestiones* later he suggests a more accurate expression of the issue: the divine essence is one single thing to which several perfections are attributed. These perfections are different in God only according to the notions apprehended by the intellect, but in the created things these perfections are really different, both according to their specific nature and according to their notions (*rationes*).⁶⁵ The ontological and the logic-linguistic levels are hereby clearly differentiated, and their roles in the process of knowledge of God are clarified. The next section focuses on Aquinas' two texts of this period of revision of his *Commentary* that again address the problem of the divine attributes and elucidate the whole picture of his position. The *Quaestio de attributis* reviews the ontological aspect and the parallel article of the *Roman Commentary on the*

⁶³ *Ibid.* Quod autem in contrarium obicitur, scilicet 'Id quod omnino unum est, non est diversitatis fundamentum' patet esse falsum ex praemissis: nam eadem divina essentia a diversis repraesentatur et intellectui et natura; sic autem intellexit scribens rationes diversorum attributorum fundari super essentiam divinam, sicut super repraesentatum per diversas conceptiones intellectus nostri quas nomina diversa significant.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* a. 3: Ut tamen intelligatur quod praestat fulcimentum veritati, in quantum repraesentatur per unamquamque conceptionem intellectus intelligentis huiusmodi attributa, non autem quantum ad hoc quod ipsa diversitas attributorum repraesentet aliquam diversitatem in Deo, ut in contrarium obicitur. Haec enim diversitas conceptionum seu rationum non provenit ex diversitate Dei, sed ex defectu intellectus nostri qui rem unam perfecte non potest intelligere nisi per multa, secundum quod perfectio invenitur in rebus creatis.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* a. 51: Poterat sic bene dici: essentia divina est una re, cui multa attribuntur quae in Deo differunt sola ratione, in rebus autem creatis re secundum naturas et rationes proprias.

Sentences focuses on the linguistic approach to the issue, so far little examined.

3. Aquinas' Revision of *In I Sent. d. 2, q. 1*

As has already been pointed out, St. Thomas twice wrote a revision of the first Book on the *Sentences'* articles on the divine attributes in this period (around 1265-1266): the so-called *Quaestio de attributis*, inserted into his *Parisian Commentary*, and the unfinished *Roman Commentary*. The development of the arguments shows that the possibility of naming God after a multitude of created perfections lies at the root of the problem, and the solution demands a closer examination of the nature of intellectual apprehension and its articulation with the linguistic level. Aquinas briefly presents this examination in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*. However, his broadest review of the issue is the *Quaestio de attributis*, which expands the explanations already given and completes his first redaction of the *Commentary* by integrating the twofold aspect of the problem: the multiplicity of notions or acts of apprehension and the multiplicity of names. This second aspect is reviewed *a se* in the article of the *Roman Commentary*. Both texts stress the dependence of the linguistic terms on the ontological level, which corroborates the legitimacy of human speech about God.

The collation of the two texts shows a parallel approach to the problem:

Quaestio de attributis: "Whether the diversity of *rationes*, by which attributes differ, is only in the intellect or also in God". The article's *Respondeo* is divided into the following questions:

1. What this *ratio* is according to which we say that attributes differ,
2. In which sense it is said that the *ratio* is or is not in something,
3. Whether the diverse *rationes* of the attributes are in God or not,
4. Whether the multiplicity of *rationes*, is only on the part of our intellect or is in some way also on the part of the thing.

Roman Commentary: "Whether the names said of God signify one or many things in God." The *Responsio* of the article is divided into three questions:

1. Whether the divine names mean one or many in God,
2. Whether they are synonyms,
3. Whether they differ only according to the intellect or also in God.

I will first briefly review the structure and doctrine of the *Quaestio de attributis* on the problem of the divine attributes, then analyze the *Roman Commentary*, to show that there is unity and continuity of doctrine between the two texts. The explicit references to Maimonides and Aquinas' evaluation of his position in the *Quaestio de attributis* are found in the third and fourth questions of the *Respondeo*, and will be examined first in the context of the issues dealt with in both texts, then separately and as a way of conclusion in the fourth and last section of this chapter.

(a) Aquinas' *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 (*Quaestio de attributis*)

This text is longer than the average in Aquinas' *Commentary* to Book I of the *Sentences*, probably due to its having been originally a *quaestio disputata*. It explains how God's utmost simplicity, the notions of the divine attributes and their multiplicity can be compatible. Aquinas formulates the question thus: "Whether the diversity of *rationes*, by which attributes differ, is only in the intellect or also in God."⁶⁶ This is actually the last of a fourfold question that discusses this complex issue. The origin of the problem is the fact that each *ratio* really expresses the nature of God and there are several of them, different among themselves. On one hand it could be that their plurality is only in the intellect, as some assert, but then it would be difficult to maintain their real reference to the divine nature. On the other hand, if the plurality exists also in God, that would contradict the divine simplicity.

Aquinas initially enumerates six arguments in favor of the opinion that the plurality of *rationes* according to which attributes differ is not in God, but only in the intellect that apprehends them. This would be in fact the easiest way to preserve the transcendence of God and His simplicity as rationally understood. The first argument recalls the Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy of the

⁶⁶ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3: *utrum pluralitas rationum, quibus attributa differunt, sit tantum in intellectu, vel etiam in Deo.*

multiplicity of perfections in the world and its origin in the one God. Since the intellect also proceeds from God, it is appropriate to its limited nature to apprehend according to multiplicity what is really simple.⁶⁷ The second argument is also attributed to Dionysius, but it is reminiscent of Maimonides' position as well:

If anyone while seeing God were to understand what he sees, he would not see Him but some of the things that are His. Consequently, if the said names differ according to the diverse rationes that we understand regarding them, there is nothing in God that corresponds to these rationes, but only in the things that are God's, namely creatures.⁶⁸

According to this position, any perfection apprehended by a human intellect is necessarily found in the created world and just in reference to it, for the limitation of creatures does not allow the intellect to grasp anything of the divine perfection. This reasoning would lead one to conclude, as Maimonides indeed does conclude, that when knowing the "divine" we are in fact just deepening our understanding of God's effects or actions in the world.⁶⁹ The third argument refers to Book XI of Averroes' *Metaphysica*, also quoted in Tarantasia's article 3, and draws a strict parallelism between the nature of names — to which Averroes refers — and intellectual notions. Since according to the Commentator the multiplicity of names is only in the intellect, the same should apply to the multiplicity of their notions.⁷⁰ The last three arguments are based on God's utmost simplicity,

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* arg. 1: Videtur quod pluralitas rationum secundum quas attributa differunt, nullo modo sit in Deo, sed tantum in intellectu ratiocinantis. Dicit enim Dionysius (*De div. nom.* t. 1, c. 4, col. 590): 'Omnem sanctorum theologorum hymnum invenies ad bonos thearchiae processus, manifestative et laudative Dei nominationes dividendum.' Et est sensus, quod nomina quae in laudem divinam sancti assumunt, secundum diversos divinitatis processus, quibus ipse Deus manifestatur, dividuntur. Ergo ista pluralitas non est ex parte Dei, sed ex parte diversorum effectuum, ex quibus intellectus noster Deum diversimode cognoscit et nominat.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* arg. 2: si aliquis videns Deum, intellexerit quod vidit, non ipsum vidit sed aliquid eorum quae sunt ejus. Si ergo praedicta nomina differunt secundum diversas rationes quas de eis intelleximus, istis rationibus nihil respondet quod in Deo sit, sed in his quae Dei sunt, scilicet creaturis.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Guide* I, 53, 122.

⁷⁰ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, arg. 3: Praeterea, Commentator dicit loquens de hujusmodi nominibus quod multiplicitas, quam ista nomina praetendunt, est in Deo secundum intellectum, et nullo modo secundum rem. Ergo videtur quod pluralitas harum rationum sit secundum intellectum nostrum tantum.

which would make any multiplicity incompatible with it.⁷¹ The fifth argument is similar to that of the anonymous objector in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*, who asserts that anything that is simple and one cannot be the foundation for any multiplicity and concludes that the multiplicity of notions of the divine perfections is only in the intellect.⁷² The sixth is taken from St. John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa* I, c. 2 and, like the previous one, is based on the need to preserve the divine simplicity.⁷³ All these arguments play with the three elements involved: the limited nature of the human intellect, which calls for limited objects and can only grasp God's effects in the world; the close relation between the semantic and epistemological levels; and the simplicity and unity of the divine nature.

Accordingly, the *Respondeo* explains the nature and extent of the intellectual operations and notions and the articulation between notions and names. It also stresses that the presence of the *rationes* in God should not be identified with that of a *multiplicity* as such. Aquinas' straight answer to the title's question corroborates his position in previous articles and especially in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*: wisdom, goodness, and the other perfections attributed to God are really one thing in God, but different among themselves due to their notions or *rationes*. These *rationes* consist of the apprehension of the created perfections, acknowledged as created and attributed to the divine reality that produced them as their source.

Since the understanding of the whole of Book I depends on the understanding of this question — remarks Aquinas — it is

⁷¹ *Ibid.* arg. 4: Praeterea, quidquid est in Deo, Deus est. Si ergo istae rationes secundum quas attributa differunt, sunt in Deo, ipsae sunt Deus. Sed Deus est unus et simplex. Ergo istae rationes, secundum quod in Deo sunt, non sunt plures.

⁷² *Ibid.* arg. 5: Praeterea, illud quod in se est unum omnibus modis, non est radix alicujus multitudinis in eo existentis. Sed essentia divina est una omnibus modis, quia est summe una. Ergo non potest esse radix alicujus multitudinis in ea existentis. Pluralitas ergo dictarum rationum non radicatur in essentia divina sed in intellectu tantum.

⁷³ *Ibid.* arg. 6: Praeterea, Damascenus dicit quod in Deo omnia sunt unum praeter ingenerationem et generationem, et processionem. Si ergo sapientia et bonitas et hujusmodi attributa sunt in Deo, secundum quod in ipso sunt, non habent aliquam pluralitatem. Ergo pluralitas rationum quam nomina significant, non est in Deo, sed in intellectu nostro tantum.

necessary to explain all the elements involved. He does so by dividing his answer into four questions. The first one explains what the cause is of the real diversity among the divine attributes. He calls this *ratio*. The second focuses on the kind of presence of a *ratio* in something and its peculiar nature. The third inquires whether the *rationes* of the divine attributes are in God and the reasons for it. Finally, the fourth answers the question about the presence of their multiplicity in God.

Aquinas' definition of the *ratio* in this place is similar to that in the *Responsio de 108 articulis*: the *ratio* is the intellectual apprehension of the signification of any given term. In the case of things that can be defined, the *ratio* is expressed by the definition, as the intentional reference of the concept to the real thing apprehended. However, there are some notions that do not have a definition, like the genera, e.g., quality, quantity, and so forth, which are apprehended intuitively and their meaning expressed only by their names.⁷⁴ The *ratio* is different from the concept in that the latter is always an apprehension of a finite thing that can be defined, whereas the former is the concept's intention of the real thing, and does not necessarily apply to something definable. This means that the nature of the thing meant by the *ratio* can be far greater in extent than a finite apprehension, the *ratio* referring to a real plenitude regardless of limitation and definition. It is therefore suitable for a notion of God and the divine perfections.

The notion of *ratio* is a "second attribution term" (*nomen secundae impositionis*), like the terms "genera" and "definition". This means that it does not refer directly to a thing outside the mind as a name does, but to a notion's intention in the intellect that, in its turn, refers to a real thing. This notion enables the understanding of the notion of divine wisdom and its name, although without understanding what that means in reality. The existence

⁷⁴ *Ibid. Respondeo*: Quantum ad primum pertinet, sciendum est, quod ratio, prout hic sumitur, nihil aliud est quam id quod apprehendit intellectus de significatione alicujus nominis: et hoc in his quae habent definitionem, est ipsa rei definitio, secundum quod Philosophus dicit: ratio quam significat nomen est definitio. Sed quaedam dicuntur habere rationem sic dictam, quae non definiuntur, sicut quantitas et qualitas et hujusmodi, quae non definiuntur, quia sunt genera generalissima. Et tamen ratio qualitatis est id quod significatur nomine qualitatis; et hoc est illud ex quo qualitas habet quod sit qualitas.

of such capacity in the human intellect demonstrates that the intellect is not completely subject to knowing through concepts and can apprehend things far above the creatures' limited nature.⁷⁵

Elaborating on the nature of the *ratio*, Aquinas clarifies that it is found in the intellect as in its subject. However, it does have a sort of presence in the real thing as well, since the *ratio* really means the thing outside the mind as the thing apprehended. Therefore the *ratio*'s intention is also in the thing represented as something signified by a sign, unlike the name, whose foundation is just the intellect. Only in this sense it can be said that the *ratio* is in the real thing.⁷⁶

Following Tarantasia's third article, Thomas explains the three-fold possible reference of the intellect's apprehension to the real thing: Sometimes, this apprehension is the similarity of the thing existing outside the soul. In this case, the apprehension is directly founded in reality, and it receives its authentication from it. For instance, in the case of the notion of "man."⁷⁷ Sometimes, however, the conception of the intellect is the result of a certain way of understanding what is outside the soul. This is the case of the terms of second attribution, which refer to a notion already found in the intellect and indicate a certain way of understanding the individuals in reality. Examples of these terms of second attribution are the definitions and the genera, which have as a close foundation the intellect, but refer to something in the real world as its remote

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Et sic patet quod ratio sapientiae quae de Deo dicitur, est id quod concipitur de significatione hujus nominis, quamvis ipsa sapientia divina definiri non possit. Nec tamen hoc nomen ratio significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatur per nomen sapientiae vel per aliud nomen rei; sed significat intentionem hujus conceptionis, sicut et hoc nomen definitio, et alia nomina secundae impositionis.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Et ex hoc patet secundum, scilicet qualiter ratio dicatur esse in re. Non enim hoc dicitur, quasi ipsa intentio quam significat nomen rationis, sit in re; aut etiam ipsa conceptio, cui convenit talis intentio, sit in re extra animam, cum sit in anima sicut in subjecto: sed dicitur esse in re, in quantum in re extra animam est aliquid quod respondet conceptioni animae, sicut significatum signo.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Aliquando enim hoc quod intellectus concipit, est similitudo rei existentis extra animam, sicut hoc quod concipitur de hoc nomine homo; et talis conceptio intellectus habet fundamentum in re immediate, in quantum res ipsa, ex sua conformitate ad intellectum, facit quod intellectus sit verus, et quod nomen significans illum intellectum, proprie de re dicatur.

foundation.⁷⁸ The terms of second attribution should not be confused with the terms that refer to something in reality directly by way of similarity. Finally, there are notions whose contents have no connection with reality at all. They are mere products of the intellect, as it is the case with the chimeras, which are false notions, in the sense that they are notions of nonexistent things.⁷⁹

The answer to the second question is as follows: the *ratio* is in the real thing in the sense that the notion's intention is verified in the real thing. Therefore, the thing is the *ratio*'s remote foundation, whereas the intellect is its close foundation. This happens especially in the first of the cases described above, when the apprehension of the intellect matches perfectly the thing apprehended and constitutes its similarity, but it is not discarded when the thing signified is far beyond the human mind's apprehension.⁸⁰

The previous two questions pave the way for the third one: whether the attributes' *rationes* are in God. Aquinas explains at length the positions of four authorities on the issue: Avicenna and Maimonides on one hand, and Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita and St. Anselm on the other. The first ones assert that God's pure being is identical with the divine essence and conclude that the only way to attribute names of created perfections to God is by way of negation or by way of causality, giving these two notions a particular status that will be discussed later.⁸¹ Dionysius and

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Aliquando autem hoc quod significat nomen non est similitudo rei existentis extra animam, sed est aliquid quod consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem quae est extra animam: et huiusmodi sunt intentiones quas intellectus noster adinvenit; sicut significatum huius nominis genus non est similitudo alicujus rei extra animam existentis; sed ex hoc quod intellectus intelligit animal ut in pluribus speciebus, attribuit ei intentionem generis; et huiusmodi intentionis licet proximum fundamentum non sit in re sed in intellectu, tamen remotum fundamentum est res ipsa. Unde intellectus non est falsus, qui has intentiones adinvenit.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Aliquando vero id quod significatur per nomen, non habet fundamentum in re, neque proximum neque remotum, sicut conceptio chimerae: quia neque est similitudo alicujus rei extra animam, neque consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem aliquam naturae: et ideo ista conceptio est falsa.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Unde patet secundum, scilicet quod ratio dicitur esse in re, in quantum significatum nominis, cui accidit esse rationem, est in re: et hoc contingit proprie, quando conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Quantum ad tertium, scilicet utrum rationes attributorum in Deo sint, sciendum est, quod circa hoc videtur esse duplex opinio. Quidam enim dicunt, ut Avicenna et Rabbi Moyses, quod res illa quae Deus est, est quoddam esse subsistens, nec aliquid aliud nisi esse, in Deo est: unde dicunt, quod est esse sine essentia. Omnia autem alia quae Deo attribuuntur, verificantur de Deo dupliciter, secundum eos: vel per modum negationis, vel per modum causalitatis.

St. Anselm maintain the real existence in God of the perfections found in creatures, but acknowledge that their way of being in Him is very different from their way of being in creatures. They would be unified in God and according to their highest fulfillment or plenitude, which cannot be achieved by creatures, whereas in the created world they are multiple, because God is the one single source and cause of all perfections, who knows them all and to whom all creatures imitate by the analogy of their perfections to the uncreated ones.⁸² According to them, the attributes — as apprehended by the intellect from the names of perfections — are the representation of the real thing in the intellect and God is their close foundation. Whatever is understood through the divine attributes is properly understood of God, as a knowledge of the divine essence that is, nevertheless, imperfect and insufficient.⁸³

None of the positions of the *auctoritates* in the matter fully gives Aquinas' answer to the problem of the existence of the divine attributes and of their multiplicity. He considers them rather to be partial aspects of the complete answer. These opinions — he asserts — seem to be different only if we look at them superficially, but their arguments are in fact not contrary, but correct and complementary. Avicenna and Maimonides pay attention to the created world, which is the only source for the names attributed to the divine being. They stress that every perfection exists accidentally as long as it is found in the created world because the essence cannot be identified with the existence of the created thing. These perfections cannot be properly attributed to God,

⁸² *Ibid.* Alii vero dicunt, ut Dionysius et Anselmus, quod in Deo praeminenter existit quidquid perfectionis in creaturis est. Et haec eminentia attenditur quantum ad tria: scilicet quantum ad universalitatem, quia in Deo sunt omnes perfectiones adunatae, quae non congregantur in aliqua una creatura. Item quantum ad plenitudinem, quia est ibi sapientia sine omni defectu, et similiter de aliis attributis: quod non est in creaturis. Item quantum ad unitatem; quae enim in creaturis diversa sunt, in Deo sunt unum. Et quia in illo uno habet omnia, ideo secundum illud unum causat omnia, cognoscit omnia et omnia sibi per analogiam simulantur.

⁸³ *Ibid.* Secundum ergo hanc opinionem, conceptiones quas intellectus noster ex nominibus attributorum concipit, sunt vere similitudines rei, quae Deus est, quamvis deficientes et non plene, sicut est de aliis rebus quae Deo simulantur. Unde hujusmodi rationes non sunt tantum in intellectu, quia habent proximum fundamentum in re quae Deus est. Et ex hoc contingit quod quidquid sequitur ad sapientiam, in quantum hujusmodi, recte et proprie convenit Deo.

whose being and essence are identical. Accordingly, they assert that strictly speaking there is no wisdom in God and that even the notion of essence is incorrectly attributed to the divine being, since these notions are only apprehended as partial aspects of the created reality. This explains their assertion that God is being without an essence — meaning that there is no composition in the divine being as there is in the created beings — and their wish to remove from the divine being any notion as it is apprehended from the created world. Dionysius and Anselm, on their part, stress the universal nature of perfections regardless of their presence in the creatures or in the Creator. God is the apex of all perfections and they are all found in Him in their most eminent way. The names taken from the created world are considered genuine and meaningful while attributed to the Creator, because the divine being is the fulfillment of every perfection found in the created world.⁸⁴

Aquinas concludes that these two positions do not conflict: it is just a matter of different points of view in approaching the same problem, which is complex and involves the ontological level and the epistemological one. The first two authors may not accept a positive use of the names of created perfections when attributed to God, but they acknowledge God's perfection. The other two say that, as the Creator of the world, God is the cause of every perfection and that for this reason these perfections are correctly attributed to Him. By doing so, they do not attribute to God any accident or lack of subsistence like the ones found in the created world.⁸⁵ Aquinas' answer to this question, which

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Hae autem opiniones, quamvis in superficie diversae videantur, tamen non sunt contrariae, si quis dictorum rationes ex causis assumit dicendi. Quia primi consideraverunt ipsas res creatas, quibus imponuntur nomina attributorum, sicut quod hoc nomen sapientia imponitur cuidam qualitati, et hoc nomen essentia cuidam rei quae non subsistit: et haec longe a Deo sunt: et ideo dixerunt, quod Deus est esse sine essentia, et quod non est in eo sapientia secundum se.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Alii vero consideraverunt modos perfectionis, ex quibus dicta nomina sumuntur: et, quia Deus secundum unum simplex esse omnibus modis perfectus est, qui importantur per huiusmodi nomina, ideo dixerunt, quod ista nomina positive Deo conveniunt. Sic ergo patet quod quaelibet harum opinionum non negat hoc quod alia dicit: quia nec primi dicunt aliquem modum perfectionis Deo deesse, nec secundi qualitatem, aut res non subsistentes in Deo ponerent.

inquires whether the *rationes* of the divine attributes are really found in God, is affirmative, in the sense that the most genuine foundation of the *ratio*'s meaning is the divine being, which is the only reality that fully conforms to the term's content. The created things from which the terms are taken are only recipients of perfections. These perfections are originated in the Creator and are only defectively present in creatures because their finite existence does not match perfectly the term's *ratio*.⁸⁶ The divine names, due to their semantic nature, are only found in the intellect. The names' *rationes*, instead, are found both in the intellect and in God though in different ways, and they are the condition of possibility for a true natural knowledge of the divine nature.

Finally, the fourth part of the *Respondeo* completes Aquinas' answer to both the question about the plurality of the *rationes* and its compatibility with God's simplicity, and to Maimonides' position. He explains that the plurality is due to the limitation of the human intellect and to the fact that the divine nature far exceeds it. Therefore, both the intellect's nature and God's are the cause of that plurality. When the intellect tries to grasp something of the divine reality it can do it only through a plurality of notions, which are different approaches to the same reality. The created intellect cannot produce one single notion out of the diverse apprehension of perfections, as it cannot produce one single name to match with them. This can be understood by analogy with what happens at the ontological level, where the plenitude of the divine perfection is shared among a plurality of beings because creatures are finite by nature, and none of them can cope with the plenitude of the infinite divine perfection.⁸⁷ Likewise, the different manners of apprehension originate in the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Sic ergo patet tertium, scilicet quod rationes attributorum sunt vere in Deo, quia ratio nominis magis se tenet ex parte ejus a quo imponitur nomen, quam ex parte ejus cui imponitur.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Quantum vero ad quartum, scilicet utrum pluralitas istarum rationum sit tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel aliquo modo ex parte rei, sciendum est, quod ista pluralitas rationum contingit ex hoc quod res quae Deus est, superat intellectum nostrum. Intellectus enim noster non potest una conceptione diversos modos perfectionis accipere: tum quia ex creaturis cognitionem accipit, in quibus sunt diversi modi perfectionum secundum diversas formas: tum quia hoc quod in Deo est unum et simplex, plurificatur in intellectu nostro, etiam si immediate a Deo reciperet; sicut multiplicatur processio suae bonitatis in aliis creaturis.

different aspects of the same single divine reality as it appears to the finite intellect through the created world. These aspects do not correspond to a division or composition in the divine being, but rather to the nature of the human intellect. Besides, the fact that the divine reality is simple does not mean that the names assigned to God are synonyms, but rather that each one of them conforms to the richness of the divine being in a different way, as signified by their *rationes*.⁸⁸

Aquinas outlines in this article something that had been implicit throughout the previous approaches: that language, reason, and reality must be defined and their levels articulated in order to successfully overcome the difficulty. The *ratio*, a second attribution term, explains the intellect's ability to apprehend created perfection and to properly refer it to the correlative uncreated one, which is found most truthfully in God, because of its participation in the world. These are the grounds for Aquinas' rejection of equivocality in God and creatures. Language is based on knowledge, and therefore if there is true knowledge, the name attributed is also truthful to the nature it refers to, both the created and the uncreated. That language is based on knowledge means that if wisdom were equivocally said of God and of created beings, each one of these two kinds of wisdom would have a different *ratio*. Saying "God's wisdom" and "creature's wisdom" would mean totally different things. However, we have one single *ratio* of wisdom, which is attributed both to God and to creatures. This attribution — Aquinas explains — is done by analogy.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* Unde, cum Deus secundum unam et eandem rem sit omnibus modis perfectus, una conceptione non potest integre perfectionem ejus apprehendere, et per consequens nec nominare; et ideo oportet quod diversas conceptiones de eo habeat, quae sunt diversae rationes, et quod diversa nomina imponat significantia rationes illas. Unde nomina illa non sunt synonyma, inquantum significant rationes diversas.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* sc. 3: Praeterea, sapientia non dicitur aequivoce de Deo et creatura; alias sapientia creata non duceret in cognitionem sapientiae increatae; et similiter est de potentia et bonitate et de aliis hujusmodi. Sed ea quae praedicantur de pluribus secundum rationes omnino diversas, aequivoce praedicantur. Ergo aliquo modo ratio sapientiae, secundum quod de Deo dicitur et de creaturis, est una, non quidem per univocationem, sed per analogiam: et similiter est de aliis. Sed ratio sapientiae, secundum quod de creaturis dicitur non est eadem ratio cum ratione bonitatis et potentiae. Ergo etiam secundum quod ista de Deo dicuntur, non sunt eadem rationes sed diversae.

The danger of synonymity is also avoided by this notion, since the divine perfections are really different among themselves. This is due to the *ratio* of wisdom being diverse from the *ratio* of goodness and all the other perfections, when they are apprehended in the created world. The names that are said of God are really said of Him, but their plurality does not damage the divine simplicity, because each perfection is identical with the divine in reality. We can say, for instance, that divine essence and fatherhood are the same in the real God (*idem sunt in re*), the divine essence itself being the reason for that identity in God and the *rationes* for these notions being really different. Therefore — concludes Aquinas — it is appropriate to assert that every perfection is really in God, and that all perfections are the same because of the divine essence but different among themselves due to their notions' intellectual nature.⁹⁰

The multiplicity of the names of God is addressed in its linguistic dimension in Aquinas' last relevant text of this period, the Roman *Commentary on the Sentences*. It will be reviewed now in order to complete his position on the attributes.

(b) *The Roman Commentary on the Sentences*

The single surviving manuscript of this text also contains the text of the *Parisian Commentary*, with the *Quaestio de attributis* in its proper place as article 3.⁹¹ The text of the second *Commentary* is written in the margins, correlative to the *Parisian Commentary*, with the relevant question entitled: "Whether the names said of

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* sc. 4: Praeterea, sicut Deus vere est pater, ita etiam vere est sapiens. Sed ex hoc quod vere Deus est pater, non potest dici quod ratio paternitatis sit in intellectu tantum. Ergo nec ex hoc quod Deus vere est sapiens, potest dici quod ratio sapientiae sit in intellectu tantum. Sed ratio paternitatis, quae realiter in Deo est, non est eadem cum ratione divinitatis. Unde nec paternitate est Deus, nec divinitate est pater: et tamen ista pluralitas rationum non tollit simplicitatem divinam, propter hoc quod essentia et paternitas idem sunt in re. Ergo similiter si ponamus sapientiam et essentiam esse idem re omnino, et rationes eorum diversas, non tolletur simplicitas divinae essentiae. Sed divinae essentiae simplicitas est tota causa quare ista attributa in Deo non differunt. Ergo non est inconveniens ponere, quod sapientiae et bonitatis ratio in Deo est, et tamen una non est altera, si res omnino una ponatur.

⁹¹ Cf. note 19. My quotations are from H.-F. Dondaine's partial edition of the text, numbered as piece XI (ff. 9va-10va).

God mean one or many things in God.⁹² The redaction seems to be provisional, quick notes taken for a later composition, because some objections are immediately followed by answers, which is unusual in Aquinas' style. Answers to the objections also follow the *Respondeo* in the traditional way.

Aquinas suggests in the first objection to an alleged multiplicity of the divine names the possibility that they are in fact synonyms, i.e., names that share the same *ratio*. This means that the same notion is apprehended albeit the diversity of names, which are attributed to the same thing, and that the multiplicity of names corresponds neither to a multiplicity of things nor to different ways of apprehending the same reality. The multiplicity of names would simply stand for one single name and for one single apprehension. But in the case of God — Aquinas argues — the divine names really mean different things, at least in the created world.⁹³ In the answer to this objection, Aquinas points out that, in order to be synonyms, the names must not only refer to the same reality but also represent the same apprehension of the intellect. However, although the divine names refer to the same God, they correspond to different conceptions of the intellect.⁹⁴

In the second objection Aquinas has in mind the doctrine of Maimonides even if he omits mentioning his name, as it appears from his explicit reference in the parallel text of the *Quaestio*. The explanation is reminiscent of Tarantasia's *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, obj. 1 with two variations: in the previous case it was attributed to Averroes and referred to the divine perfections' diversity according to the notions among themselves, whereas Maimonides' position as raised here regards the names' diversity according to the notions of God's effects in the world. His answer is twofold. First, God is the cause of the whole creature just as he is the cause of each one of its qualities. If the only reason for attributing names

⁹² H.-F. Dondaine, 325, l. 1: *Utrum nomina de Deo dicta significant unum in Deo vel multa.*

⁹³ *Ibid.* ll. 4-6: *Quaecumque enim nomina diversa significant unam rationem sunt synonyma: si ergo multa nomina dicta de Deo significant unum et idem, sunt synonyma: quod est inconueniens.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* ll. 55-59: *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ad hoc quod nomina aliqua sint synonyma, oportet quod significant eandem rem et eandem intellectus conceptionem representent. In Deo autem huiusmodi nomina licet significant rem, significant eam mediantibus diuersis conceptionibus quas intellectus noster habet de Deo: et ideo non sunt synonyma.*

taken from the created world to God is the fact that God is their cause, there would be no difference between naming Him after the created goodness and naming him after any creature, like a stone or a body.⁹⁵ The second part of Aquinas' answer is also reproduced in an expanded version in the *Quaestio de attributis* as a critique of Maimonides.⁹⁶ According to Aquinas, the latter's perspective would have contradicted the nature of the cause-effect relation by asserting that the attribution of perfections as existing in God is strictly due to the existence and nature of perfections in the world. This interpretation does in fact reverse the natural and logical order of that relation. By aligning the name's meaning exclusively with the effect, the objector empties the divine name of any real significance and concludes that only the cause's existence can be known. However, — Aquinas observes — nothing in the nature of the cause-effect relation or in the nature of the intellect as experienced in the world allows for drawing this conclusion, and it is therefore unjustified to assert it while dealing with the relation between God and created beings. The apprehension of an effect naturally leads the intellect towards the knowledge of the cause, both of its existence and of something about its nature. Aquinas contends that the foundation for the *rationes* of the divine names cannot be the created world from which the names are first taken, but only the very nature of God the Creator. As a consequence, the names' diversity is real and it should find its authentication in God, not just in the created world. Aquinas later adds that we know the Maker through the multiplicity of his effects because we have no other choice but that, in Himself, He is one and simple.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* ll. 7-10: Si tu dicas quod differunt per rationes diuersorum effectuum, contra: si huiusmodi nomina differunt per rationes effectuum, dicetur bonus Deus quia facit bonos, pari ergo ratione corpus quia facit corpora, et lapis quia facit lapides: quod est inconueniens. Non ergo differunt per rationes effectuum.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* ll. 11-13: Preterea. Effectus magis assimilantur causis quam cause effectibus; non ergo Deus bonos est quia facit bona, sed quia bonus est ideo bona facit. Et sic idem quod prius.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* ll. 60-66: Ad secundum dicendum quod nos cognoscimus Deum bonum ex hoc quod facit bona, et gubernationem ex eo quod gubernat, regit et disponit omnia, cum non possimus eum cognoscere per essentiam suam. Et ideo licet huiusmodi diversitas sit ex parte nostra, in quantum per effectum diversas

In the fourth argument Aquinas again reviews the possibility, already analyzed and rejected while dealing with the multiplicity of *rationes*, that the multiplicity of the divine names is in God only according to the intellect:

If you say that these names differ only according to the ratio, [an argument] against it is that the ratio of all these names is in our intellect. If they only differ according to the ratio, they are not in God but just in our intellect.⁹⁸

If the names and their *rationes* are diverse only in the intellect, the divine attributes are emptied of any reference to the real thing that is the divine essence. That is apparently the case, since the *rationes* are notions and the intellect is their natural place. If any divine name is different from the others only according to its *ratio* and both the *ratio* and the name are only in the intellect, the divine transcendence remains safe, but this turns any discourse and notions about the divine being into a tautology. In the end all perfections are the same as the notion of God, and nothing we can say about the divinity means anything different than “God”. But, is this objection true? This question is partially answered in the *Questio de attributis*, where Thomas asserts that the *ratio* is in the intellect as in its subject or foundation and in reality as in the thing signified. The answer helps in defining the nature of the linguistic terms, whose diversity stems from the intellect, their differences being established according to the plurality of *rationes* in the intellect.

Aquinas’ answer clarifies that indeed, it is true that the natural place of any notion is the intellect that apprehends, but that the correspondence of these notions to the real thing should not be forgotten, particularly in the case of the *rationes* or perfections of God as they are apprehended by a limited intellect:

To the fourth [objection] it should be answered that, although the conceptions are different in our intellect, the thing that corresponds to them is eternal in God, that is His one and simple substance, in which all perfection is found that corresponds perfectly to the conceptions of our intellect.⁹⁹

perfectiones devenimus in cognitionem eius, ipse in se est unum et idem, omnimodam habens perfectionem, ut dictum est. Et per hoc patet solutio ad tertium.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* ll. 14-16: Si tu dicas quod huiusmodi nomina differunt tantum ratione, contra: ratio illorum omnium est in intellectu nostro; si ergo solum ratione differunt, non sunt in Deo sed in intellectu nostro.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* ll. 67-70: Ad quartum dicendum quod licet conceptiones diuere sint in intellectu nostro, res tamen que repondet eis est eterna in Deo, scilicet una et simplex substantia eius, in qua est omnimoda perfectio respondens perfecte conceptionibus intellectus nostri.

The objection is not real because it takes for granted that the *rationes* are also only found in the intellect, as names are. The answer is clear: names differ only according to their notions in the intellect. The names' multiplicity is real but it is not in God, because although language is natural for human beings, every name as such is conventional, owing their existence to a physical demand. The differences between names are, therefore, not applicable to the divine nature. If a parallelism between names and notions could be drawn we would conclude that the notions of the divine perfections are only in the intellect that apprehends them, not in the real divine being. However the correspondence between them is not complete, because whereas the notions themselves mainly owe their existence to the reality of the thing signified, conveying it according to the nature of the intellectual faculty, names just exist due to their correlative notions in the intellect.

The last objection addresses the core problem, which is the legitimacy of a human discourse about God. Simple sentences are composed of two elements, subject and predicate. If the divine names do not have a real meaning no propositions can be formed, as the predicate attaches to the subject in order to say something about the divine nature.¹⁰⁰ The answer relies in the previous analysis of the names' linguistic nature: different propositions can be formed about God just as much as different names can be attributed to the divinity.

The article's *Responsio* explains Aquinas' position according to a threefold question, of which the first one is the title to the whole article. The other two are additional questions that develop in his examination of the issue from a linguistic perspective, and his answer is unequivocal:

It must be said that all names said of God mean one and the same thing in God, that they are not synonyms, and that they differ only according to their *rationes*.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* ll. 17-19: Preterea. In omni propositione oportet esse duo, scilicet unum quod subicitur et aliud quod predicatur; si ergo huiusmodi nomina non differunt, nulla propositio poterit formari de Deo.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* ll. 23-24: Responsio. Dicendum quod omnia nomina de Deo dicta significant unum et idem in Deo, et quod non sunt synonyma, et quod differunt ratione tantum.

Aquinas' objective is to find the balance among the premises involved in the issue. Preserving the simplicity of the divine essence is the first goal, but no less important is that of preserving the possibility of a real language about God. He asserts again at this point that the understanding of the whole *Commentary* to Book I depends on understanding this issue, signaling the strict parallelism between this article and the *Quaestio de attributis*.¹⁰² The answer to the first question is necessary in order to preserve the unity and simplicity of the divine essence. The answer to the second is necessary in order to preserve the real meaning of the names, which contain true information about the divine nature and are the condition for the possibility of a rational discourse about God. The third answer is a first incursion into the new subject, already hinted at while analyzing the nature of the distinction among the *rationes*: that of determining the nature of the distinction among the names. Both *rationes* and names are aspects of the issue of the divine attributes, and explaining the difference between the two notions and the diversity of *rationes* and names among themselves is the key to a solution of the problem of their attribution to God. This question stands at the crossroads where he who denies the possibility of a natural knowledge of God, the advocate of such a possibility, and the one who introduces multiplicity into the simplicity of the divine essence, must part ways. The very core of the difference between all of them is dependent on the accuracy in the approach and answer to this question.

In order to explain how these perfections are one in God, Aquinas recalls that the more excellent something is, the more simply everything is comprised in it. He compares the hierarchy of perfections with the exercise of authority in the world, which is always according to a hierarchy with the king at the top. The king rules everything, but he makes his authority effective through a multiplicity of subordinates, who participate in his sovereignty to a lesser extent. Something similar happens in the hierarchy of the sciences, in which the most universal one encompasses the more particular ones. There is one, metaphysics, which is the most universal of all because it comprises the science of being *qua* being.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* l. 25: Quia quasi totius primi summa pendet ex hoc.

Yet another example is that of the organization of the cognitive faculty, which is composed of several senses. Each one of them apprehends something different, specific to that sense, but the final notion produced is just one, made of many perceptions that have been apprehended by the particular senses.¹⁰³

Likewise, the divine names mean in God one single thing, which is the divine essence. However, they are not synonyms, because they are different among themselves in the created intellect, which is their source. In order to explain how these perfections are different according to their *rationes*, or “notionally”, Aquinas recalls how things are at the ontological level, explaining the doctrine of participation as it happens in the created world. Due to His goodness, God wanted to share his perfection with creatures. Since no created being can possess the divine perfection, it could only participate in it according to multiplicity and in limited manifestations.

By analogy, the divine names can be compared to that multiplicity of civil servants of the same unique royal authority, to the multiplicity of particular sciences that make up the knowledge of the same real world and to the multiplicity of the senses which constitute the same faculty of knowing and contribute to making the same complex apprehension. In every example, the multiplicity is only on the part of the “expression” or manifestation of one single subject, be it the supreme authority of the ruler, the science of the world, or the faculty of knowledge. Likewise, the divine names would be the expression of the supreme perfection of God which are the only ones possible in the created world, among rational creatures who must express that perfection in terms suitable to their own limited nature:

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* ll. 25-35: Sciendum est quod quanto aliquis est magis eleuatus et altus, tanto in uno simplici plura comprehendit. Et hoc patet inspicientibus in potestatibus: nam in regia potestate cum sit una includitur omnis potestas que per diuersa officia distribuitur sub dominio regis. Patet etiam in scientiis: nam cum diuerse scientie secundum diuersa genera rerum circa que eorum uersatur intentio multiplicentur, una tamen scientia, que [est] eis superior, est ad omnia se habens, scilicet philosophia prima. Patet etiam in uiribus cognoscitiuis: nam superior uis secundum unum et idem est cognoscitiua omnium que ab inferioribus uiribus secundum diuersa cognoscuntur: omnia namque illa que uisus, auditus et ceteri sensus percipiunt, intellectus una et simplici uirtute diiudicat.

For we can only name something according to our understanding, since names are the intellect's signs, and therefore we can only name God according to the perfections found in things. And since these perfections are multiple, it behooves us to attribute many names to God in order to express the diverse notions of God that our intellect apprehends, which are one in God.

It is for this reason that Aquinas categorically asserts that the divine names differ among themselves "only according to their *rationes*", because perfections are in God as one, and in the created world as many.¹⁰⁴

Summarizing the revision of the Commentary's first redaction, Aquinas senses the need for a clarification of the various dimensions involved in the issue of the divine attributes. The problem is first raised as an ontological one, in which a multiplicity of really distinct things would be attributed to the divine essence, a proliferation of divine names would ensue. But since names are expressions of thought, the nature of the human notions of the divine perfections must be defined, and Aquinas does so by analyzing the names' *rationes* and their link to the reality named. Finally, he defines the divine names' nature and justifies their plurality. Both the epistemological level and the linguistic one are associated with the ontological level and rely on it as on their foundation through the *ratio*'s peculiar intentional nature. According to Aquinas, the issue of the multiplicity of the names of God cannot be answered without an *excursus* into the two other dimensions, and the purpose of the inquiry is the clarification of what man apprehends when he is said to possess a notion of God.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* ll. 39-51: Quomodo autem different ratione, sic ostenditur. Nam Deus sua bonitate uoluit huiusmodi perfectionem suam, que in se omnimoda et simplex [est], creaturis secundum eorum capacitatem communicare; et ideo cum nulla creatura excedat terminatum modum sue nature in perfectione sua, quod in Deo est unitum et simplex, in creaturis inuenitur multiforme et diuersum. Intellectus enim noster quia diuinam essentiam in seipsa capere non sufficit, in eius cognitionem consurgit ex rebus creatis que apud nos sunt. Non autem possumus aliquid nominare nisi secundum quod intelligimus, cum nomina sint signa intellectuum; non autem possumus nominare Deum nisi ex perfectionibus in huiusmodi rebus inuentis. Et cum huiusmodi perfectiones in rebus istis multiples sint, oportuit multa nomina Deo imponere quibus diuersas conceptiones quas intellectus noster de Deo concipit manifestarem, que in Deo unum sunt.

4. Maimonides' Place in the Dispute

Maimonides is mentioned twice in the *Respondeo* of the *Quaestio de attributis*, in the third question, entitled "Whether the *rationes* of the diverse attributes are in God or not." Concerning the main issue at stake for Aquinas in the *Quaestio*, the problem of the multiplicity of the divine attributes, Maimonides' place in the dispute is that of one of two authorities who give voice to one aspect of the complex problem. He stresses the fact that we know the divine perfection only through its effects in the world, and Aquinas agrees with him. However, Maimonides seems to conclude that what we know are only the created perfections and, contrary to Aquinas, he would answer the above question with the negative. The logic behind this is the consideration that since all knowledge comes from the created world and creatures are the origin of our notions of perfections, the created perfections are the primary source for any attribution of names to God and therefore do not express the divine perfection.

In order to preserve the divine unity and transcendence, Maimonides answers the question of the multiplicity of divine names by asserting that multiplicity — both real and notional — is only in the created beings and absolutely not in God. He does so by pointing to creatures as the ontological and epistemological foundation for any name of perfection. Thus, when attributing any perfection to God we are using human language that has no correlation whatsoever with the divine being. Perfections are so only to us, but we do not know what is perfection in God, to the point that any name attributed to creatures and to God is equivocal.

Aquinas criticizes Maimonides on two points: his notion of causality at the ontological level, and his choice of equivocality at the epistemological level. Aquinas' departure point is the fact that the foundation of both knowledge and reality is God, the universal cause of being. Any perfection found in the world must be found first and eminently in its cause. At the ontological level, if a perfection can be attributed to a creature it is due to its participation in the divine perfection, and not the other way around. It is true that we draw our knowledge from the created world, but that does not mean that the created world must be considered the first foundation of knowledge. The fact that creatures are

effects of God ensures the ontological link between them and their cause. At the epistemological level, congruently with his denial of such ontological relation, Maimonides asserts equivocality between the creatures' and the divine names. This solution safeguards the divine transcendence, but frustrates the possibility of any true knowledge of God. Again — Aquinas answers — the fact that creatures are effects of God ensures the possibility of the knowledge of the cause from the effects.

Aquinas' explicit references to Maimonides in the context of the dispute on the divine attributes show that he considered the Jewish scholar a leading authority on the issue. However, the *Quaestio de attributis* examines also other aspects of the problem of the knowledge of God, like the most proper divine name, the role of faith and the possibility of a direct apprehension of the divine essence, which Aquinas discusses with Maimonides in other places in his works. We must review them now in order to determine whether the *Quaestio* does in fact offer Aquinas' most complete and final reading of Maimonides' position on these issues. Chapter 2 examines chronologically Aquinas' references to Maimonides on the knowledge of God in these texts and examines their agreements and disagreements on the nature of the divine names and being as the most proper name of God, confirming that the *Quaestio* does not deviate from his previous readings but summarizes Aquinas' critique of Maimonides on the issue.

CHAPTER TWO

AQUINAS AND MAIMONIDES ON THE DIVINE NAMES

Chapter 1 argued that the *Quaestio de attributis* represents one of Aquinas' most complete and definitive insights on the issue of the divine attributes. This chapter attempts to demonstrate that it also contains one of Aquinas' most comprehensive evaluations of Maimonides' position on the divine names and that it does not deviate from his earlier readings of the *Guide* on the issue, but rather elucidates all the elements of his critique and offers a new insight into Maimonides' work.

Regarding the general approach to philosophical issues in the *Guide*, Aquinas already finds common interests in principle with Maimonides in his Introduction, where the latter asserts that human beings apprehend God through the divine science and that this can only be achieved after the study of natural science.¹ In other places Maimonides claims that it is only possible to apprehend God through the things He has made, a principle also present in Aquinas' thought, both of them following Aristotle in the acknowledgment of the physical world as the sole way for any natural knowledge of God.² Another element common to Aquinas and Maimonides is their acknowledgment of the divine characteristics of unity and simplicity as a fact easily grasped and demonstrated by the intellect,³ and of the divine attributes as expressions of God's utmost perfection.⁴

Aquinas' first explicit references to Maimonides in his earliest major work, the *Commentary on the Sentences*, are precisely related to the names of God and the apprehension of the divine essence, a fact that stresses this issue's central role in Aquinas' interest in the *Guide*. When, ten years later, he composed the *Quaestio de attributis*, he also reviewed his earlier understanding of Maimonides' position. It is therefore opportune to examine these first references in

¹ *Guide*, Intro., 9.

² *Ibid.* I, 34, 74.

³ Cf. for instance *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1; *Guide*, II, Intro. and ch. 1.

⁴ *Guide*, I, 26, 56 and I, 46, 98.

order to put in context the elements persistently maintained and the possible discrepancies between his early and late readings of the *Guide* in the *Commentary on the Sentences* (1252-1256), *De Potentia* (1265-1266), the *Quaestio de attributis* (1265-1266) and the *Summa Theologiae* I (1266-1268).⁵

I am dividing this chapter into three sections. The first identifies the reasons for Aquinas' interest in the *Guide* and for his disagreement with Maimonides' answer to the problem according to the *Commentary on the Sentences* and *De Potentia*. The second is devoted to Aquinas' analysis of Maimonides' position according to the *Quaestio de attributis* and the new elements in his approach to the *Guide*. The third examines his more general summary contained in *S. Theol.* I, q. 13. While maintaining the chronological order of the texts, I also examine them according to the two main questions at stake: being as the proper name of God and the legitimacy of the divine names.

1. *Maimonides' Position According to the Commentary on the Sentences and De Potentia*

The first references to Maimonides on the issue of the divine attributes are affected by the nature of the Parisian *Commentary on the Sentences*.⁶ Aquinas approaches the problem of the knowledge of God in this work in a context that is unsuitable for a systematic explanation of his own position on the issue, constrained as he is by the ordering imposed by Peter Lombard.⁷ This explains the scattered references to key issues of his doctrine, like the three steps for the elaboration of a notion of God (causality, removal, and eminence), which Aquinas expounds at least three times: when explaining the causality of God,⁸ the

⁵ For a systematic examination of Aquinas' position on quidditative knowledge of God and knowledge by analogy, cf. J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. However, the author follows Wolfson and Feldman in considering *In I Sent.* d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 an early reference in which Aquinas' presentation of Maimonides' position is not as precise as in the other texts. Cf. fn. 81, 523-524.

⁶ From now on I will refer to it simply as the *Commentary on the Sentences*.

⁷ John F. Boyle outlines Aquinas' struggle to comment on the different issues within the limits of the Lombardian ordering, and his attempts to achieve a more systematic explanation in latter works. Cf. op. cit.

⁸ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2.

attribute of science,⁹ and the divine knowledge of things other than God Himself.¹⁰ References to Maimonides are likewise scattered, making it difficult to present a comprehensive analysis of Aquinas' approach to his position, because Aquinas judges his statements separately and does not maintain a thorough critique. Still, it is possible to distinguish two main approaches to the issue: some references are related to "Being" as the proper name of God, and others to the problem of the multiplicity of the divine names in general.

The writing of *De Potentia* was almost contemporary with the composition of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. Its references to Maimonides are complementary to the ones in the *Quaestio de attributis*, though from diverse perspectives stemming from the different purpose of each text. They deal with the identity of being and essence in God, the role of negations, and the equivocal nature of the language about Him.

(a) "Being" as the Proper Name of God

The Commentary on the Sentences

The first reference to Maimonides in the *Commentary on the Sentences* deals with the notion of Being as God's most proper name, and is found in connection with the problem of the multiplicity of the divine names.¹¹ The relevant article mentions Maimonides among the authorities in favor of such naming in the *sed contra*:

Exod., III, 14: 'The Lord said to Moses: if they were to ask my name, thus will you answer the children of Israel: Who Is sent me to you.' The same thing appears according to Damascene, who says that 'the One Who Is' is God's best proper name; and according to Rabbi Moses, who says that this name 'Being' is the ineffable name of God, which was considered to be the most noble.¹²

⁹ *Ibid.* d. 35, q. 1, a. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* a. 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.* d. 8, q. 1, a. 1.

¹² *Ibid.* Sc.: *Exod.*, III, 14: "Dixit Dominus ad Moysen: Si quaesierint nomen meum, sic dices filiis Israel: *Qui est*, misit me ad vos." Hoc idem videtur per Damascenum, ubi supra [*De fide orthodoxa*, lib. I c. 9], dicentem quod *Qui est*, maxime est proprium nomen Dei; et per Rabbi Moysen, qui dicit, hoc nomen esse nomen Dei ineffabile, quod dignissimum habebatur.

Aquinas' reference to the *Guide* is influenced by St. Albert the Great, who also reads "ineffabile".¹³ He does not mention Maimonides in the *Respondeo*, perhaps because his main concern is the issue of the multiplicity and not the proper name. However, he recalls there some authorities and their arguments in order to explain the role of the notion of being for the knowledge of God: St. Jerome, St. John Damascene, the Pseudo-Dionysius, and Avicenna. According to Aquinas, the two first had discerned "Being" as God's proper name for safeguarding the divine transcendence.¹⁴ Dionysius contributes to Aquinas' position by explaining that the existence of perfections in the world allows for the First Principle of all to be known. Each perfection presupposes and is included in the more universal ones up to being as the most universal of all in the world. Any other perfection, like life, goodness, or power, presupposes being, which is the most appropriate name for the Principle of all perfections and of all beings.

Finally, he quotes Avicenna's argument in Book VIII of the *Metaphysics*, which draws a radical distinction between the nature of names that are properly attributed to creatures and the names that can be attributed to an infinite reality.¹⁵ Avicenna notes that the act of comprehension of any reality in the world distinguishes the essence of the thing from its being, for the act of being is common to every reality, whereas the essence is precisely what distinguishes one kind of creature (*natura determinata*) from the others. According to this distinction, since a created thing is

¹³ Cf. Albert's Commentary *Super Dionysium de divinis nominibus*, ch. 13, 448, ll. 63-66: Ad idem: Rabbi Moyses dicit, quod hoc solum nomen "qui est" est nomen ineffabile, quod antiqui propter suam dignitatem litteris non scribebant; ergo "qui est" videtur dignissimum. I am grateful to Dr. C. Rigo for calling my attention to this text. Cf. *Guide*, I, 61 and 62, where Maimonides connects the Tetragrammaton with Being as the most proper name of God. Cf. *Dux*, I, LXI, fol. XXVv: Iam patefecimus quod omne nomen quod dicitur de Creatore es decum ab opere, praeter nomen separatum. Necessae autem est loqui de quodam nomine quod dictum est Moysi, Sum quod sum, in capitulo separato; quod est ibi ratio profunda per cuius viam incedimus, id est in remotione nominationem a Creatore. Cf. I, LX, fol. XXIIIv: Et manifeste dixerunt sapientes quod istud nomen separatum quod est quatuor literarum, ipsum solummodo est significativum substantiae creatoris sine participatione cuiuscumque alterius rei.

¹⁴ Aquinas quotes Damascene's well-known words: "*qui est non significat quid est Deus, sed quoddam pelagus substantiae infinitum*". Cf. *Ibid.* obj. 4.

¹⁵ Avicenna, *Metaphysica*, tract. II, c. 1.

identified by its specific difference from the rest of the creatures, the name attributed to a thing is given in conformity with its essence. Now divine nature is different, for God is alone above every genus and species, above every limitation. Therefore, when looking for the most suitable name for the divine reality, "Being" is found to be the best, because it expresses the essence of God without any limitations and it is identical with it.¹⁶

Aquinas' explanation is built upon three principles: the hierarchy of perfection up to the highest and most universal one; being, which is participated in all creatures, and the distinction between being and essence, which explains why creatures are named after their essence in opposition to their being whereas God is named after His identity of being and essence.¹⁷ These principles testify to Aquinas' effort to define a path to an intellection of God and its linguistic expression firmly grounded on the reality to which it refers. Aquinas stresses this approach in his answers to the objections, where he asserts that "Being" can be considered the proper name of God even though it is shared with the created world because, taken with no further specifications, can *stricto sensu* be applied only to God. The other beings have their limited share in the act of being because they are determined by their own essence, whereas God's nature is devoid of potentiality or privation, fully being and actuality.¹⁸

He concludes that God can be correctly denominated "Being", which is the term that best articulates between the levels of reality (where being is found), thought (where being is grasped) and speech (where being is named).

Stressing the inadequacy of any name taken from the created world for a denomination of God, Aquinas asserts that "Being" is the least inadequate among the names that could be taken into account. In fact any other name includes more imperfection in its meaning, for they are all under "being" in the hierarchy of perfections in the world. Any other perfection attributed to God

¹⁶ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, Resp.

¹⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 22, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3, confirms that this name is attainable from reason: Similiter dicendum est de pronomine, quod etiam per pronomen significari potest, ut habetur *Exod.* 3, 14: Ego sum qui sum. Et quamvis non possit demonstrari quantum ad sensum, tamen potest demonstrari quantum ad intellectum, secundum id quod intellectus de ipso apprehendere potest.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* ad 1.

includes the limitation and inadequacy inherent to that perfection being grasped in a created being, plus the inadequacy of “created being” as well. Thus, the name “Being” presupposes the least of limitations, because it is devoid of any limitation other than the one of “created being” itself.¹⁹

Aquinas in this early stage regards Maimonides as an authority, but his insight into Maimonides’ position is still not at the center of his concerns, in his being far closer to the Christian Neoplatonic sources of St. John Damascene and the Pseudo-Dionysius. His single reference to Maimonides is to *Exod.* 3, 14, which he recalls in several other places mentioning only the source and not Maimonides. Why does Aquinas not refer more in detail to Maimonides’ doctrine of Being as the most proper name of God? *De Potentia* casts new light on Aquinas’ critique of the author of the *Guide* on the issue.

De Potentia

As seen in the text examined from the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas agrees with Maimonides in the answer to the question about God’s proper name. The next reference is also Aquinas’ first explicit mention of Maimonides in *De Potentia*, and recalls the latter’s identification of God’s being and essence, which occurs in several places in the *Guide*. One of these places is *Guide* I, 57, a chapter that Aquinas explicitly mentions in the *Quaestio de attributis*:

Rabbi Moses says that God is being not in essence, living not in life, powerful not in power, and wise not in wisdom. Therefore essence is in God nothing different from His being.²⁰

However, some differences are evident in the collation of the reference with the original in the *Guide*, which reads as follows:

Consequently He is not in essence, alive not in life, powerful not in power, and wise not in wisdom. For all these attributes refer back to the same thing: that there is no multiplicity in Him, as it will be said.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.* ad 3.

²⁰ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, sc. 2: Praeterea, Rabbi Moyses dicit, quod Deus est ens non in essentia, et vivens non in vita, et est potens non in potentia, et sapiens non in sapientia. Ergo in Deo non est aliud essentia quam suum esse.

²¹ *Dux*, I, LVI, fol. XXIV: Et idcirco est non in essentia, et vivus non in vita, et potens non in potentia, et sapiens non in sapientia. Et haec omnia in idem

Whereas Maimonides had used a phrasing aimed at excluding the linguistic distinction between *esse* and essence in God in order to conclude that in Him no multiplicity can be conceived, Aquinas uses it in order to single out *esse* as the true divine essence. This identification of being and essence has far-reaching consequences for Aquinas' doctrine of the knowledge of God and serves as the basis for his critique of Maimonides, who in the former's opinion sees the identification but misses its main contribution to the problem of the language about God, as will become evident in the following explanations. This contribution is based on the distinction between the meanings of being, which Aquinas explains in the same question of *De Potentia*:

Ens and being are said in a twofold manner. Sometimes, it means the thing's essence or act of being. Sometimes, instead, it means the truth of the proposition.²²

He had already used this distinction in *In I Sent.*, d. 33. This text, although not explicitly related to Maimonides, contains a key doctrine that Aquinas explains again in distinction 35 and in the *Quaestio de attributis*. On these two other occasions he does refer to Maimonides' position, and it is therefore relevant to recall it here.

Aquinas distinguishes in d. 33 between being as the substance or essence, the act of being, and the truth of a proposition, in a bid to find the articulation between the ontological and logical levels. When analyzing the expression "the being of the divine essence", Aquinas explains three meanings of the word being (*esse*). Sometimes it is used to refer to the essence or nature of a thing expressed by the definition, which is a sentence that means what the thing defined is (*quid est*). In another sense, "being" means the act of the essence or act of being, not as the second act or operation (*actus secundus*) but as the first act (*actus primus*). In yet another meaning it is the copula in speech, and it expresses the truth of the composition in a sentence. The first two meanings belong to the ontological level, whereas the third

redundant: quia non est in eo multitudo, sicut explanabitur. Cf. *Guide*, I, 57, 132: "Consequently He exists, but not through an existence other than His essence; and similarly He lives, but not through life; He is powerful, but not through power; He knows, but not through knowledge. For all these attributes refer back to one notion in which there is no idea of multiplicity, as it will be made clear."

²² *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 1. A. Llano analyzes the Thomistic texts that outline this distinction. Cf. *Metafísica y lenguaje*, 236-262.

one belongs to the logical-linguistic level, which in its turn relies on the ontological one.²³

According to this distinction and going back to Maimonides' words in *Guide* I, 57, his assertion that "all these attributes refer back to one notion in which there is no idea of multiplicity" points to the linguistic aspect of the problem. He means that whatever is predicated of God should be devoid of multiplicity. Since predication produces a fragmentation of notions and inserts multiplicity and possession in the divine reality, he proposes a sentence in which the term affirmatively attributed to God is a verb — an action — that is immediately negated in its form of a name. Aquinas' quotation of *Guide* I, 57 in *De Potentia* instead overlooks the linguistic aspect in order to convey his own concern, the apprehension of God's nature, and concludes that "therefore essence is in God nothing different from His being". He focuses here on the onto-transcendental dimension of the term "being", conjoining its meaning as the essence of the thing with the act of being.

Two questions later, Aquinas elaborates on the distinction between the meanings of being and explains that this is relevant not only to the issue of God's proper name, which identifies the divine being and essence, but also for discerning the nature of negation and privations:

Ens and being are said in a twofold manner, as Aristotle explains in Book V of the *Metaphysics*. Sometimes, it means the thing's essence or the act of being, whereas on other occasions it means the truth of the proposition, which can refer even to the things that are not, as when we say that there is blindness, because it is true that a man is blind. When Damascene says that God's being is manifest to us, being should be understood in the second sense and not in the first one. In the first sense, God's being is identical with His essence. Since His essence is unknown to us, His being is likewise unknown. In the second sense,

²³ *In I Sent.*, d. 33, q. unica, a. 1, ad 1: Sed sciendum, quod esse dicitur tripliciter. Uno modo dicitur esse ipsa quidditas vel natura rei, sicut dicitur quod definitio est oratio significans quid est esse; definitio enim quidditatem rei significat. Alio modo dicitur esse ipse actus essentiae; sicut vivere, quod est esse viventibus, est animae actus; non actus secundus, qui est operatio, sed actus primus. Tertio modo dicitur esse quod significat veritatem compositionis in propositionibus, secundum quod 'est' dicitur copula: et secundum hoc est in intellectu componente et dividente quantum ad sui complementum; sed fundatur in esse rei, quod est actus essentiae, sicut supra de veritate dictum est.

instead, we know that God exists, because we produce this proposition in our intellect from His effects.²⁴

Aquinas explicitly refers here to Aristotle's Book V of the *Metaphysics* as the source for his arguments and he will do it again in the *Quaestio de attributis*, shortly before expounding Maimonides' position on the divine attributes. The doctrine contained in this text and Aquinas' understanding of it is therefore the key to his critique of Maimonides' position. I will elaborate on this in the section devoted to the *Quaestio de attributis*, but first I will analyze Maimonides' doctrine of the multiplicity of the divine names and Aquinas' insight into his solution to the problem prior to the *Quaestio*.

(b) *The Multiplicity of the Divine Names*

The Commentary on the Sentences

As mentioned in the previous subsection, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1 is the location of Aquinas' first explicit reference to Maimonides and is devoted to the problem of the multiplicity of the divine names. However he recalls Maimonides only in connection with "Being" as the proper name of God and omits any reference to his elaborated doctrine on the names and the use of negation for the language about God. The reasons for this are some important differences in their approach to the issue that will become apparent here.

Aquinas enumerates three ways for naming God, of which the first one deals with the relations between the creature and God as a basis for divine names like "Creator" and "Dominus", The second group contains the names originated in actions that God performs in creatures, like "Sapientia", "Potentia", and "Voluntas". The third group comprises those that express something found in creatures, like "Life" and "Being", inasmuch as created life and created being have their exemplar in the divine life and being. He concludes that these names are due to the fact that a limited

²⁴ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 2, ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ens et esse dicitur dupliciter, ut patet V *Metaph.* Quandoque enim significat essentiam rei, sive actum essendi; quandoque vero significat veritatem propositionis, etiam in his quae esse non habent: sicut dicimus quod caecitas est, quia verum est hominem esse caecum. Cum ergo dicat Damascenus, quod esse Dei est nobis manifestum, accipitur esse Dei secundo modo, et non primo. Primo enim modo est idem esse Dei quod est substantia: et sicut eius substantia est ignota, ita et esse. Secundo autem modo scimus quoniam Deus est, quoniam hanc propositionem in intellectu nostro concipimus ex effectibus ipsius.

intellect cannot know God directly while in this world, but needs to rely on what is perceived in creatures, from which names are apprehended. The created world provides certain knowledge of the divine, like a clear and natural awareness of the existence of its Principle, though insufficient for a direct apprehension of the divine essence.

The answers to the objections confronted in this article include Aquinas' position on the role of negation for the knowledge of God. The last objection deals with the very possibility of naming a reality that remains unknown in itself and Aquinas' understanding of negations in the language about God.²⁵ According to him, the difficulty lies in the nature of human knowledge, which elaborates concepts by discovering the limits of the object and only by producing a concept can it find a name that matches the intellectual contents of the reality meant. It is true — asserts Aquinas — that any name is produced due to a circumscribing of the reality named. However, the word “being” remains free from any limit. Therefore, whenever the intellect proceeds by removing the limitations imposed by the created perfections, it approaches the apprehension of the true divine reality in which essence and being are identical. He first removes the bodily attributes, then, the intellectual ones as they are found in creatures. Finally, only God's existence remains in the intellect. The removal of circumscription produces in the intellect a sort of darkness, of confusion, due to the violence caused to its natural tendency to divide and obtain distinct notions. However, this is the way for a correct approach to the divine reality, which is far removed from human nature. In the end, even the notion of being should be removed in order to attain a state of perfect detachment from the limitations of an imperfect apprehension. This imperfect apprehension is connatural to a creature trying to grasp the infinite through finite apprehensions. This effort leads to a state of ignorance, which — according to Dionysius — is inherent to life on earth.²⁶

Maimonides also devotes several chapters of the *Guide* to the negative language about God, where he analyzes the reason for

²⁵ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.* in fine: Unde quando in Deum procedimus *per viam remotionis*, primo negamus ab eo corporalia; et secundo etiam intellectualia, secundum quod inveniuntur in creaturis, ut bonitas et sapientia; et tunc remanet tantum in intellectu nostro, quia est, et nihil amplius: unde est sicut in quadam confusione.

the biblical language about God and its abundant use of corporeal images. He asserts that the beginning of any reflection about God entails acknowledging His incorporeality:

Men attribute to God whatever they consider or understand at the beginning of imagination, and for this reason they named Him with things suitable for the body, in order to mean His being, inasmuch as the multitude at the beginning of imagination cannot at first conceive any existence save that of a body alone; and that which is neither a body nor existent in a body does not exist in their opinion. In a similar way we ascribe to Him everything that in our opinion is a perfection in order to indicate that He is perfect in every manner of perfection, and that no deficiency whatever mars Him.²⁷

But his answer is insufficient for Aquinas because Maimonides considers the names of perfections equally inappropriate for God as the corporeal attributes. He rejects the existence of all these attributes in God because, as a product of the human intellect, they are many and would attach to His essence as accidents, but multiplicity is only in the created world.

Besides these attributes, which must be negated for the reasons stated above, Maimonides acknowledges others that express God's actions in the world:

The multiplicity of diverse names that are found in the books about the Creator are in reference to the multiplicity of His actions and not because of a multiplicity subsisting in His essence. Some of them are given also with a view to indicating His perfection, according to what we consider as perfection.²⁸

²⁷ *Dux*, I, XXVI, fol. Xr: Quicquid considerant homines vel intelligunt in initio imaginationis, hoc est quod attribuunt Deo, et ideo nominaverunt ipsum quae conveniunt corpori, ut significant ipsum esse, quoniam gentes initio imaginationis non inveniunt existentiam nisi rei corporeae, et quicquid non est corpus vel in corpore, secundum sensum eorum nihil est. Similiter etiam quicquid est perfectum secundum nostrum, attribuimus ei, ut ostendatur quod est perfectus in fine bonitatis perfectionum, et nulla imperfectione admiscetur ei ullo modo. Cf. *Guide*, I, 26, 56. Cf. also I, 46, 98.

²⁸ *Dux*, I, LI, fol. XIXr-v: Nominaciones quae multipliciter variantur et inveniuntur in libris qui dicuntur de Creatore, sunt ex parte multitudinis operum ipsorum, non quia propter hoc sit multitudo in substantia eius. Pars etiam ipsarum posita est ad ostendendum perfectionem ipsius, secundum quae nos reputamus perfectionem. Cf. *Guide*, I, 52, 119: "The numerous attributes possessing diverse notions that figure in the Scriptures and that are indicative of Him, may He be exalted, are mentioned in reference to the multiplicity of His actions and not because of a multiplicity subsisting in His essence, and some of them, as we have made clear, also with a view to indicating His perfection according to what we consider as perfection." Cf. I, 53, 120.

They are also multiple but detached from the divine reality. In their limitation as products of imperfect notions and human speech, the divine attributes would only express the rational apprehension of God's existence, the fact that He is perfect and his actions in the world, and do not add any more information about the divine essence than the corporeal attributes. In this case, the nature of the attributes seems to be merely categorial, with no onto-transcendental dimension, and equivocal with the divine perfections because the names indicate God's perfection "according to what we consider as perfection". This is also an insufficient answer for Aquinas, who seeks to ensure the possibility of a true knowledge of God.

Distinction 35 of the *Commentary* contains a veiled reference to Maimonides on the same issue. Aquinas recalls three opinions regarding the difficulty inherent in the attribution of a multiplicity of names to God. The first opinion considers attributes to be necessarily additions to an essence. These additions introduce multiplicity in the subject, making it impossible for it to preserve its simplicity. Besides, the possession of attributes would introduce potentiality in God, which is likewise impossible. Maimonides had rejected this position without reservation in *Guide I*, 57.

The second group holds a position similar to Maimonides', asserting that the divine names only convey what God is not or what His actions are similar to. They claim that the multiplicity of names attributed to God say nothing about His nature, simply pointing to the existence of the Creator. By attributing the names of created perfections to the divine reality we would be in no way considering it to be really endowed with these perfections but just denying that the opposite is in God, that is, the imperfection contrary to the relative perfection found in the world. We are actually removing from God the nonbeing, the potency or privation of being. To say that God is not ignorant would be therefore the same as saying that God is not a stone. The epithet "wise" considered in this way is devoid of any reference to its real content, and it does not add to the notion of God more information than the one given by the assertion "God is not a stone."²⁹

²⁹ Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1, ad. 2: Ideo alii dixerunt, quod omnia hujusmodi nomina nihil praedicant in Deo, nisi forte esse ipsius; unde improprie de Deo dicuntur; sed duabus rationibus inveniuntur dicta de Deo. Vel ratione negationis, ut quando dicitur Deus sciens, intelligitur non esse ignorans, sicut

The *Guide* has several passages advocating this position, which Maimonides summarizes as follows:

It has thus become clear that every denomination that we attribute to the Creator either is taken from an action or, if it is intended for the apprehension of His essence and not of His action, it signifies the negation of its privation. Moreover, even these negative names are not used with reference to the Creator except in the sense in which something that does not befit something else is denied of it, as when it is said of a wall that it does not see.³⁰

Aquinas' first reason to reject this position stems from an analysis of the nature of negations. A negation presupposes always an affirmation, a thing's affirmation being precisely the matter of the negation.³¹ This assertion is founded upon the Aristotelian principle that any real negation cannot stand by itself, without reference to an affirmative intellectual notion, which is the thing negated from the subject.³² This is needed according to the nature of the

lapis: vel propter similitudinem operis, ut dicatur Deus sciens, quia operatur effectum sicut aliquis sciens; sicut dicitur iratus, in quantum punit ad similitudinem irati, non quod ira sit in eo; ita nec scientia, nec vita, nec aliquid hujusmodi, sed tantum esse.

³⁰ *Dux*, I, LVII, fol. XXIIv: Iam patet igitur quod omnis agnominatio attributa Creatori, vel sumitur ab opere, vel erit eius ratio impossibilitas suae privationis, si fuerit intentio in illa appraehensio suae substantiae non operis. Ista vero nomina negativa non consueverunt attribuere Creatori, nisi secundum modum secundum quem removetur aliquid ab alio quod non est aptum ut inveniatur in ipso, sicut dicitur quod paries non videt. Cf. *Guide*, I, 58, 136: "It has thus become clear to you that every attribute that we predicate of Him is an attribute of action or, if the attribute is intended for the apprehension of His essence and not of His action, it signifies the negation of the privation of the attribute in question. Moreover, even those negations are not used in reference to or applied to Him, may He be exalted, except from the following point of view, which you know: one sometimes denies with reference to a thing something that cannot fittingly exist in it. Thus we say of a wall that it is not endowed with sight."

³¹ *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: Sed hoc non videtur sufficiens. Primo, quia omnis negatio de re aliqua fundatur super aliquid in re existens, ut cum dicitur, homo non est asinus, veritas negationis fundatur supra hominis naturam, quae naturam negatam non compatitur. Unde si de Deo negatur ignorantia, oportet quod hoc sit ratione alicujus quod in ipso est: et ita oppositum ignorantiae oportet in ipso ponere. Secundo, quia omnis actus procedit ab agente alicuius quod in ipso est, sicut calidum calefacit et leve ascendit sursum.

³² Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, IV, c.2 1004a, 10-17: Quoniam autem unius est opposita speculari, et uni opponitur pluralitas, et negationem et privationem unius est speculari: quia utrobique specularatur unum, cuius negatio aut privatio. Haec autem quae simpliciter dicitur, quia non inest illi, aut alicui generi. Hic igitur uni differentia adest praeter quod est in negatione. Illius enim absentia negatio est. In privatione vero subiecta quaedam fit natura, de qua dicitur privatio. Sed uni pluralitas opponitur.

intellect, which can only operate through affirmations. It would be against that nature and against the nature of the created world that an act of the intellect ends in a simple negation because the proper object of the intellect is being, not privation. A negation is an act of the intellect that presupposes being in order to deny it. Therefore, although both the transcendental nature of the divine being and the limitation of the human intellect require the negation implicit in the attribution to God of names of perfections taken from the created world, even the negations about God necessarily presuppose an affirmation. Due to the intellect's nature, any negation about God must be founded upon the apprehension of a created perfection — perceived by the intellect as an affirmation — because the negation of the intellect's content is founded upon the reality of the perfection itself.

Aquinas concludes that denying the existence in the divine nature of a real perfection as it is in the created world is correct because it is a way to express God's infinite perfection, but that to deny of God any other created thing which is not a real perfection, as in the case of a stone, has no meaning and is useless for the knowledge of the divine being. Moreover — adds Aquinas — Aristotle says that a negation is always a plurality, because it consists of the negation (step 2) of something previously known or supposed (step 1). Only an affirmation is simple, and therefore it is more suitable for the nature of God than a negation.

Aquinas also challenges here the other explanation that, according to Maimonides, justifies the attribution of names — however inaccurate — to the divinity, the perception of divine actions in the world. Aquinas asserts that these actions refer to an agent or cause, and since the effects perceived in the world show something about the nature of their cause, the same can be thought to happen with God as universal cause. However, Maimonides concludes that attributing ontological causality with all that this implies to God is a mistaken extrapolation that compromises the divine transcendence. According to this conclusion, what all the actions of God in the world would show about the cause is simply its existence:

There is accordingly a being whom none of the things that He has brought into being resembles, and who does not participate in them in any way, in whom there is no multiplicity or incapacity to bring into being things other than He, and whose reference to this world is like

that of a captain to a ship. Even this is not the true comparison and perfect likeness, but is only for the intellect to show that the Creator governs the created.³³

Aquinas rejects this interpretation on the grounds that the world shows an order in which every agent operates according to its nature. This means that the effect perceived in the world gives information about the agent itself. In this sense, it is demanded that the universal agent or cause of science in the world — the attribute under consideration in this distinction — may have something in its nature that really corresponds to the science experienced among the created beings. However, there is a need to distinguish among the actions attributed to God the ones corresponding to real perfections and dismiss the ones that, having been attributed to God, are only apparently similar to the actions of created agents which are really defects. This is the case of the actions that are thought to be caused by the wrath of God or are figuratively described as such, but are in fact manifestations of God's love and desire to bring His creatures back to the right path.³⁴ The distinction is, then, clear to Aquinas: the names of perfections are properly said of God according to the thing which is thereby signified, but not according to the way they are found in the world and grasped by the intellect. He concludes that it is correct to attribute to God all the names that refer to a perfection devoid of any connotation of corporeality and that do not imply any composition, as it happens in the world due to the limitations of the created beings.

³³ *Dux*, I, LVII, fol. XXIIv: Est ens cui nihil est simile eorum quibus dedit esse, et non participat eis aliquo modo et non est in eo multitudo, nec abbreviatur eius potentia, ut non faciat esse alia extra se, et quod comparatio ipsius ad istum mundum est sicut comparatio gubernatoris ad navem. Hoc etiam non est comparatio vera neque similitudo perfecta, sed ut ostendat intellectus quia Creator regit creata. Cf. *Guide*, I, 58, 137: "There is accordingly a being whom none of the beings that He has brought into existence resembles, and who has nothing in common with them in any respect; in reference to whom there is no multiplicity or incapacity to bring into being things other than He; whose relation to the world is that of a captain to his ship. Even this is not the true relation and a correct likeness, for this likeness has been used in order to lead the mind toward the view that He, may He be exalted, governs the existent things."

³⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: Et ideo dicendum est, quod omnia huiusmodi proprie dicuntur de Deo quantum ad rem significatam, licet non quantum ad modum significandi; et quantum ad id quod est proprium de ratione cuiuslibet horum, licet non quantum ad rationem generis; ut supra habitum est.

Aquinas proposes an example to show how real attribution of perfections to God is suitable for the nature of the intellect. Three persons can be skilled in three different sciences, say grammar, geometry, and philosophy. But one single person can also be acquainted with the three of them, which are one in him though they are really three in themselves.³⁵ The same can be said of God, who is the summit of all perfections found in the created world. All the different perfections attributed to God are one in Him despite our perception of their created multiplicity. It can be said that they are one *secundum rem*, i.e., according to the divine essence, but not *simpliciter*. All perfections are one in God and according to His own simple nature, which is a fact easily apprehended and demonstrated by the intellect, but differ according to their *rationes*. The diversity of *rationes* is not only in the intellect, but refers to a true reality in the thing itself named by that perfection. The difference among perfections is actually founded also in God. However — remarks Aquinas — this is not a multiplicity or an addition attached to the thing itself, i.e., to God, but only *ratione*.³⁶

Aquinas elaborates on the notion of *ratio* in distinction 33, distinguishing two uses of the term. Sometimes it means the act of reasoning or the capacity to reason. On other occasions, *ratio* is the name of the intention of a term. Given a term with a meaning, for instance “house”, there is an intention of that name in

³⁵ *Ibid.* Respondeo: Si ponantur tres homines, quorum unusquisque secundum suum habitum sciat ea quae pertinent ad unam scientiam, scilicet naturalia, geometricalia, et grammaticalia; et quartus, qui horum omnium per unum habitum scientiam habeat, de quo constat quod vere poterit dici, quod est grammaticus vel grammatica est in eo, et similiter geometria, et philosophia: et quamvis in eo non sit nisi una res, secundum quam omnia haec sibi conveniunt, tamen aliud et aliud secundum rationem nominis unumquodque horum in ipso nominat, eo quod unumquodque eorum imperfecte exprimit illam rem.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: Cum enim in aliis creaturis inveniatur esse, vivere, et intelligere, et omnia huiusmodi secundum diversa in eis existentia; in Deo tamen unum suum simplex esse habet omnium horum virtutem et perfectionem. Unde cum Deus nominatur ens, non exprimitur aliquid nisi quod pertinet ad perfectionem eius et non tota perfectio ipsius; et similiter cum dicitur sciens, et volens, et huiusmodi; et ita patet quod omnia haec unum sunt in Deo secundum rem, sed ratione differunt, quae non tantum est in intellectu, sed fundatur in veritate et perfectione rei: et sicut proprie Deus dicitur ens, ita proprie dicitur sciens et volens, et huiusmodi: nec est ibi aliqua pluralitas vel additio vel ordo in re, sed in ratione tantum.

the intellect. That intention is the meaning of the term as it is grasped by the intellect. In this example, the intention means or matches the thing's definition. The divinity cannot have a definition because it is an infinite and simple being. However, the terms attributed to God also have an intention, which is the *ratio*. These intentions are only in the intellect, but there is something in reality that confirms their meaning — the divine nature — at which the intellect addresses the intentions. The perfection's *ratio* is therefore not in the real thing, but the real thing is the foundation for it and legitimizes the truthfulness of the *rationes* or notions attributed to the divine essence.

Moreover, Aquinas asserts that it cannot be said that God is identical with these *rationes* in order to preserve the divine simplicity. Despite His simplicity, God “possesses” the *rationes* of the divine perfections. The *rationes* are not identical with the divine essence because they express the specificity of the perfection. They designate what is proper to that perfection, regardless of the perfection's concrete attribution to a particular being. God can “possess” the *rationes* because the nature of a *ratio* is to be in the intellect, but founded in the reality of the thing to which the intention of the name refers. Possession implies composition, but the *rationes* are possessed as “intentions” and the nature of an intention does not compromise the divine simplicity, in the same sense that it is said that God “has” a name and not that He “is” a name.

Summarizing, Aquinas criticizes Maimonides' position on the nature of negation and of God's actions in the world on the grounds that he misses the ontological relation between God as the universal Cause and creatures as His effects. As a consequence, his linguistic solution to the problem of the language about God is also faulty, in his opinion, because it does not honor the laws of the intellect. This ontological premise of Maimonides' position finds its epistemological expression in his choice for equivocality to describe the relation between the names of perfections attributed to God and the same names attributed to creatures.

The last reference to Maimonides in the *Commentary on the Sentences* on the issue of the divine attributes addresses precisely this issue:

Others, like **Rabbi Moses**, said that God perfectly knows singulars. He refuted all opinions contrary to his by saying that the Science of God is equivocal with our own, thereby denying any inference from the

conditions of our science in order to attribute it to the Science of God. We cannot comprehend his Science as long as we cannot comprehend God's Being. Thus it is said in Isaiah 55: 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways.' This, although it is true, requires something else in addition: that even though God's Science is different from ours, through ours we somehow arrive to God's. Thus, our science is not deeply univocal with the Science of God, but rather analogical. ... This is the reason why we should follow the way taught by Dionysius.³⁷

Aquinas is referring to *Guide* III, 20, where Maimonides writes:

According to our opinion — that is, of we who say that His wisdom is not something superadded to His nature's substance — we must show the difference between His science and ours, which is a true and substantial difference, just as the substance of the heavens differs from that of the earth. The prophets have stated this, saying: 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts.' And they said: 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts' [*Isaiah* 55, 8-9].³⁸

Aquinas proposes the analogy of language not only as a way to form valid notions about God, but also and particularly as a way to overcome the gap between the categorial and the transcendental approaches to the knowledge of God. Apprehending

³⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 36, q. unica, a. 1, Resp.: Ideo alii dixerunt, sicut Rabbi Moyses, quod Deus scit perfectissime singularia; et omnes rationes, quae in contrarium inducuntur, solvit per hoc quod dicit, scientiam Dei esse aequivocam scientiae nostrae; unde per conditiones scientiae nostrae non possunt aliquid de scientia Dei arguere: sicut enim esse Dei non comprehenditur a nobis, ita nec sua scientia. Hoc confirmat per id quod habetur per *Isa.* 55: "Sicut exaltati sunt caeli a terra, sic exaltatae sunt viae meae a viis vestris." Sed istud, quamvis sit verum, tamen oportet aliquid plus dicere: videlicet, quod quamvis scientia Dei sit alterius modi a scientia nostra, tamen per scientiam nostram aliquammodo devenimus in scientiam Dei; et sic scientia nostra non est penitus univoca scientiae Dei, sed potius analogica, ut in praecedenti distinctione, qu. 1, art. 4, dictum est. Et ideo oportet dicere secundum quid scientia nostra imitatur scientiam Dei, et in quo deficit et quare; et ita rationes dissolvere. Unde procedendum est per viam quam docet Dionysius.

³⁸ *Dux*, III, XXI, fol. LXXXIIIr: Secundum nostram opinionem qui dicimus quod sapientia eius non est res addita super substantiam ipsius naturae, obligati sumus ad ostendendam differentiam scientiae ipsius et scientiae nostrae: differentiam veram scilicet et substantialem; sicut differt substantia caelorum a substantia terrae. Istud enim dixerunt prophetae: "Non enim cogitationes meae cogitationes vestrae." Et dixerunt: "Quomodo exaltantur caeli a terra, sic exaltatae sunt viae meae a viis vestris, et cogitationes meae a cogitationibus vestris." Cf. *Guide*, III, 20, 483.

something of the divine nature through the knowledge of created perfections is a *conditio sine qua non* in order to preserve the capacity to speak about God. However, Maimonides' preference for equivocality hampers both possibilities and does not provide Aquinas with a suitable basis for his attempt to offer a comprehensive explanation about the creature's intellection of God.

De Potentia

De Potentia develops Aquinas' critique of Maimonides' doctrine of the use of negations for the language of God and appeals again to Dionysius Areopagita and St. John Damascene as the best sources for a correct answer to the problem:

Dionysius says that negations are absolutely true in God, whereas affirmations are inconsistent. We do not know what is God but rather what God is not, as Damascene says. Therefore, **Rabbi Moses** said that all things that seem to be asserted of God are introduced more for removing than for adding something to Him. We say that God is alive in order to remove from Him the way of being of non-living things among us, not in order to add life to Him, since life and the other names of this sort mean certain ways and creatural perfections that are far from God. However this is not completely true since, as Dionysius says, wisdom, life and so on are not removed from God in the sense that He lacks them, but in the sense that He possesses them in a much more excellent way than human intellect can apprehend or language can express.³⁹

The reference is again to *Guide* I, 58.⁴⁰ The negation's role is not only to express the imperfection that is not found in the divine being, but also and mainly to stress the superabundant divine perfection. In Aquinas' view, Maimonides' concern for stressing

³⁹ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7, Resp: Nam et Dionysius dicit, quod negationes sunt maxime verae in Deo; affirmationes vero sunt incompactae. Non enim scimus de Deo quid est, sed magis quid non est, ut Damascenus dicit. Unde et Rabbi Moyses omnia quae affirmative videntur dici de Deo, dicit magis esse introducta ad removendum quam ad aliquid ponendum. Dicimus enim Deum esse vivum ad removendum ab eo illum modum essendi quem habent res quae apud nos non vivunt, non ad ponendum vitam in ipso, cum vita et omnia huiusmodi nomina sint imposita ad significandum quasdam formas et perfectiones creaturarum quae longe absunt a Deo; quamvis hoc non sit usquequaque verum, nam, sicut dicit Dionysius, sapientia et vita et alia huiusmodi non removentur a Deo quasi ei desint, sed quia excellentius habet ea quam intellectus humanus capere, vel sermo significare possit.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Dux*, I, LVII, fol. XXIIv.

the limitation of language overshadows the language's real capacity to express God's transcendental being. As a consequence, Maimonides' explanations are occasionally insufficiently precise in distinguishing between the linguistic and the ontological levels; a critique that is often implicit in Aquinas' references to Maimonides.

Question 7 of *De Potentia* highlights Aquinas' effort to discriminate between the two levels:

Rabbi Moses says that these names do not mean in God intentions added to His essence. Every accident means an intention added to the essence of its subject. Therefore, these names do not signify something accidental in God.⁴¹

Maimonides says something similar at the end of I, 57:

All these words as applied to Him are according to the language of the sons of man. Similarly, when we say one, the meaning is that He has no equal, and not that the notion of oneness attaches to His essence.⁴²

Maimonides reads the positive assertion about God as a negation or removal of a defect, and excludes from the transcendental simplicity and unity of God the possibility of an accident — or its notion — attached to His essence. Aquinas rewrites Maimonides' words, distinguishing between the names (linguistic level), their intention in the intellect, and the removal of accidents in the real God (onto-transcendental level). Aquinas' interpretation of Maimonides' doctrine of the divine attributes focuses here again on the need to articulate and distinguish between the ontological and the logical-linguistic meanings of being. The latter notes the different levels of discourse but they appear intertwined and even mixed in the explanations. He often gives the primacy to the linguistic and is sometimes unclear in regard to the level to which he is referring. This is due to the fact that he does not confront Aquinas' main question on the connection between the notion produced by the intellect and the reality that is the notion's source.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* q. 7, a. 4, sc. 3: Praeterea, Rabbi Moyses dicit, quod hujusmodi nomina non significant in Deo intentiones additas supra ejus substantiam. Omne enim accidens significat intentionem additam supra substantiam sui subjecti. Ergo praedicta nomina non significant accidentia in Deo.

⁴² *Guide*, I, 57, 133. I elaborate on this quotation, central to Maimonides' doctrine of negation, in the next subsection.

In *De Potentia* q. 7, a. 5 Aquinas stresses Maimonides' silence regarding the divine reality and also criticizes his reductive solution for the knowledge of God:

I answer saying that some asserted that these names predicated of God do not mean the divine essence. **Rabbi Moses** most expressly said this. He said that these names must be understood in two ways: one as similarity to the effect, meaning that God is said to be wise not because there is some wisdom in Him, but because He behaves with His effects in the manner the wise do, ordering each one to its due end; and likewise He is said to be living inasmuch as He behaves in the way living beings do, operating by Himself. The other way is that of negation, in the sense that when we say that God is a living being we do not mean that there is any life in Him, but rather remove from God the inanimate way of being. Likewise, when we call God intelligent, we do not mean that there is any intelligence in Him, but rather remove from God the irrational animals' way of being, and so on. Each one of these ways appears to be insufficient and unsuitable.⁴³

These references testify that, in Aquinas' opinion, Maimonides regards the transcendental identification of being and essence in God as a linguistic problem by reducing being to its veritative meaning as the copula in a sentence. Aquinas' concern instead is with the ontological being as the basis for his doctrine of the knowledge of God and the divine attributes, and with clarifying the articulation between the logical and the ontological levels, in search of a comprehensive onto-linguistic perspective through the discernment of the meanings of being and the notion of *ratio*. It can be derived from these quotations that Aquinas' interpretation of Maimonides' position in the *Guide of the Perplexed* remains consistent from the time of his very first large work, the *Commentary on the Sentences*, and is confirmed in later works like *De Potentia*.

⁴³ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 5, Resp.: Respondeo. Dicendum quod: quidam posuerunt, quod ista nomina dicta de Deo, non significant divinam substantiam, quod maxime expresse dicit Rabbi Moyses. Dicit autem, huiusmodi nomina de Deo dupliciter esse intelligenda: uno modo per similitudinem effectus, ut dicatur Deus sapiens non quia sapientia aliquid sit in ipso, sed quia ad modum sapientis in suis effectibus operatur, ordinando scilicet unumquodque ad debitum finem; et similiter dicitur vivens in quantum ad modum viventis operatur, quasi ex se ipso agens. Alio modo per modum negationis; ut per hoc quod dicimus Deum esse viventem, non significemus vitam in eo aliquid esse, sed removeamus a Deo illum modum essendi quo res inanimatae existunt. Similiter cum dicimus Deum intelligentem, non intelligimus significare intellectum aliquid in ipso esse, sed removemus a Deo illum modum essendi quo bruta existunt; et sic de aliis. Uterque autem modus videtur esse insufficientis et inconveniens.

The last reference to Maimonides in q. 7 recalls his equivocal interpretation for the divine names. Aquinas categorically rejects it as on previous occasions. However, this time something new is added:

Some said that nothing could be predicated of God and creatures by way of analogy, but only equivocally. This is the opinion of **Rabbi Moses**, as it appears from his sayings. This opinion, however, cannot be true.⁴⁴

The reference is to *Guide*, I, 56:

Similarly 'wise', 'powerful', 'alive', and 'possessed of will' are only said of Him and of any other to whom they apply by pure equivocality, because no similarity whatsoever exists between Him and what is other than Him. Do not think that these names are ambiguous or said by analogy, because the names predicated in such way are suitable for two things between which there is a certain similarity, and that in which they converge is an accident and does not belong to their essence.⁴⁵

The literal meaning of Maimonides' words cannot be misunderstood: he rejects any attribution to God other than by equivocality. Aquinas criticizes the statement as unacceptable, for it casts doubts about the possibility of the knowledge of God. However he adds that this is "as it appears from his sayings". In other words, he

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* a. 7, Resp.: Quidam autem aliter dixerunt, quod de Deo et creatura nihil praedicatur analogice, sed aequivoce pure. Et huius opinionis est Rabbi Moyses, ut ex suis dictis patet. Ista autem opinio non potest esse vera.

⁴⁵ *Dux*, I, LV, fol. XXIv: Similiter etiam sapiens, potens, vivus et volens non dicitur de eo et de omni alio cui conveniunt nisi equivocatione pura, quia inter ipsum et alia nulla est similitudo aliquo modo. Nec putes quod ista nomina sint ambigua, vel per transsumptionem dicta, quia nomina quae sic dicuntur conveniunt duobus inter quae est similitudo aliquo modo, et illud in quo conveniunt est accidens et non intrat in substantiam alicuius istorum. Cf. *Guide*, I, 56, 131: "Similarly the terms 'knowledge', 'power', 'will', and 'life', as applied to Him, may He be exalted, and to all those possessing knowledge, power, will, and life, are purely equivocal, so that their meaning when they are predicated of Him is in no way like their meaning in other applications. Do not deem that they are used amphibolously. For when terms are used amphibolously they are predicated of two things between which there is a likeness in respect to some notion, which notion is an accident attached to both of them and not a constituent element of the essence of each one of them." Note that it is the Latin translator who understands that the term "amphibolous" can mean either "ambiguous" or "analogous", and St. Thomas just adopts the meaning. H.A. Wolfson had attributed to Aquinas himself this innovation. Cf. "The Amphibolous Terms in Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy and Maimonides," 475.

seems unsure that this is really Maimonides' intention. In fact, he is aware of Maimonides' declared belief in the destiny of the human intellect to attain the knowledge of God, repeated throughout the *Guide*. It is also clear to him that this belief openly contradicts an extreme reduction of all language to equivocality. Moreover, Aquinas probably keeps in mind Maimonides' own assertion that his statements have to be taken with precautions and that the *Guide* must be considered as a whole, chapter after chapter, without quick judgements about the author's intention.

The different course of their doctrines of the knowledge of God despite their common departure point needs to be explained. Maimonides' search for a definition of a proper language about God is led by a main concern: attributing names of created perfections to God can be equated to idolatry because any such attribute is a defective mental representation of the deity. This representation is taken for the real God at the epistemological level and it necessarily introduces multiplicity in the notion of God, fragmenting the simplicity and unity of the divine essence.⁴⁶ Since neither language nor the intellect properly expresses God, he understands that the same happens at the onto-transcendental level and that no relation is possible between the world and its Creator:

It is clear at the first glance that there is no interchange or affinity between the Creator and any of the things created by Him, because it belongs to the nature and disposition of those things having something in common that they may be exchanged. However, He is a necessary being and anything which is not Him is a possible being, as we explained. If this is so, there cannot be any affinity in them.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *Guide*, I, 37, 84: "Their idolatrous worship entails their deserving destruction, for the reason that their infidelity bears upon a prerogative reserved to God alone, may He be exalted, I mean the prerogative of being worshipped and magnified, just as Scripture says: 'And ye shall serve the Lord', and so on. This is so ordained in order that God's existence may be firmly established in the belief of the multitude. Now the idolaters thought that this prerogative belonged to that which was other than God, and this led to the disappearance of the belief in His existence, may He be exalted, from among the multitude. For the multitude grasp only the actions of worship, not their meanings or the true reality of the Being worshipped through them."

⁴⁷ *Dux*, I, LI, fol. XIXr: Manifestum est in principio considerationis quod non est aliqua communicatio seu coniunctio inter Creatorem et aliquam de substantiis creatiis ipsius, quoniam de proprietate et dispositionibus coniunctorum in aliquo est ut transmutentur. Ipse autem est necesse esse et quicquid est

In fact, since both intellect and speech are clearly insufficient for the production of notions fully applicable to the divine nature, their articulation and connection remains unclear and out of reach. These are Maimonides' words on the relations between God and creatures:

Know that likeness is a comparison between two things and that in cases where no comparison exists between two things, no likeness between them can be thought to exist. Similarly in all cases in which there is no likeness between two things, there is no comparison between them. An example of this is that one does not say that this heat is like this color, or that this voice is like this sweetness. This is evident in itself. Accordingly, in view of the fact that no comparison between us and the Creator exists or can exist — namely between Him and that which is other than He — it follows that there is no such likeness.⁴⁸

The assertion that the relation between God and creatures is nonexistent can be understood only if Maimonides' approach to the problem of the knowledge of God and his departure point is of a categorial nature, i.e., that he is only taking into account the categorial dimension of being, which is the knowledge provided by the created world. In fact, this approach would confine the discourse about the knowledge of God to the notions' limits as they are grasped in the world, keeping the divine reality out of reach for any intellectual operation. Aquinas' answer to this question will become manifest in the next subsection, devoted to his analysis of Maimonides' position according to the *Quaestio de attributis*.

praeter ipsum est possibile esse, sicut exponemus. Ex quo sic est, ergo non est ibi coniunctio. Cf. *Guide*, I, 52, 117: "It is clear at the first glance that there is no correlation between Him and the things created by Him. For one of the properties of two correlated things is the possibility of inverting the statement concerning them while preserving their respective relations. Now He, may He be exalted, is a necessary being while that which is other than He is a possible being, as we shall make clear. There accordingly can be no correlation between them."

⁴⁸ *Dux*, I, LV, fol. XXI^r: Scito quod similitudo est comparatio inter duo, et omnia duo inter quae non est comparatio non ascendit in cor quod sit inter ea similitudo ulla. Similiter inter quae non est similitudo nec inter ea est comparatio, cuius rei exemplum est quod non dicitur quod iste calor est similis huic tincturae, nec ista vox est similis huic dulcedini, et hoc est notum per se. Quoniam ergo nulla comparatio est inter nos et Creatorem, nec potest esse, scilicet inter ipsum et id quod est extra ipsum, sequitur quod nulla sit similitudo. Cf. *Guide*, I, 56, 130.

2. Maimonides' Position According to the *Quaestio de attributis*

I summarized the *Quaestio de attributis*' structure and contents in the framework of Aquinas' general answer to the problem of the divine attributes in Chapter 2. I did not however wish to deal fully with the question of Maimonides' place in this text until an examination of Aquinas' references to him in other relevant works prior and contemporary to it was completed. It is necessary now to focus on it. The article reveals the common Aristotelian source for their answer to the problem of the attributes, summarizes the reason for their doctrinal differences, and points to a development in Aquinas' use of the *Guide* that is noticeable in his references to Maimonides contemporary and subsequent to this period. To uncover all aspects of this use will be the objective of 3, 4, and 5 Chapters.

(a) *The Multiplicity of the Divine Names*

The *Quaestio*'s first of the six *sed contra* that pave the way for Aquinas' long response manifests his interest in holding a discourse about God's transcendental perfection. He recalls three authorities who endorse the opinion that the attributes truly refer to the divine reality. One of them is Aristotle in Book V of the *Metaphysics*:

Dionysius says that God is called perfect, as He comprehends everything in Himself. This is also what the Philosopher and the Commentator say [V *Metaph.*, text 21], that God is called perfect because all perfections found in all the genera of things exist in Him. Now this perfection, according to which God is perfect, is real (*secundum rem*) and not only in the intellect (*non secundum intellectum tantum*). Consequently, these attributes that display perfection are not purely in the intellect, but in the real thing which is God.⁴⁹

Aristotle does not refer to God in the text quoted, but Aquinas' reference to the *genera entis* certainly points to Aristotle's Book V as a major foundation for Aquinas' analysis of the knowledge of the divine perfection through the created beings, in which he takes the existing perfections in the created world as the basis for the apprehension of God's perfection. His reference to agreement

⁴⁹ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q.1, a. 3, sc. 1.

between a Christian theologian, a Greek philosopher, and a Muslim scholar conveys the message that his position is not linked to a particular religious point of view, but it is rather a conclusion attainable by natural reason.

Aristotle distinguishes in V *Metaphysics* four meanings of being: by accident, per se or by predication, as the truth of a proposition (being and nonbeing), as potency and act.⁵⁰ At the end of Book VI he adds that being-by-accident should not be studied by *Metaphysics* because its cause is unknown, and likewise being-in-propositions, because its cause is the intellect alone. This means that this meaning of being belongs to the logical–linguistic level, whereas being-by-predication — summarized in the nine categories — and the act of being belong to the ontological level. According to the texts examined in the previous subsection, Aquinas regards it as essential for a comprehensive answer to the problem to distinguish any discussion about God’s ontotranscendental being from that on the truth of a proposition about the divine being. Maimonides focuses on the linguistic level and Aquinas corrects him in *De Potentia*, q. 7 for the sake of a more comprehensive approach that takes into account all the meanings of being including God’s transcendental being. *De Potentia*, q. 9, explicitly recalls Aristotle’s distinction in Book V of the *Metaphysics* between *ens* and being, meaning the thing’s essence or act of being, and their use as the truth of a proposition. In this last sense — explains Aquinas — it is said that blindness exists when a man is said to be blind, despite the ontological nonbeing of the blindness. Aquinas’ main critique of Maimonides according to this distinction would be the fact that the latter transforms the knowledge of God as *ens per se* into a non-knowledge based on the negation’s logical existence, in order to stress God’s transcendental being.

Maimonides makes an attempt to use the Aristotelian categories or predicaments as described in V *Metaphysics* for a language about

⁵⁰ *Metaph.* V, 7, 1017^a: Quae quidem igitur secundum accidens esse dicuntur, sic dicuntur aut eo quod eidem enti ambo insunt, aut quia enti illud inest, aut quia ipsum esse cui inest de quo ipsum praedicatur. Secundum se vero esse dicuntur quaecumque significant figuras praedicationis. Quoties enim dicitur, toties esse significat. Quoniam ergo praedicatorum alia quid est significant, alia quale, alia quantum, alia ad aliquid, alia facere aut pati, alia ubi, alia quando: horum unicuique idem esse significat. Cf. the same scheme though in different order in *Metaph.* VI, 4, 1025^a: by accident, in the propositions, by predication, potency and act.

God in *Guide*, I, 52. Aquinas, for his part, does it in *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 4, a. 3, and they reach different conclusions. Both conclude that the scheme of the categories is insufficient for the language about God, but whereas Maimonides chooses to depart from any positive language as a consequence and gives a logical gist to the notions by negation, Aquinas formulates the transcendental perfections of God through analogy. I will first analyze Maimonides' use of the Aristotelian scheme in *Guide*, I, 52, and then collate it with Aquinas' own version and answers.

The chapter's opening outlines Maimonides' exclusive interest in the linguistic and the categorial — i.e., accidental — dimension of the genera:

Any attribute predicated of any thing, of which thing it is accordingly said that it is such and such, must necessarily belong to one of the following five groups.⁵¹

By doing this Maimonides modifies Aristotle's original intention, because he had in fact asserted that the meanings of being are as many as the ways of predicating, but this parallelism refers to beings in the created world and the predication of definable things, and does not necessarily imply that the predication of divine perfections should be subject to it.

The first group refers to the predication of definitions and the second to the predication of parts of definitions. Both of them obviously refer to Aristotle's first meaning of being (*ens*) as substance or essence (*quid est*). Maimonides translates Aristotle's category of substances in terms of linguistic predication, in which the thing's essence is expressed by the definition. He then removes from the list, quantity and passion as attached only to bodily things and therefore inapplicable to the divine nature. Quality is likewise discarded, and Maimonides concludes that the three first groups are useless for the language about God:

With regard to those three groups of attributes — which are the attributes indicative of the essence or of a part of the essence or of a certain quality subsisting in the essence — it has already been made clear that they are impossible in reference to Him, may He be exalted, for all of them are indicative of composition.⁵²

⁵¹ *Guide*, I, 52, 114.

⁵² *Ibid.* 116.

The fourth group is relation, which Maimonides initially deems less harmful for the divine transcendence but soon rejects for the following reason:

It is impossible to represent oneself that a relation subsists between the intellect and color although, according to our school, both of them are comprised by the same 'existence'. How then can a relation be represented between Him and what is other than He when there is no notion comprising in any respect both of the two, inasmuch as existence is, in our opinion, affirmed of Him, may He be exalted, and of what is other than He merely *by way of absolute equivocation*. There is, in truth, no relation in any respect between Him and any of His creatures. For relation is always found between two things falling under the same — necessarily proximate — species, whereas there is no relation between the two things if they merely fall under the same genus.⁵³

Maimonides understands existence as a predicate, as a notion side by side with all the notions of perfections and confined to the logical–linguistic level as the truth of a proposition (in two cases, God and creatures, which are equivocal). There is no trace of the other meanings of being as ontological and transcendental being according to Aristotle's scheme. Moreover, he uses in his example the distinction between dissimilar notions like intellect — which, meaning one of the human faculties, directly points to something real — and color — which is what Aquinas would call a second attribution term because it comprises all existing colors — to exemplify the kind of nonexisting relation that can be conceived between God and creatures. Maimonides seems to understand the existence of a real thing and that of a logical notion as equivocal because one of them has an ontological existence whereas the other has a logical existence, in the mind, and uses this example to describe the only possible comparison between God's existence and that of His creatures. He concludes that, in the same way that there cannot be comparative relation between different genera, so there is no relation whatsoever between the things comprised under any of them and God, who is outside this scheme.

Although I am focusing here on Maimonides' position it is worth noting the variations that the *Dux neutrorum* displays in this place, which surely made it difficult for Aquinas to understand his position on the issue:

⁵³ *Ibid.* 117-118.

It is impossible to represent oneself that ‘intellect’ and ‘nature’ may be compared although both of them share something, i.e. in our knowledge. If this is so, how can a relation be represented between Him who has nothing in common with any other thing and what is other than He, when there is nothing in common that unites them, inasmuch as ‘essence’ is, in our opinion, affirmed of the Creator and of what is other than He merely by way of absolute equivocation, and there is no relation between Him and any of His creatures? Relation is indeed found between two things that are comprised under the same common species, close to each other.⁵⁴

The Latin translator conveys the example’s intention even though he writes “nature” instead of “color”, since both are second attribution terms and their existence cannot imply any equivocality. But then he misreads “although both of them are comprised by the same existence” as “although both of them share something in our knowledge”, which changes Maimonides’ original intention because he was pointing to the equivocal application of the name “existence” to both of them, given that one of them exists in reality whereas the other exists only in the intellect. The Latin version, instead, stresses that both notions (intellect and nature) exist in our intellect. The original explanation is completely lost. Finally, the Latin translation renders “existence” as “essence”. I will elaborate on this later on.

Maimonides also rejects time and place as unsuitable for God and focuses on the last group, which predicates actions from a subject. An action — he remarks — is remote from the essence of the thing of which it is predicated, and therefore:

It is permitted that this kind should be predicated of God, may He be exalted, after you have – as shall be made clear – come to know that the acts in question need not be carried out by means of differing notions subsisting within the essence of the agent, but that all His different acts, may He be exalted, are all of them carried out by means of His essence, and not, as we have made clear, by means of a superadded notion.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Dux* I, LI, fol. XIXr: Impossibile est ut ascendat in cor quod aliqua sit comparatio inter intellectum et naturam licet ambo communicent in aliquo, scilicet in scientia nostra. Quod cum ita sit, quomodo ascendet in cor quod comparatio sit inter illum qui nihil habet commune cum aliqua re, et rem aliam, cum non sit aliquod commune quod ea coniungat, quoniam essentia secundum nos non dicitur de Creatore et de aliis nisi equivoce pure. Comparatio namque semper invenitur inter duas res quae continentur sub una specie communi, proxima illis.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 119. Cf. *Dux, ibid.*: Ideoque conveniens est ut ab illius sic nominetur Creator, ex quo sciveris quod ista opera variabilia non sequitur ut sint operata modis variabilibus in substantia eorum qui operantur, sicut explanabo. Omnia vero opera Creatoris variabilia omnia in quam sunt in substantia sua non in modo additionis, sicut praediximus.

In order to avoid any attribution of multiplicity, Maimonides stresses that God performs His actions by means of His own essence. The idea is clear and Aquinas would perfectly subscribe to it. As in the statement previously quoted from I, 57 where Maimonides writes about the notion of oneness attaching to God's essence, the distinction between the logical and the ontological levels is not explained. Both of them even appear here mingled. Maimonides writes that God carries out His actions by means of His essence and not by means of an added *notion*.⁵⁶ However, a notion belongs to the domain of knowledge, whereas an action belongs to that of reality. Strictly speaking, no one — not even God — could ever perform actions by means of notions. Of course, it can also be interpreted that Maimonides really means by notions their correlative reality in God as, for example, different faculties by means of which He would perform the diverse actions. But it is just as strange to attribute to Maimonides a misuse of language due to inadvertence in a work where he repeatedly notes that every single word and sentence has been carefully weighed. This leaves only one of two possibilities. It could mean a deliberate purpose to break the rules of language on the assumption that human expression is helpless when it comes to speaking about God. Or else it could point to a real lacuna in Maimonides' articulation of metaphysics and epistemology. The answer to this question would demand a thorough analysis of all the texts of the *Guide* showing the same tendency and goes beyond the scope of this study. In any case, the articulation between the logical and the ontological dimensions appears to be missing in key texts of the *Guide* on the divine attributes and Aquinas points to it. Maimonides rejects all categories for a language about God except action, which he describes in the peculiar terms that have been examined in the previous subsection and that I will analyze again later in the context of the *Quaestio de attributis*.

Aquinas' *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2 and 3, recalls the role of the *rationes* for the apprehension of God's perfection and describes the kind of community of perfections that, in his opinion, can be said to exist between God and His creatures. His twofold departure point is the assumption that God is the universal cause and

⁵⁶ In Hebrew, *'inyan*.

that it is possible to distinguish three kinds of causes: univocal, equivocal, and analogical. In the first kind, the agent and the effect have in common the name and the perfection's *ratio*. In the second, they have in common the name but not the *ratio*. The third kind consists of the community of name and a *ratio* that, originally meaning the thing apprehended in the created world, is transformed by removal of all imperfection and directed by eminence to a divine reality which is in itself far above human grasp.

In I Sent., d. 8, q. 4. a. 2 inquires whether God belongs to the category or predicament of substances, and a. 3 explores the possibility of applying other predicaments to Him.⁵⁷ Aquinas does not mention here Maimonides' attempt to apply the Aristotelian predicaments of created beings to a language about God, but his answer to this question suggests a response to Maimonides' position.

The same process of apprehension is extended to all names attributed to God:

I answer that whatever is found in creatures, if predicated of God, it is predicated eminently, as Dionysius says, as it happens in all the other causes and effects. Therefore it is necessary to remove every imperfection from what is predicated of God.⁵⁸

God's causality on creatures is analogical, of which created causes would be a kind of imperfect similarity. This conclusion is reasonable, since there is no parallel to the role of God in the created world, and including the divine causality in any other kind belonging strictly to the relations between creatures would have showed a misleading notion of God's reality. This danger is, in fact, what Maimonides wanted to avoid by defining the relation as equivocal. Analogy is, thus, essential for attributing created perfections to God. Since these perfections are all included in the Aristotelian categories or predicaments of being and it is necessary to overcome the difficulty of attributing them to God as they are found in the created world, Aquinas suggests analyzing them in the following way:

But two things are found in each of the nine predicaments: the *ratio* of accident and the *ratio* proper to that genus, like quantity or quality. The *ratio* of accident contains imperfection, because to be an

⁵⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 4, a. 3: *Utrum alia praedicamenta de Deo dicantur.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Respondeo.

accident is to inhere and to depend, and therefore to produce composition with the subject. Therefore, nothing can be predicated of God according to the *ratio* of accident.⁵⁹

He concludes that, among the Aristotelian categories, only the *rationes* of relations and the *rationes* of substances are free from objections for an attribution to the divine nature if they are properly considered, i.e., as analogical in God and creatures. God is named after perfections found among creatures, but only upon removal of every imperfection found in them and by considering every perfection eminently. The *ratio propria* of any predicament other than relation lacks perfection as long as it says something of a substance. Relation has a different status because its being is just a reference to something external to the holder of the relation. It does not say anything about the subject of such a relation, who cannot be considered even a subject in the proper sense of the term. Unlike Maimonides who had discarded all the categories but the attribution of actions, he concludes that among all the possible ways of naming God the less improper ones are the ones in the categories of “substance” and “relation”. He rejects the rest because they are all related to created substances even if they are considered in themselves, and there is no way of stripping them of their accidental nature.

The *Quaestio de attributis* summarizes and completes these conclusions in the five *sed contra*. The first two refer to the two foundations of Aquinas’ solution to the problem already expounded in the earlier formulations of dialogue with Maimonides: God’s perfection and His universal causality on creatures. It is possible to assert that the intellect attains true knowledge of the divine nature through the knowledge of created perfections because God is the Creator of every perfection by way of participation:

Besides Dionysius says that creatures are said to be similar to God in so far as they imitate God, who is not imitable perfectly by any creature. Now this imitation is according to participation in the attributes. Consequently, creatures are similar to God according to wisdom, goodness and the like. But this could not be so if the aforementioned [perfections] were not in God according to their own *rationes*. Therefore the *ratio* of wisdom and goodness are properly in God; and so *rationes* of this kind do not exist only on the part of the intellect.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, sc. 2: Praeterea, Dionysius dicit [IX *De divinis nominibus*], quod creaturae dicuntur Deo similes, in quantum imitantur Deum,

The third outlines the fact that equivocality of perfections in God and creatures cannot serve the purpose of a language about God because it excludes true knowledge:

Besides, wisdom is not said equivocally of God and creatures; otherwise created wisdom would not lead to the knowledge of uncreated wisdom, and the same with power, goodness and other examples of this kind. But attributes that are predicated of many according to completely diverse *rationes* are predicated equivocally. Thus in some way the *ratio* of wisdom, being said of God and of creatures, is one, though not by univocality but by analogy, and the same with the others. Now the *ratio* of wisdom, when it is said of creatures, differs from the *rationes* of goodness and power. Consequently, even when these are said of God they are not the same *rationes* but diverse.⁶¹

The last two *sed contra* stress that every true *ratio* signifies something existing in reality and that the divine reality guarantees their being one in God despite their notional multiplicity.⁶²

qui perfecte imitabilis non est a creatura. Ista autem imitatio est secundum participationem attributorum. Ergo creaturae sunt Deo similes, secundum sapientiam, bonitatem et hujusmodi. Sed hoc non posset esse, nisi praedicta essent in Deo secundum proprias rationes. Ergo ratio sapientiae et bonitatis proprie in Deo est; et ita hujusmodi rationes non sunt tantum ex parte intellectus.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Sc. 3: Praeterea, sapientia non dicitur aequivoce de Deo et creatura; alias sapientia creata non duceret in cognitionem sapientiae increatae; et similiter est de potentia et bonitate, et de aliis hujusmodi. ... Ergo aliquo modo ratio sapientiae, secundum quod de Deo dicitur et de creaturis, est una, non quidem per univocationem, sed per analogiam: et similiter est de aliis.

⁶² *Ibid.* Sc. 4: Praeterea, sicut Deus vere est pater, ita etiam vere est sapiens. Sed ex hoc quod vere Deus est pater, non potest dici quod ratio paternitatis sit in intellectu tantum. Ergo nec ex hoc quod Deus vere est sapiens, potest dici quod ratio sapientiae sit in intellectu tantum. Sed ratio paternitatis, quae realiter in Deo est, non est eadem cum ratione divinitatis. Unde nec paternitate est Deus, nec divinitate est pater: et tamen ista pluralitas rationum non tollit simplicitatem divinam, propter hoc quod essentia et paternitas idem sunt in re. Ergo similiter si ponamus sapientiam et essentiam esse idem re omnino, et rationes eorum diversas, non tolletur simplicitas divinae essentiae. Sed divinae essentiae simplicitas est tota causa quare ista attributa in Deo non differunt. Ergo non est inconveniens ponere, quod sapientiae et bonitatis ratio in Deo est, et tamen una non est altera, si res omnino una ponatur.

Sc. 5: Si dicatur quod non est simile de relationibus personalibus et de attributis essentialibus, quia in Deo non sunt nisi duo praedicamenta, scilicet substantia et relatio, unde ratio relationis est alia a ratione substantiae, non tamen ratio sapientiae et aliorum absolutorum est alia a substantia: contra. Relatio in divinis habet duplicem comparisonem: unam ad suum correlativum, secundum quam ad aliquid dicitur; aliam ad essentiam, secundum quam est idem re cum ea. Sed secundum id quod aliquid est idem alteri, non facit numerum cum eo. Ergo quod relationes ad aliud praedicamentum pertineant quam ad praedicamentum substantiae, est per comparisonem ad suum relativum. Ergo adhuc manet eadem comparatio sapientiae et paternitatis ad essentiam.

The *Respondeo*'s fourfold answers were briefly analyzed in the previous section, but it is possible to add something to questions one and two in light of the above examination of Maimonides' insight into the Aristotelian categories and Aquinas' use of the meanings of being. When the latter explains the nature of the *rationes* he distinguishes between *rationes* of definable and non-definable things.⁶³ The created beings belong to the first group, whereas simple genera and God's being belong to the second one. This represents an implicit criticism by Aquinas of the absence of this distinction in *Guide*, I, 52, where Maimonides' single reference is to things with definition (1st group) and with part of a definition (2nd group). The consequences for Maimonides' position are evident: Maimonides regards the created things as the only way to the knowledge of God, but he takes them as they are, in their limitation, and this proves useless for the divine attributes and leads him to choose the attribute's negative formulation. Aquinas, instead, defines the *ratio* of divine wisdom as what can be apprehended of that name's meaning despite the impossibility of defining such wisdom. He notes that the term *ratio* does not mean such apprehension but it is — like the term "definition" — a second attribution term. The suggestion is again that it is not possible to formulate a human language about God unless we count on this second level of attribution and distinguish the logical-linguistic level to which it belongs from the onto-transcendental one.⁶⁴

The other allusion relevant to Maimonides' position is found under the second question, where Aquinas inquires in which sense the *ratio* is found in the thing. He distinguishes between notions with immediate, remote, and false foundation in reality. Analogy allows for a notion of the second kind whereas equivocality means notions of the third kind, labeling any such knowledge and language about the reality concerned strictly false. The truth is in the intellect, but the source of its verification is in the real thing.⁶⁵

⁶³ On the meanings of *ratio* and the role of analogy for the knowledge of God, cf. my *Los límites del conocimiento de Dios según Alberto Magno*, p. 59-78.

⁶⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, *Respondeo*, ad primum.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* *Respondeo*, ad secundum: Et hujusmodi intentionis licet proximum fundamentum non sit in re, sed in intellectu, tamen remotum fundamentum est res ipsa. Unde intellectus non est falsus, qui has intentiones adinvenit.

The *Respondeo*'s next question extensively reviews Maimonides' answer to the problem of the divine attributes.

Aquinas confirms his reading of the *Guide* already found in *De Potentia*, q. 7. Since God is pure being, nothing else can be predicated of Him. The only attributes both philosophers acknowledge — Aquinas adds — are verified in God by way of negation or by way of causality.

According to Aquinas, Maimonides includes among the attributes by way of negation both those with a negative formulation, e.g., “immaterial”, and also and specifically affirmative names like “wise” and “one” whose meaning is given a peculiar twist.⁶⁶ God would be wise only in the sense that He is not ignorant and one only in the sense that He is not divided. Therefore, names that are originally positive in content when attributed to created beings are stripped of that meaning when attributed to God and stand only for a negation in the intellect, that can be either of the existence of a defect (God is not ignorant) or of the lack of a perfection in the divine nature (God is not divided).⁶⁷ The divine names convey positive knowledge only about the created world, the positive content of any divine name's single contribution to the knowledge of God being simply to say that He is the plenitude of perfection:

Thus it has become clear to you that these attributes are not to be considered in reference to His essence, but in reference to the things that are created.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Guide*, I, 57, 133: “For this reason, we give the gist of the notion and give the mind the correct direction toward the true reality of the matter when we say, one but not through oneness, just as we say eternal in order to indicate that He has not come into being in time.” Cf. *Dux*, I, LVI, fol. XXIV: Et idcirco volumus examinare rationem dicti, et ostendimus intellectui veritatem in dicendo quod est unus non in unitate, sicut dicimus quod est antiquus ut ostendamus quia non est novus.

⁶⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, *Respondeo*, ad tertium: Per modum negationis dupliciter: vel ad removendum privationem seu defectum oppositum, ut dicimus Deum sapientem, ut removeatur defectus qui est in carentibus sapientia; vel secundum quod aliquid ex negatione consequitur, sicut est de hoc nomine unus, qui ex hoc ipso quod non est divisum, est unus. Similiter ex hoc ipso quod est immaterialis, est intelligens. Unde, secundum eos, omnia ista nomina potius sunt inventa ad removendum, quam ad ponendum aliquid in Deo.

⁶⁸ *Guide*, I, 53, 122; also I, 54, 125. Cf. *Dux*, I, LII, fol. XXr: Sic ergo probatur tibi quod istae dispositiones non conveniunt ei cum intenderimus in substantia eius, sed cum intendimus in creata ipsius.

This explains each one's preferences as to what categories are to be acknowledged as divine attributes. Maimonides prefers actions because he focuses on God's effects in the world, which are best defined as effects of divine actions but do not express God's being, whereas Aquinas chooses substance and relation because he is interested in God's transcendental being regardless of His connection with creatures. He stresses this interest in the *Quaestio de attributis* when, examining the categories of relation and substance, he distinguishes two ways of understanding relation in God:

Relation in the divinity has a twofold reference: in one sense it is [referred] to its correlative, according to which it is said relation 'to something' (*ad aliquid*), and in another sense it is compared 'to the essence' (*ad essentiam*), according to which it [the relation] is the same as it [the essence] in reality.⁶⁹

The first coincides with Maimonides' description of God's relation to creatures. The second is genuinely Thomistic and serves as background for Aquinas' explanation of the Trinity, whereby he draws a comparison between divine attributes like wisdom and the Personal relations in the Trinity and their identity *in re* with the divine essence. In any case, Maimonides' rejection of all the categories and his assertion that any language about God only teaches something about the world, lays the ground for his logical doctrine of the negative attributes. He acknowledges the logical background of his position by stressing the role of demonstration for the knowledge of God based on negations:

The negation of a thing whose existence does not pertain to the Creator by means of a demonstration undoubtedly makes you come nearer to Him by one degree.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, sc. 5: Relatio in divinis habet duplicem comparationem: unam ad suum correlativum, secundum quam ad aliquid dicitur; aliam ad essentiam, secundum quam est idem re cum ea. Sed secundum id quod aliquid est idem alteri, non facit numerum cum eo. Ergo quod relationes ad aliud praedicamentum pertineant quam ad praedicamentum substantiae, est per comparationem ad suum relativum.

⁷⁰ *Dux*, I, LVIII^{bis}, fol. XXIIIv: Remotio namque cuiuslibet rei a Creatore quae non est in ipso cum tibi probata fuerit, faciet te appropinquare ipsi per unum gradum sine dubio. Cf. *Guide*, I, 60, 144: "On every occasion on which it becomes clear to you by means of a demonstration that a thing whose existence is thought to pertain to Him, may He be exalted, should rather be negated with reference to Him, you undoubtedly come near to Him by one degree."

The importance of the logical domain for Maimonides is implicit in several places of the *Guide*. He devotes I, 55 to the four elements found in the world that should be rejected by demonstration in order to prove the existence of God: corporeality, affections, privation, and similarity with any existing thing. Since these are found in every created being from which the names of perfections are apprehended, Maimonides concludes that such names cannot be attributed to God even if they mean perfection, for the divine perfection has “no similarity with any existing thing”. Then he confirms: “But that can be understood only by someone who already possesses knowledge of the art of logic and of the nature of creation.”⁷¹ Logic’s proper operation is demonstration and the nature of creation is apprehended by studying natural science. This is coherent with his repeated principle that the created world is the only way for the knowledge of God and his attempt to obtain divine attributes only from the nine Aristotelian predicaments.

Chapter I, 56 deals with the absence of relation and similarity or community between God and creatures and the analysis of univocality and equivocality, and concludes that the latter is the only possible explanation for the use of common names between them. Chapter I, 57, one of Aquinas’ main sources for the analysis of Maimonides’ position as he explicitly states in the *Quaestio de attributis*, again interprets some positive names as merely denying a defect:

All these words are according to the language of men. Similarly we say one, meaning that He has no second, and not that oneness attaches to His essence.⁷²

The quotation outlines Maimonides’ reason for rejecting affirmative names: any real attribution means attaching an accident to the divine essence. Thus, his solution empties the name of its

⁷¹ *Guide*, I, 55, 129. Cf. *Dux*, I, LIII, fol. XXI: Postquam ergo praemisi hoc stramentum, incipiam aliud capitulum et loquar de remotione illius quod putant illi qui credunt dispositiones substantiales Creatoris. Hoc autem non intelliget nisi qui exercitatus fuerit in arte dialectica et in natura creationis.

⁷² *Dux*, I, LVI, fol. XXII: Omnia verba ista sunt de idiomate hominum. Similiter dicimus quod est unus, et hoc est dicere quod non habet secundum, non quod unitas sit adiuncta substantiae ipsius. Cf. *Guide*, I, 57, 133: “All these words as applied to Him are according to the language of the sons of man. Similarly when we say one, the meaning is that He has no equal and not that the notion of oneness attaches to His essence.”

original content and substitutes it for a negation, which is strictly a product of the intellect. In other words, Maimonides' solution consists in redirecting the natural intention of the notions towards the real thing meant back to the logical level in order to avoid their reference to the ontological level, in which no relation is possible between God and creatures. And he does so by endowing the names with a negative meaning.

He further explains the difference between the knowledge grasped through negative and affirmative attributes, and the benefit derived from the first option:

Thus negations have according to this way something in common with affirmations, for it cannot be that they do not bring about some particularization, even if the particularization is only the removal of what we negate, which we did not consider to be removed. Now it is in this that negations differ from attributions: the attributes of affirmation, even if they do not particularize, indicate a part of the thing the knowledge of which is sought, that part being either a part of its essence or one of its accidents. Negations, however, do not mean in any respect anything of the essence the knowledge of which is sought.⁷³

Maimonides expresses the infinite ontological gap between God and creatures by showing the practical uselessness of language and concludes that the knowledge of God's essence is impossible. The transcendence of God is preserved at all three levels — ontological, linguistic, and epistemological:

As everyone is aware that it is not possible, except through negation, to achieve an apprehension of that which is in our power to apprehend of the Creator, and that negation does not give knowledge in any respect of the true reality of the thing with regard to which the matter in question has been negated, all wise men have agreed that the sciences did not apprehend the Creator and that none but He Himself can apprehend what He is, and that our apprehension of Him consists in the inability to attain the apprehension of Him.⁷⁴

⁷³ *Dux*, I, LVII, fol. XXIIr: Et secundum hunc modum communicant abnegationes cum affirmationibus, quia non potest esse ut non terminentur per aliquem terminum, licet nihil sit ibi determinantium nisi remotio eius quod abnegavimus, quod nondum putabamus esse abnegatum. In hoc autem differunt abnegationes ab attributionibus: quia affirmationes licet non sint determinatae, significant aliquid de universitate rei cuius cognitio quaeritur, vel aliquid de substantia ipsius vel aliquod accidens de accidentibus ipsius. Negationes vero non significant de substantia quaesita quid sit aliquo modo. Cf. *Guide*, I, 58, 134-135.

⁷⁴ *Dux*, I, LVIII, fol. XXIIIr: Et quoniam quilibet sentit quod non apprehendimus de Creatore quod est in nostra potentia nisi apprehendamus per

Back in the *Respondeo* of the *Quaestio*, and after analyzing Maimonides' version of the attributes of negation, Aquinas examines those of causality and finds them likewise unsuitable for the knowledge of God. According to Avicenna and Maimonides, God is said to be good either because he is the cause of goodness in creatures or because His effects describe Him in a way that can be assimilated to that of creatures with a particular character, e.g., willing, pious, or angered. These attributes would be granted only by similarity with creatures' behavior. This explanation, however, responds to a reality named according to perfections or attributes perceived in His effects and not to the nature of an ontological cause. Maimonides confirms this when clarifying that actions and relations, the two divine attributes that he would be inclined to accept though in different degrees, have definitely no support in reality:

It makes no difference whether these diverse attributes and names are according to His actions or to diverse relations between Him and the things produced by the actions, in conformity with what we have likewise explained regarding the truth of relation and its being merely something that is in thought, not real.⁷⁵

In this sense, the cause receives legitimacy and is named from its effects. God as cause as Maimonides understands it, is reduced to being a source of created perfections that have no real relation with Him. The mere similarity between God's and the creature's actions justifies also his assertion that the names of created perfections are at the same level as the ones that mean something that, among creatures, is considered a defect as, for instance, the attribute of wrath.⁷⁶ But this explanation — adds Aquinas —

abnegationem, abnegatio vero non facit scire aliquid de veritate rei a qua fit abnegatio, idcirco convenerunt sapientes quod scientiae non appraehenderunt Creatorem, et non appraehendit quid est nisi ipse, et appraehensio nostra respectu ipsius est defectus appropinquandi appraehensioni eius. Cf. *Guide*, I, 59, 139.

⁷⁵ *Dux*, I, LII, XXr: Nec multum refert quod istae dispositiones et nominationes sunt secundum opera, vel secundum varias operationes inter ipsum et operata, per viam quam exposuimus de veritate comparationis, quia est cogitatio, non vera. Cf. *Guide*, I, 53, 123.

⁷⁶ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, *Respondeo*, ad tertium: Item per modum causalitatis dupliciter: vel inquantum producit ista in creaturis, ut dicatur Deus bonus, quia bonitatem creaturis influit et sic de aliis; vel inquantum ad modum creaturae se habet, ut dicatur Deus volens vel pius, inquantum se habet ad modum volentis vel pii in modo producendi effectum, sicut dicitur iratus, quia ad modum irati se habet.

contradicts the ontological nature of the relation of causality and of the perfections. In fact, Maimonides places them at the same level as their absence, intending to preserve the created perfections' limitation and God's infinite transcendence.⁷⁷ Thus, Aquinas concludes:

According to this [position], whatever is apprehended of the attributes' names does not refer to God as a kind of likeness of something found in God. It follows that these names' *rationes* are not in God as if their proximate foundation was in Him, but only their remote one, as we say of the relations that are predicated of God *ex tempore*. Relations of such a kind do not exist in God *secundum rem*, but follow a way of understanding, as has been said in regard to the intentions. Therefore, according to this opinion, these attributes' *rationes* are only in the intellect and not in the reality that is God, and the intellect conceives them from the contemplation of creatures by negation or by causality, as has been said.⁷⁸

This position leads Maimonides to the conclusion that all knowledge of God is reduced to the existence of a being, Creator of the world, who is absolutely not like any of his creatures. Even the notions of causality and existence are considered equivocal in reference to the ones experienced in the created world.⁷⁹ The *Quaestio* concludes:

According to this opinion it follows that all names predicated of God and creatures are said equivocally, and saying that creatures are good or wise or anything else of the kind expresses no likeness of creatures to their Creator. **Rabbi Moses** says this explicitly.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *Guide* I, 53, 123.

⁷⁸ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Respondeo, ad tertium: Secundum hoc, illud quod concipitur de nominibus attributorum, non refertur ad Deum, ut sit similitudo alicujus quod in eo est. Unde sequitur quod rationes istorum nominum non sunt in Deo, quasi fundamentum proximum habeant in ipso, sed remotum; sicut nos dicimus de relationibus quae ex tempore de Deo dicuntur; hujusmodi enim relationes in Deo secundum rem non sunt, sed sequuntur modum intelligendi, sicut dictum est de intentionibus. Et sic, secundum hanc opinionem, rationes horum attributorum sunt tantum in intellectu, et non in re, quae Deus est; et intellectus eas adinvenit ex consideratione creaturarum vel per negationem vel per causalitatem, ut dictum est.

⁷⁹ *Guide*, I, 35, 80: "The term existence can only be applied equivocally to His existence and to that of things other than He." The Latin version brings "essence" instead of "existence". Cf. *Dux*, I, XXXIII, fol. XIIIv: Similiter essentia sua et essentia de aliis dicta, equivoce dicitur, et non communicant nisi in nomine sicut postea explanabimus.

⁸⁰ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Respondeo, ad tertium.

This, asserted in several places in the *Guide*, is extended to all notions attributed to God:

Between the attributions ascribed to Him and the attributions found among us there is nothing in common in any respect or in any mode, apart from the name.⁸¹

Summarizing, it becomes evident that, being perfectly consistent with his approach in the first *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas' description of Maimonides' position in the *Quaestio de attributis* reveals a deeper and more comprehensive insight into the similarities and the differences between the two philosophers, while maintaining the same analysis of the *Guide* already implied in earlier references.⁸²

Aquinas' solutions to the problem are still the notions of *ratio* and analogy. If we were to translate the differences between the two philosophers in Aquinas' words, according to Maimonides the name's signification has no relation with the real thing which is the divine being because there is no common notion for the created and uncreated perfections, namely the same *ratio*. For Aquinas, instead, the *ratio* is common to both but modified by analogy in order to match the created and the uncreated and keep the infinite distance between them. This is possible because the *ratio* belongs to the domain of knowledge, and so it can be modified without impugning the divine transcendence, whereas the intentionality to the reality of God expressed by the *ratio* remains the same. According to Maimonides, however, the *rationes* of these so-called divine names are in fact only in the intellect and their meaning matches only the created perfections, not the divine being.

⁸¹ *Dux*, I, LV, fol. XXIV: Inter istas dispositiones quae attribuuntur ei, et inter alias dispositiones quae apud nos inveniuntur, nulla est participatio nisi in nomine tantum. Cf. *Guide* I, 56, 131: "The meaning of the qualificative attributions ascribed to Him and the meaning of the attributions known to us have nothing in common in any respect or in any mode; these attributions have in common only the name and nothing else."

⁸² Cf. for instance *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2: Quidam autem dicunt, quod ista attributa non differunt nisi penes connotata in creaturis: quod non potest esse, tum quia causa non habet aliquid ab effectu, sed e converso: unde Deus non dicitur sapiens quia ab eo est sapientia, sed potius res creata dicitur sapiens inquantum imitatur divinam sapientiam: tum quia ab aeterno creaturis non existentibus, etiamsi nunquam futurae fuissent, fuit verum dicere, quod est sapiens, bonus et huiusmodi. Nec idem omnino significaretur per unum et per aliud, sicut idem significatur per nomina synonyma.

The *Quaestio de attributis* outlines the common Aristotelian source of their inquiry into the nature of the divine names, namely V *Metaphysics*. Their differences stem from their diverse use of the doctrine contained in this Book. Maimonides attempts to match the Aristotelian categories or predicaments of created beings only to conclude that they are deficient for a language about God. He then chooses action and negation to solve the problem, but only if both are given a logical twist towards a modal ontology. This means that negation would be the end of the intellectual quest for God in this world and that the divine actions in the world are equated to effectiveness, which is the existential version of being as the truth of a proposition as opposed to being as pure onto-transcendental act. This version of action as effectiveness stems from the single-sided consideration of categorial being which, as Maimonides and Aquinas agree, is insufficient for a proper language about God. At the categorial level, in fact, action can be equated to effectiveness as long as creatures are considered strictly as effects endowed with univocal perfections.⁸³

Aquinas addresses the issue by broadening the Aristotelian contribution of V *Metaphysics* to the discussion and adducing the distinction between God's onto-transcendental being and being as truth in the propositions. Maimonides instead had kept the notions of action and negation at the logical level. Aquinas redefines the problem by translating God into pure act, the divine action into causality and creatures-effect into beings by participation. Considering being from a transcendental perspective, he transforms the Maimonidean effectiveness of God — as mere cause of effects — into divine actuality and the equivocal divine names taken from the Aristotelian categories into perfections apprehended from the world and attributed to God by analogy. As for negation, it recovers its original Aristotelian meaning as “negation of affirmation” that cannot stand by itself and implies multiplicity, being discarded as the last step in the intellectual inquiry about God's nature.

⁸³ This ontology focuses on the notions of effectivity, possibility and necessity, which would replace the Aristotelian notions of act and potency, and proposes “existence” as a substitute for “being”. For more on this issue and its ramifications in contemporary philosophy, cf. A. Llano, *Metafísica y lenguaje*, 236-264.

There are also new elements in Aquinas' revision of Maimonides' position. First, he tempers his judgement on the latter's explanation about the cause of the attributes' multiplicity by offering two possible interpretations:

Consequently, the ones who said that this plurality is only on the part of our intellect or on the part of the effects, in a way said something true and in a way not. If this refers to the cause of the multiplication they are right, because it is on the part of our intellect and in a way on the part of the effects, since our intellect cannot apprehend the divine perfection in one conception but only in many. One reason for the above stems from the fact that [our intellect] is used to created things.⁸⁴

He notes that their multiplicity can be considered according to the intellect in the sense that the origin of the process of multiplication is the apprehension by a created intellect, in itself an effect of God. If it were an apprehension by an infinite intellect, the notion of the divine perfection would remain according to its real nature, i.e., one and single.

The second explanation is similar to that already attributed to an unknown authority in *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2 and rejected:

However, if it refers to the way these *rationes* are attributed to God, they are wrong. It is not that God is good because He does good things or because He behaves like the good, but it is because He is good that He does good, and others behave like Him by participating in His goodness. Consequently, even if He had never created or were to create any creature, He would still be intrinsically such that it would be possible to contemplate Him truly according to these conceptions that our intellect has now when contemplating Him.⁸⁵

The foundation of all perfection is God, not the created being, and therefore the attributes are more properly attributed to God

⁸⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Respondeo, ad quartum: Qui ergo dixerunt, quod pluralitas ista est tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel ex parte effectuum, quodammodo verum dixerunt, et quodammodo non. Si enim hoc referatur ad causam multiplicationis, sic verum dicunt, quod est ex parte intellectus nostri, et effectuum quodammodo, ex eo quod intellectus noster non potest concipere divinam perfectionem una conceptione, sed pluribus; cujus una ratio est ex hoc quod est assuefactus ad res creatas.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Si autem referatur ad modum quo istae rationes attribuuntur Deo, falsum dicunt. Non enim ex hoc quod bona facit, vel quia ad modum bonorum se habet, bonus est; sed quia bonus est, ideo bona facit, et alia participando ejus bonitatem ad modum ejus se habent. Unde si nullam creaturam fecisset nec facturus esset, ipse in se talis esset ut posset vere considerari secundum omnes istas conceptiones, quas habet nunc intellectus noster ipsum considerando.

than to creatures despite the fact that the intellect apprehends them first and more easily in the created world. The attributes really express the nature of God and the notions contained in them really mean the divine reality. They would stay the same even if no created intellect were to apprehend the divine essence, because they are correct apprehensions and the divine names are correct expressions of God's nature.⁸⁶ The verification of the examples of apprehension of God remains God himself, and not the created beings, and this is the reason for the tension that pervades Aquinas' writings between the apprehension of a notion of God through His creatures and the fact that a created intellect cannot comprehend completely the divine essence. The answer, attributed to Maimonides as a hypothesis, would mean an inversion in the hierarchy by subjecting the level of reality — where the ontological being is found — to the logical one existing only in the intellect.

Aquinas, who rejects this explanation, understands the reason for Maimonides' effort is to avoid jeopardizing the divine transcendence. Despite his conviction that there is something in God that really corresponds to the apprehension of the intellect, Aquinas concedes that the knowledge of the divine essence by a created intellect remains a mystery. Thus, he devotes the answers to the objections to stressing the insufficiency of the knowledge of God that man can obtain in this life. The answer to the second objection asserts that although the divine reality authenticates the names, they fall short of providing knowledge of God *secundum se*.⁸⁷ His answer to the third objection notes that they point

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Et sic patet quartum, quod pluralitas istorum nominum non tantum est ex parte intellectus nostri formantis diversas conceptiones de Deo, quae dicuntur diversae rationes, ut ex dictis, art. anteced., patet, sed ex parte ipsius Dei, in quantum scilicet est aliquid in Deo correspondens omnibus istis conceptionibus, scilicet plena et omnimoda ipsius perfectio, secundum quam contingit quod quodlibet nominum significantium istas conceptiones, de Deo vere et proprie dicitur; non autem ita quod aliqua diversitas vel multiplicitas ponatur in re, quae Deus est, ratione istorum attributorum.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* a. 2: Ad secundum dicendum, quod intellectus noster id quod concipit de bonitate vel de sapientia non refert in Deum quasi in eo sit per modum quo ipse concipit, quia hoc esset comprehendere ejus sapientiam vel bonitatem; sed intelligit ipsam bonitatem divinam, cui aliquo modo simile est quod intellectus noster concipit, esse supra id quod de eo concipitur. Unde per hujusmodi conceptiones non videtur ipse Deus secundum quod in se est, sed intelligitur supra intellectum. Et hoc vult dicere Dionysius in illa auctoritate.

to a simple reality with a multiplicity of notions, and this is a grave limitation.⁸⁸ The fourth one notes, however, that the *rationes* are not in the intellect as an autonomous thing and that the attributes are in God identical with God himself. They are in the intellect as in their subject, and in God as in the reality that grants them authenticity.⁸⁹ Finally, the basis for his position on the issue is firmly established by repeating that only the divine nature grants truth to the divine attributes and that it is just in this sense that God can be called the foundation of the attributes, whereas as notions, they have their existence only in the intellect. This enables Aquinas to concede that the doctrine of the divine attributes is not detrimental to the divine simplicity and that, far from being an obstacle to a proper knowledge of God, it is the only explanation that allows for it in this world.⁹⁰

In short, Aquinas considers the divine attributes imperfect similarities of God's perfections in the intellect as they are grasped through the knowledge of created beings in the physical world. He explains that the perplexing multiplicity of divine names is due to God's perfection and the intellect's limitation, which demands that the apprehension be through several notions, corresponding to different ways of considering the divine being. They are all ratified in the reality of God and different among themselves, and such differences stem from the fact that the same

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* a. 3: Ad tertium dicendum, quod multiplicitas ista attributorum nullo modo ponitur in Deo quasi ipse secundum rem sit multiplex; sed tamen ipse secundum suam simplicem perfectionem, multitudini istorum attributorum correspondet, ut vere de Deo dicantur. Et hoc intendit Commentator.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* a. 4: Ad quartum dicendum, quod sicut ratio hominis non dicitur esse in homine quasi res quaedam in ipso, sed est sicut in subjecto in intellectu, et est in homine sicut in eo quod praestat fulcrum veritati ipsius; ita etiam ratio bonitatis divinae est in intellectu sicut in subjecto, in Deo autem sicut in eo quod correspondet per quamdam similitudinem isti rationi, faciens ejus veritatem. Unde patet quod ratio procedit ex malo intellectu ejus quod dicitur.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* a. 5: Ad quintum dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur fundari vel radicari in aliquo metaphorice, ex quo firmitatem habet. Rationes autem intellectae habent duplicem firmitatem: scilicet firmitatem sui esse, et hanc habent ab intellectu, sicut alia accidentia a suis subjectis; et firmitatem suae veritatis, et hanc habent ex re cui conformantur. Ex eo enim quod res est vel non est locutio et intellectus veritatem vel falsitatem habet. Rationes ergo attributorum fundantur vel radicantur in intellectu quantum ad firmitatem sui esse, quia, ut dictum est, art. anteced., intellectus est earum subjectum; in essentia autem divina quantum ad firmitatem suae veritatis; et hoc in nullo repugnat divinae simplicitati.

divine perfection cannot be comprehended in a single notion and that the human intellect initially apprehends God through creatures, which are multiple. The notions of *ratio* and analogy justify both the attributes' faithfulness to the divine reality, their imperfect reality as intellectual notions and their plurality, which is in the intellect but not in God. Maimonides, on his part, argues that the so-called divine attributes are in fact divine actions in the world and convey knowledge about the world they are taken from, but not about the divine essence.

Nevertheless, these answers to the problem of the attributes are not complete, nor is this Maimonides' sole answer to the problem either in Aquinas' view. The second part of the *Respondeo* of the *Quaestio de attributis* contains allusions to other texts that examine "Being" as the proper name of God. These references complete both authors' comprehensive approach to the problem, and are the subject of the following subsection.

(b) "*Being*" as the Proper Name of God

In *Guide I*, 57, which Aquinas quotes in the *Quaestio de attributis*, Maimonides distinguishes created beings from God in the fact that the latter is necessary existence, since there is no cause for His existence, and identifies in Him essence and existence:

It is known that existence is an accident attaching to what exists. For this reason it is something that is superadded to the quiddity of what exists. This is clear and necessary with regard to everything the existence of which has a cause. Hence its existence is something that is superadded to its quiddity. As for that which has no cause for its existence, there is only God, may He be magnified and glorified, who is like that. For this is the meaning of our saying about Him, may He be exalted, that His existence is necessary. Accordingly, His existence is identical with His essence and His true reality, and His essence is His existence. Thus His essence does not have an accident attaching to it when it exists, in which case its existence would be a notion that is superadded to it.⁹¹

In chapter 58, Maimonides focuses on the linguistic implications of such identity, which according to him makes *de facto* any true predication — and therefore any language about God — equivocal:

⁹¹ *Guide I*, 57, 132.

It has already been demonstrated that God, may He be honored and magnified, is existent of necessity and that there is no composition in Him, as we shall demonstrate, and that we are only able to apprehend the fact that He is and cannot apprehend His quiddity. It is consequently impossible that He should have affirmative attributes. For He has no 'That' outside of His 'What,' and hence an attribute cannot be indicative of one of the two.⁹²

God is pure existence, and this is what allows Maimonides to assert that it is possible to know Him and at the same time safeguard His transcendence, His unknowability to the created intellect. We only know God's existence, which is identical with His essence.

However, the *Dux neutrorum* — the only text of the *Guide* known to Aquinas — which is based on the Al-Ḥarizi Hebrew translation, renders a different version of *Guide* I, 57 by translating "existence" as "esse", and prevents him from knowing Maimonides' real position:

It is known that for all caused beings it happens to them accidentally that they are, which is other than their essence. Hence they are not inherently. As for that which has no cause for its being, only God is like that. This is the reason why it is said about Him that He is necessary being, because His position in being is His essence, and His truth, and He is not an essence to which being has arisen accidentally, in which case His position in being would be something added to His essence. But He is a necessary being always for which nothing arises accidentally.⁹³

According to the Latin translator, God is identity of essence and being, in complete agreement with Aquinas' own position and with the Aristotelian — non Avicennian — tradition.

The *Dux neutrorum* reads *Guide* I, 58 in likewise fashion, in which the terms' philosophical weight is lost:

After having stated these things we say that it has been demonstrated that the Creator is a necessary being, in whom there is no composition as we shall demonstrate, and that we are only able to apprehend His

⁹² *Guide*, I, 58, 135.

⁹³ *Dux*, I, LVI, fol. XXIV: Scitum est quod in omnibus entibus causatis accidit eis ut essent quod est aliud quam sua substantia. Unde ex se non sunt. Quod autem non habet causam sui esse, istud est Creator solus. Et haec est ratio propter quam dicitur de ipso quod est necesse esse, quia tunc sua inventio in esse, est sua substantia, et sua veritas, nec est substantia cui acciderit esse, quia tunc sua inventio esset res addita super suam essentiam, sed est necesse esse semper cui nihil accidit.

essence and not His quiddity. Consequently no attributive denomination befits Him, *because He has no essence demanding a term for His quiddity*, neither as if His essence were composed and the term referred to a part of it nor as if it had accidents and the term was applied to them. If this is so, no denomination befits Him in any way.⁹⁴

The Latin translator, who again renders “existent of necessity” as “necessary being”, seems unsure of how to interpret “That” and “What” and uses “essence” and “quiddity”, which are synonyms, as contraries, instead of “the fact that He is” (i.e., God’s existence) and “quiddity” (i.e., God’s essence). The translator’s hesitation about the philosophical meaning of Maimonides’ statements causes further confusion in the text, as will become apparent below.

Maimonides proposes the agreement of faith as the only way to apprehend God’s existence and acknowledges divine names taken from created perfections only in the sense that God is their cause, or as negative names that are necessary in order to conduct the intellect toward that which must be believed with regard to Him.⁹⁵ If we take Maimonides’ statements on the issue of the divine attributes to their logical conclusion, we end in the most complete agnosticism. Aquinas outlines this apparent contradiction in a quotation already cited:

Some said that nothing could be predicated of God and creatures analogically, but only equivocally. This is the opinion of **Rabbi Moses**, *as it appears from his sayings*. This opinion, however, cannot be true.⁹⁶

Whether it is because of the apparent internal contradiction between these and other texts located in the *Guide* or because of the translation’s difficulty, he points to Maimonides’ sayings as the source of that interpretation but seems unconvinced of the complete identification of the author of the *Guide* with this position.

⁹⁴ *Dux*, I, LVII, fol. XXIIr: Postquam ista praemisimus dicemus quod probatum est quod Creator est necesse esse, in quo non est compositio, sicut probabimus, et non appraehendimus nisi essentiam eius, non quidditatem ipsius. Et idcirco non convenit ei agnominatio attributiva, quia non habet essentiam quae exigat terminum quidditatis nedum ut substantia eius sit composita, ut agnominatio significet aliquam partem, nedum etiam quod habeat accidentia ut agnominatio significet illa. Quod si ita est, nulla agnominatio convenit ei aliquo modo.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Verum negativae affirmationes sunt necessariae intellectui, in quibus laborat ut per eas demonstret quod oportet credi de Creatore.

⁹⁶ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 7, Resp.

Confirming this evaluation, Maimonides acknowledges in *Guide I*, 61 one divine name that is unrelated to the world:

All the names of God, may He be exalted, that are to be found in any of the books derive from actions. There is nothing secret in this matter. The only exception is one name: namely, *Yod, He, Vav, He*. This is the name of God that has been originated without any derivation, and for this reason it is called the articulated name. This means that *this name gives a clear unequivocal indication of His essence*, may He be exalted. On the other hand, all the other great names give their indication in an equivocal way, being derived from terms signifying actions the like of which, as we have made clear, exist as our own actions.⁹⁷

Again, the Latin translator somewhat modifies the original text, which reads as follows:

All the names of the Creator found in the books are taken from actions — and this is known — except one name, namely the Tetragrammaton, which is proper to Him, and for this reason it is called the separated name, *which means the Creator's essence with a pure meaning in which there is no participation*. All His other glorious names mean with participation, being taken from actions that are produced.⁹⁸

According to Maimonides, the Tetragrammaton points to the divine essence and has no other content or intention. In light of the previous texts reviewed, this essence is identical with God's existence. The Latin translator stresses the same idea of an exclusive divine name, but asserts that the name's participation in creatures is nonexistent. The Tetragrammaton would be, then, the proper name of God as pure Being, which cannot be comprehended by a created intellect.⁹⁹

Maimonides' main reason for rejecting the use of the names deriving from perfections perceived in the physical world is because of their association with created things. This tends to

⁹⁷ *Guide I*, 61, 147.

⁹⁸ *Dux*, I, LX, fol. XXIIIr-v: Omnia nomina Creatoris quae inveniuntur in libris sunt sumpta ab operibus, et hoc notum est, praeter unum nomen, scilicet tetragrammaton, quod est appropriatum ei, et idcirco vocatur nomen separatum, quia significat substantiam Creatoris significatione pura, in quo non est participatio. Alia vero nomina ipsius gloriosa significant cum participatione, quia sunt sumpta ab operibus quae sunt inventa.

⁹⁹ It should be noted that we are speaking here about the participation or common use of a name, not about the participation of being that is the basis for Aquinas' metaphysical and epistemological teaching.

produce misleading notions regarding the divine nature in the minds of people:

And when these names deriving from the actions pertaining to Him were multiplied, they induced some men to believe that the Creator has many denominations, according to multiplicity of actions from which they derive.¹⁰⁰

In other places of the *Guide*, Maimonides regards the divine actions in the world as the only way for the knowledge of God in this life, but here he considers them to be the cause of the confusion that leads many to attribute multiplicity to God. This clarification emphasizes the defectiveness of such knowledge in Maimonides' view, as opposed to a perfect apprehension of the divine essence through a single notion expressed in one name. The derivative names — he repeats — are to be understood either as a certain action attributed to Him or used with the purpose of directing the mind toward His perfection. The articulated name, instead, is “a clear unequivocal indication of His essence” because it is unrelated to any created being or action and therefore excludes multiplicity and desecration of the divine transcendence by mixing the notion of God with those of creatures.

He also refers to a passage in the *Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer* where it is said that “before the world was created, there were only the Holy One, blessed be He, and His name.” His interpretation of this passage is as follows:

Consider now how this dictum states clearly that all the derivative names have come into being after the world has come into being. This is correct, for all these names have been laid down so as to correspond to the actions existing in the world. However, if you envisage His essence as it is when divested and stripped of all actions, He no longer has a derived name in any respect whatever, but only one original name that indicates His essence. In fact we have no nonderivative name except the one in question, namely, *Yod, He, Vav, He*, which is the articulated name simply.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ *Dux*, I, LX, fol. XXIIIv: Cum autem multiplicata fuerint huiusmodi nomina ab operibus sumpta induxerunt partem hominum ad credendi quod Creator habet agnominaciones multas secundum multitudinem operum a quibus sumuntur. Cf. *Guide*, I, 61, 148.

¹⁰¹ *Guide*, I, 61, 149. Cf. *Dux*, I, LX, fol. XXIIIv: Intellige ergo quomodo manifeste dixit quod omnia ista nomina ab operibus sumpta fuerunt innovata post mundi creationem. Et hoc est verum, quoniam omnia sunt dicta secundum opera quae inveniuntur in mundo. Cum autem intellexeris in substantiam eius

Since, according to Maimonides, the names of divine perfections are originated with the creation of the world, they have their foundation in creatures and are attributed to God as their source only in a secondary sense.

How is his assertion about the existence of a proper name of God to harmonize with his statements about the impossibility of grasping God's essence and the subsequent equivocality of the divine names? Maimonides' solution to the difficulty is as follows. On one hand, he asserts that the full apprehension of the articulated name that overcomes the derivative names' limitations is something expected and not yet realized, and finds biblical support for this assertion in *Zechariah* 14, 9, a text that will be examined in Chapter 3:

Hence Scripture promises that an apprehension that will put an end to this delusion will come to men. Thus it says: *In that Day shall the Lord be one, and His name one*, which means that in the same way as He is one He will be invoked at that time by one name only; by that which is indicative only of the essence and which is not derivative.¹⁰²

Further, Maimonides explicitly connects in chapter 62 the articulated name *Yod, He, Vav, He*, with another passage of Holy Scripture, *Exod.* 3, 14, which in his opinion expresses God's proper name as well:

We have already pointed out that all the names of God, may He be exalted, are derived except the articulated name. It behooves us to speak of this name, which is 'I am that I am', in a separate chapter as it includes the subtle notion with which we are dealing, I mean the negation of attributes.¹⁰³

Several conclusions can be drawn from these interrelated references. First, Maimonides claims that the aspiration to know of God's essence can be fulfilled, but that according to *Zechariah* this will only happen in a future state of the intellect. Second,

quod simplex est ab omni opere non habebit nomen sumptum ab opere aliquo modo, nisi unum nomen verum ad significandum substantiam ipsius. Nullum autem nomen est apud nos quod non sit sumptum ab opere, nisi nomen tetragrammaton, quod est sanctum, quod praecise dicitur nomen separatum.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 148-149.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* I, 62, 152. Cf. *Dux*, I, LXI, fol. XXVv: Iam patefecimus quod omne nomine quod dicitur de Creatore est decisum ab opere, praeter nomen separatum. Necessae autem est loqui de quodam nomine quod dictum est Moysi, 'Sum quod sum', in capitulo separato. Quia est ibi ratio profunda per cuius viam incedimus id est in remotione rationum a Creatore.

that this apprehension will be based on grasping the true meaning of the articulated name of four letters. Third, that this meaning is best expressed in *Exod.* 3, 14 as “I am that I am”, which points to “Being” as God’s proper name.

These two texts are, however, unequal. *Exod.* 3, 14 supports something that is attainable by reason alone: the fact that God, the universal cause of beings, should be called “Being”. In chapter I, 63 Maimonides applies his linguistic solution to the problem of the divine attributes in relation to the proper name of God in the following terms:

When God revealed Himself to Moses our Master and ordered him to address a call to the people and to convey to them his prophetic mission, Moses said: the first thing that they will ask of me is that I should make them acquire true knowledge that there exists a God with reference to the world; after that I shall make the claim that He has sent me. ... Accordingly God made known to Moses the knowledge that he was to convey to them and through which they would acquire a true notion of the existence of God, this knowledge being ‘I am that I am’. This is a name deriving from the verb ‘to be’ [*hayah*], which signifies existence, for *hayah* indicates the notion: he was. And in Hebrew, there is no difference between your saying: he was, and he existed. The whole secret consists in the repetition in a predicative position of the very word indicative of existence. For the word ‘that’ [in the phrase ‘I am that I am’] requires the mention of an attribute immediately connected with it. For it is a deficient word requiring a connection with something else. ... Accordingly the first word is ‘I am’ considered as a term to which a predicate is attached; the second word that is predicated of the first is also ‘I am’, that is, identical with the first. Accordingly Scripture makes, as it were, a clear statement that the subject is identical with the predicate. This makes it clear that *He is existent not through existence*.¹⁰⁴

In this text, Maimonides applies the doctrine of the negation of the attributes — already explained regarding other divine names — to the proper name of God and concludes that it means that He “exists but not through existence,” in the same way as to say that God is wise means “wise but not through wisdom” and to say that He is good means “good but not through goodness.” Therefore the proper name of God is “Exists”, but not in the sense that we attribute to the word when applied to creatures.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* I, 63, 154-155.

Maimonides stresses that the Hebrew language does not distinguish between “to be” and “to exist” and bases his doctrine of the knowledge of God in the identification of the two with the meaning of the second, that is, with God’s essence meaning His “position” in existence. The true natural knowledge of God would be the apprehension that there is a God. Accordingly, Maimonides interprets Moses’ understanding of his mission as twofold: first, he must teach the people the true knowledge of God, namely that there exists a God with reference to the world. Second, he must make the claim that God has sent him. In other words, with the revelation in Mount Sinai, Moses becomes aware of a philosophical mission, to find a demonstration of the existence of God, and of a prophetic one, to prove that he is His messenger. The content of the revelation is God’s proper name, “I am that I am.” By identifying that name with the articulated name of four letters *Yod, He, Vav, He*, Maimonides gives the Tetragrammaton the meaning of manifesting God’s existence in relation to the world.

However, Maimonides has said that there is a substantial difference between the names of created perfections attributed to God, which do not add anything about God’s essence but only indicate what God is not, and the proper name, that truly expresses God’s essence. As in the previous examples, he rejects any attempt to acknowledge real attribution at the linguistic level as a way of stressing God’s distance from creatures. The term “exists” enables him to use the least determination possible, and the rejection of its use as an attribute — “but not through existence” — outlines God’s transcendence in relation to the world. This is as far as God’s name attainable by reason is concerned.

On the other hand, by quoting *Zech.* 14, 9 Maimonides provides information attainable solely by someone who has faith in the prophecies of Holy Scripture, thus introducing faith as a new element that completes the picture of the intellect’s possibilities. Maimonides’ use of this second text allows him to state that the extent of the human intellect comprises not only knowledge as it is currently experienced, but also a different kind of apprehension in the world to come. It also enables him to explore modes of knowledge in this life complementary to reason, namely faith and prophecy.

What is, then, Aquinas’ critique of Maimonides’ answer to the problem of the divine names? He does not retract what he has

already said about the limitations of Maimonides' method on the divine attributes, but does not accuse him of agnosticism either, since — according to the Latin translation of the *Guide* — both acknowledge that “Being” is the most proper among the names of God. As we have seen, Maimonides regards the verb “to be” as synonym of “to exist”, and the translation adds to this confusion by introducing variations in relevant places. For example, the text examined according to the Latin version:

When the Lord appeared to Moses and ordered him to call the people and to tell them that he was His messenger, he [Moses] said: the first thing that they will ask of me is that I should show them that there is a Creator in the world. After that I shall tell them that He has sent me. ... Accordingly God made known to him the knowledge that he was to make them understand, through which the Creator's essence would be confirmed to them, and this is why He said: *I am that I am*. ‘I am’ is a substantive verb which means essence. Because the term ‘I was’ in Hebrew means in the past, but does not specify whether it means that He was or that He was something. The secret is in the repetition of the word that means something about the essence in a predicative way. For the word ‘that’ [in the phrase ‘I am that I am’] requires the mention of a denomination [i.e., predicate] connected with it, because this name is deficient and demands something to complete the *ratio*. And therefore they put the first word, which is what is denominated ‘I am’, and then the second word, which is what qualifies ‘I am’, and the latter is by itself, and this is as if you said that what is denominated is the same denomination. *And this means that He is ens not in essence.*¹⁰⁵

These deviations must have been clear to Aquinas even though he could not collate it with the original text. It is probably for this

¹⁰⁵ *Dux*, I, LXII, fol. XXVv: Quando vero Dominus apparuit Moysi et praecepit ut convocaret homines et quod diceret eis nuncium suum, dixit: quod primo quaerent a me erit ut ostendam eis vere quia Creator est in mundo. Et postea dicam eis: quia ipse me misit. ... Et idcirco ostendit ei Creator tunc scientiam quam faceret eos intelligere, per quam firmaretur eis essentia Creatoris, et hoc quod dixit Sum qui Sum. Sum vero est verbum substantivum, cuius expositio est essentia. Quia verbum fui significat praeterisse, nec refert si dixerit fuit vel fuit ens in lingua hebrea. Secretum est in repetitione verbi quod significat super essentiam in modo agnominatiois, quia verbum ‘quod’ dicit quod inducit rememorationem agnominatiois quae coniungitur ei quod hoc nomen, est imperfectum et eget perfectione rationis. Et idcirco posuerunt verbum primum et illud est agnominatum sum, et verbum secundum quod est agnominator sum et ipsum est per se, et est ac si diceret quod istud agnominatum est ipsamet agnominatio. Et eius expositio est: quia est ens non in essentia.

reason that Aquinas does not enter in further dialogue with him on the issue.

As we have already seen, following his mixed interpretation of the Aristotelian meanings of being, Maimonides produces an existential version of being equivalent to the truth of a proposition as opposed to being as pure onto-transcendental act. As a consequence, Maimonides regards the name "Being" as mere position in existence, and understands actions in general and divine actions in the world in particular, as effectiveness. Certainly, action can be equated to effectiveness at the categorial level as long as creatures are considered strictly as effects endowed with univocal perfections, but this cannot be applied to the divine being because He is above the created world. If Maimonides were to understand "Being" in the sense that Aquinas does, he would not be able to reach the logical conclusion of his stated premises.

Moreover, Maimonides says that this name, "Being", is the most proper name of God. It would be nonsense to assert on the premise of a complete equivocality of perfections between God and creatures that any name attributed to God can be "most proper". Therefore, it seems that this equivocality is not total, but that something can be correctly said of God. In fact, as noted above, he distinguishes between the Tetragrammaton, "which gives a clear unequivocal indication of His essence", and the other names attributed to God, which derive from His actions and give their indication in an equivocal way.

One interpretation of his position could be that "Being" is the proper name of God for the philosophers, having a certain *ratio* common to creatures and to God, and the articulated name of four letters, which is nonderivative, would be the proper name of God for the believers, as its *ratio* is unknown to the created intellects. Another possibility would be that neither "Being" as attributed to God nor the articulated name *Y.H.V.H.* have a known *ratio*, but then the assertion that they truly give a clear indication of God's essence would be dubious. This question needs to be examined in other related passages and in light of Aquinas' remarks.

An examination of Aquinas' works following these elements of Maimonides' position casts new light on his main interests in the *Guide* and again places the *Quaestio de attributis* at the center of attention. First, Aquinas' initial explicit reference to Maimonides

in his Parisian *Commentary on the Sentences* precisely relates to the passage on “Being” as the proper name of God revealed in *Exod.* 3, 14.¹⁰⁶ After this Aquinas will mention it often in his works.¹⁰⁷ This fact favors the assumption that the role of “Being” for a denomination of God is one of the reasons for Aquinas’ early interest in Maimonides.

Further, the *Quaestio de attributis* begins the *Respondeo*’s third part with a reference to Maimonides’ solution to the problem of the proper name of God and clarifies Aquinas’ reading:

About the third, i. e. whether the attributes’ *rationes* are in God, it should be noted that there seem to be two opinions on this. Some say, like Avicenna [lib. *De intelligent.* 1] and **Rabbi Moses** [lib. I, 57 and 58], that God’s reality is a kind of subsisting being and that nothing else is in God but being. *Therefore they say that He is being without an essence.*¹⁰⁸

Aquinas obviously has in mind here the previous passages of the *Dux neutrorum*, where the translator renders essence (or being) instead of existence.¹⁰⁹ He understands the reasons for Avicenna’s and Maimonides’ assertion regarding the difficulty of applying the name of “Being” to God, since they are aware that God’s being is not univocal with the creatures’ and this is the single experience of being that created intellects can have. However, he does not share this expression of the problem, rather considering it insufficient, as becomes clear if we examine anew the references in previous texts.

¹⁰⁶ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. for instance: *In I Sent.*, d. 22, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1; *De Pot.* q. 2, a. 1, Resp.; q. 7, a. 2, sc 3; q. 10, a. 1, ad 9; *SCG I*, c. 22; *S. Th.*, I, q. 2, a. 3, sc; II^a-II^{ae}, q. 174, a. 6, Resp.; *De substantiis separatis*, c. 18; *Div. Nom.*, c. 1, 3; *Super Decret.*, 1.

¹⁰⁸ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Respondeo, ad tertium: ... unde dicunt quod est esse sine essentia.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Dux I*, LVII, fol. XXIIr; I, LXII, fol. XXVv. Cf. also *Guide*, I, 57, 132: “For this is the meaning of our saying about Him, may He be exalted, that His existence is necessary. Accordingly, His existence is identical with His essence and His true reality, and His essence is His existence. Thus His essence does not have an accident attaching to it when it exists, in which case its existence would be a notion that is superadded to it. For His existence is necessary always; it is not something that may come suddenly to Him nor an accident that may attain Him. Consequently He exists, but not through an existence other than His essence.” *Dux*, I, LVI, fol. XXIV: Et haec est ratio propter quam dicitur de ipso quod est necesse esse, quia sua inventio in esse est sua substantia, et sua veritas, nec est substantia cui acciderit esse; quia tunc sua inventio esset res addita super illam essentiam, sed est necesse esse semper cui nihil accidit, et idcirco est non in essentia.

In *I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, which contains his first reference to *Exod.* III, 14, he quotes St. John Damascene as saying that “the One who is” is God’s best proper name. According to Maimonides, instead, “this name ‘Being’ is the unspeakable name of God, which was considered to be the most noble”. Following his teacher Albert the Great, Aquinas does not attribute to Maimonides the opinion that “Being” is in fact the most proper divine name, but only that it is unspeakable and that *it is considered* to be the most noble.¹¹⁰ In fact, if the name “Being” does not match any known *ratio* it becomes unspeakable, since any name expresses the thing’s essence and, according to the *Dux neutrorum*, God is being without an essence. As he puts it in another passage of *De Potentia*:

The name properly signifies the substance and the *quidditas*, as said in IV *Metaphysica*. But this name ‘quid est’ is among the others the most proper name of God, as it appears in *Exod.* IV. Since this name is attributed due to the fact that it is ‘being’, *it seems that the very being of God is His essence.*¹¹¹

In other words, whereas — always according to the *Dux neutrorum* — for Maimonides the proper name of God means “being without an essence,” for Aquinas it means “the identity of being and essence.”

What is Maimonides’ true intention in the passages mentioned? It is difficult to answer this question. W. Harvey and S. Harvey have published a joint piece of research on the Arabic notion that Maimonides uses in *Guide* I, 58, the text quoted at the beginning of this subsection.¹¹² The study highlights what seems to be the reason for the Latin translator’s hesitation between “essence” and “existence”, as follows:

According to S. Pines’ English translation, the original Judeo-Arabic text, which reads *ולים נדרך אלא אגיה פקט לא מאהיתה*, would say “and we are only able to apprehend the fact that He is and

¹¹⁰ Aquinas refers to the Tetragrammaton as “incommunicabile apud Hebraeos” in *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 13, a. 9.

¹¹¹ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, sc. 3: Nomen enim proprie significat substantiam et quidditatem, ut habetur IV *Metaphys.* Sed hoc nomen quid est, est inter cetera magis proprium nomen Dei, ut patet *Exod.* IV. Cum ergo hoc nomen imponatur ab hoc quod est esse, videtur quod ipsum esse Dei sit sua substantia.

¹¹² W.Z. Harvey and S. Harvey, “A Note on the Arabic Term ‘Anniyyah/’Aniyyah/’Inniyyah.”

cannot apprehend His quiddity.” Ibn Tibbon’s version reads “and we will grasp only His being [אֲנִיּוּתוֹ פִקּוּט], not His essence [מֵאֵיחָתוֹ].”¹¹³ Al-Harizi renders: “and we will grasp only the fact that He is [הִיחֻתוֹ], not His essence [מֵהוּתוֹ].”¹¹⁴ In I, 63 Maimonides’ original reads: “the necessary existent [אלואגב אלוגוד].” The Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon has “necessary of existence [המחויב המציות].” Al-Harizi writes something similar [הראוי למציאות].

Although in his translation Pines chose to render the word אֲנִיּוּת as “the fact that He is” he reexamined it later and changed his mind, suggesting that it could have originated from the Greek terms *on* or *einai*.¹¹⁵ If this interpretation is correct, it would have to be translated as “being”. S. Munk, who translated the *Guide* into French, proposes translating it as “quodité”, meaning that “we can only know that-He, not what He is”.¹¹⁶ M. D’Alverny has also suggested that it could be related with the Arabic word *أنا*, which means “I” or “myself”. Others prefer to see it related to *אין*, which means “indeed” and would point to an emphatic assertion of God. The authors conclude that they are inclined to accept the last possibility, close to Al Fārābī’s position — whose philosophy, by the way, Maimonides regarded highly — and propose vocalizing it as אֲנִיּוּת (*inniyyah*) instead of אֲנִיּוּת (*anniyah*).

In any case, if we compare the text of *Guide* I, 58: “we are only able to apprehend the fact that He is and cannot apprehend His quiddity ..., for He has no ‘That’ outside of His ‘What’,” with its parallel text in *Dux* I, LVII, fol. XXIIr: “we are only able to apprehend His essence and not His quiddity ..., because He has no essence demanding a term for His quiddity,” we perceive that the anonymous translator of the *Dux neutrorum* had a contribution of his own to Aquinas’ interpretation of Maimonides’ thought that made it difficult for them to engage in a real dialogue.

Returning to Aquinas’ two texts quoted (from the *Quaestio* and *De Potentia*), his interpretation of Maimonides’ position in the *Quaestio* — being without an essence — means a complete ignorance of God’s nature, whereas that in *De Potentia* — the very being of God is His essence — acknowledges a certain

¹¹³ ולא נשיג אלא ישותו בלבד לא מהותו

¹¹⁴ ולא נשיג אלא היחוט בלבד לא מהותו

¹¹⁵ S. Pines, “Les textes arabes dits plotiniens.”

¹¹⁶ *Le Guide des égares*, I, 241, n. 2.

apprehension of it even if we do not have experience of such identity in the created world. According to the *Dux neutrorum* and in Aquinas' terminology, Maimonides would accept "Being" as the divine name that is considered most noble but, unlike the names of created things, this one lacks any *ratio* and therefore, strictly speaking it cannot be considered a real name. He, instead, accepts it as the same "being" that is attributed to creatures and only by analogy to God, and concludes that it does express the divine essence.

3. Maimonides' Position According to *S. Theol. I, q. 13*

The *Summa Theologiae* is an organic summary of questions and answers on the basic theological subjects and consists of a reorganization — for the sake of sound teaching — of the sources, questions, and answers found in the *Sentences* of Lombard, enhanced and developed with references to more contemporary sources and scholarly debates. Accordingly, *S. Theol. I, q. 13* collects in an orderly and very concise way the main elements of Aquinas' position on the divine names found in the texts already discussed. What follows is a brief examination of this text that shows that his answers and references to Maimonides in this *quaestio* do not add any new insight into the subject.

Aquinas begins with an analysis of the nature of names in which, following Aristotle's *Perihermeneias*,¹¹⁷ he defines words (*voces*) as signs of the things understood, and concepts (*conceptiones*) as similarities of things (*res*). Since words refer to the thing signified through a concept of the intellect, only things that are knowable can be named.

Building on his previous explanations on the possibility of the knowledge of God (q. 12), Aquinas asserts that since God can be known in this life only through His effects and according to the way of excellence and removal, He can likewise be named with names taken from creatures. These names, however, do not refer to God Himself in the way in which the name "man" expresses the human essence by matching the definition of man. When we attribute a name to God that name does not give the definition of "God", and this is the reason for saying that God has no name,

¹¹⁷ *Periherm.* 1, c. 1, n. 2.

because His essence is above everything the created intellect apprehends and beyond anything human words mean.¹¹⁸

Aquinas' single explicit reference to Maimonides is found in the question as to whether some divine names are predicated of Him substantially.¹¹⁹ He distinguishes between negative and affirmative names. Negative names and the ones that mean relation to creatures obviously cannot express the divine essence, but just a removal of something from Him or a relation to others. Regarding affirmative names, there are different opinions. Maimonides' opinion is that although they are called affirmative, they are meant to remove something from God and not to assert something about Him. Thus, to say that God lives would mean simply that He is not inanimate (*Dux* I, 58). Others say that "God is good" just means that God is the cause of goodness in creatures.

Aquinas gives three reasons for considering the above opinions inadequate:

1. Because none of these positions explains the fact that some names are more suitable for God than others;
2. Because perfection in creatures would be attributed to God only as long as He is their cause and therefore their names would be applied to Him according to creatures only;
3. Because these opinions are against the intention of those who speak about God.

Aquinas answers the question by saying that each name attributed to God signifies the divine substance and is said of God substantially, but is deficient because of the representation of God being taken from creatures. Since our intellect knows God through creatures, it knows Him according to what they show of Him, which is very far — by defect — from their perfection's source. When we say "God is good" we mean neither "God is the cause of goodness" nor "God is not bad", but "what we call good in creatures exists before and in a higher way in God". He causes goodness in creatures because He is good, and not the other way around.

Article 3 explains that in order to attribute names to God we have to distinguish between the perfections referred to and the meaning of the words. Perfections are said more properly of God

¹¹⁸ *S. Theol.* I, q. 13, a. 1, Resp.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* a. 2.

than of creatures. However, the meaning of the names is more proper to creatures, as it is grasped in the created world and imperfectly apprehended and expressed.

Article 4 asks whether all the names said of God are synonyms. The answer recalls the definition of *ratio* explained in the *Quaestio de attributis*: “Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen”. The intellect apprehends perfections found in creatures and forms concepts commensurate with them in order to know God. These perfections, which are many in the world, are found as one in the simple and universal principle that is God. Although all these names are attributed to one single thing, the divine essence, they refer to it according to multiple and diverse concepts, and therefore these names are not synonyms.

Article 5 rejects the possibility that these names are said univocally of God and creatures, because when we predicate a perfection — say wisdom — of a creature, there is no identification of predicate and essence, while all perfections predicated of God are identical with the divine essence. They are not equivocal either, since each name really says something in common about God and creatures. Aquinas’ answer is that these names are said of God and creatures by way of analogy, which means proportion. Analogy is a middle way in which the concept (*ratio*) of perfection is neither the same in God and creatures, as in univocal terms, nor totally diverse, as in equivocal ones. Names are attributed to both according to the diverse proportion of perfection found in each.

Article 6 elaborates on the notion of analogy. Proportion entails that the names common to God and creatures are all related to one thing, so that one thing must help define the rest. Since — according to Aristotle’s IV *Metaph.* — the *ratio* or meaning of a name is its definition, the name must apply first to what helps define the others and only after (*per posterius*) to the rest according to their approximation to the first thing. Hence all names said of God metaphorically apply first to creatures and only secondarily to God, since they only express some likeness to creatures. The same would be the case with nonmetaphorical names if they only expressed God’s causality of perfection in creatures. However, these perfections preexist in God in a more excellent way and therefore are said of God essentially. According to the reality expressed by the name, such words apply first to God and only

after, to creatures, since perfections flow into creatures from God. But as applied by us we attribute them first to creatures, because we know them first.

Articles 7 to 10 deal with the name “God”, and article 11 with “Qui est” as the most proper name of God (*Exod.* 3, 13-14).

Aquinas gives three reasons for “Qui est” to be the most proper divine name:

1. Because it means being itself. Essential being is most proper to God, and does not suit any other reality, created or increated.
2. Because it is the most universal of all names. Our intellect cannot know the divine essence itself “in statu viae”. Anything the created intellect apprehends about God is defective in respect to his reality, due to the intellect’s limitation. The more universal the name, the more suitable for the divine essence, because it is the least determinate.
3. Because it means being in the present, and this is most appropriate for God.

He also concludes that “Qui est” is more proper to God than “God” because of the meaning and co-meaning of the verb to be. But because of the reality to which the name is attributed, “God” is more suitable than “Qui est”, because it means the divine essence. And the best of all is the Tetragrammaton, since it stresses the noncommunicability of the divine substance and points to God’s uniqueness.

The last article is devoted to the possibility of formulating affirmative propositions about God, to which Aquinas answers that the human intellect formulates affirmative propositions by composition of subject and predicate, and that this also suits God as an object of knowledge in spite of His simplicity and unity because the nature of the thing understood as it exists in the intellect is one thing and the thing’s nature in being is another. One does not contradict the other.

From the above we gather that Aquinas’ most thorough explanation of Maimonides’ position on the issue of the divine names remains the *Quaestio de attributis*, even if he later in the *Summa Theologiae* reiterated the main points of his reading of the *Guide*.

CHAPTER THREE

THE QUAESTIO DE ATTRIBUTIS AND ZECHARIAH 14, 9

Chapter 2 argued that the *Quaestio de attributis* represents one of Aquinas' most complete insights into Maimonides' position on the knowledge of God in the *Guide*, but focused only on the solutions that both authors give to the problem of the multiplicity of the divine names and on their agreement in the notion of being as the most proper name of God. These questions achieve much in terms of defining the extent and limits of the knowledge of God grasped from the created world, but leave the issue of the apprehension of the divine essence unanswered.

This issue had been at the center of a controversy during the first decades of the 12th century, which was still raging at the time when Aquinas studied in Paris. During the decades 1240-1250, the General Chapter of the Dominican Order repeatedly instructed all the Dominican friars to distance themselves from the errors condemned in 1241, among them the assertion that it is impossible for angels and human beings to know God's essence.¹

In his effort to clarify the subjects at stake, Aquinas stresses the distinction between what can be known of God in earthly life and the knowledge attainable after death, when human beings no longer depend on the senses. He also focuses on the peculiarities of the knower and of the object of knowledge. The result is a comprehensive theory of the knowledge of God that includes all possible stages: vision face to face, faith, prophecy, and knowledge through creatures by analogy. He will summarize his findings in *Summa Theol.* I, q. 12.²

Outstanding among all of Aquinas' attempts to find a suitable formula to define the conditions for the contemplation of God's essence is that based on *Zechariah* 14, 9, a biblical text that,

¹ Cf. M.-D. Chenu, "Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIIIe siècle", 159-181.

² For an examination of Aquinas' doctrine on the knowledge of God face to face, cf. J.-P. Torrell, "La vision de Dieu per essentiam selon Saint Thomas D'Aquin."

together with *Exod.* 3, 14 condenses his years-long effort to establish a precise definition of the extent and limits of the knowledge of God. Again, the *Quaestio de attributis* contains Aquinas' first reference to this text and its only occurrence in the whole *Summa Theologiae*. He repeatedly refers to the same passage in contemporary and later works in the context of faith and knowledge in the world to come. Maimonides quotes the same passage in *Guide* I, 61, which confirms that Aquinas indeed paid renewed attention to this particular chapter of the *Guide* and points to an evolution within a span of ten years that separate both references in his use of the doctrine contained therein.

This chapter is devoted to the role played by *Zechariah* 14, 9 in *Guide* I, 61 and the use Aquinas makes of it in the *Quaestio de attributis*. I am dividing it into two sections: the first is devoted to the text of *Zechariah* and its role in both authors, and the second to their common doctrine of the stages of the intellect, based on their belief in the afterlife, validated by this text.

1. *The Apprehension of the Divine Essence*

This section explores the role of *Zechariah* 14, 9 in *Guide* I, 61 and Aquinas' references to the same text, collates each one's position on the apprehension of the divine essence and defines the elements involved in the issue, namely, the possibility, the extent, and the timing for such apprehension.

(a) *Zechariah* 14, 9 in the *Guide of the Perplexed*

As outlined in Chapter 2, Maimonides indicates in *Guide* I, 61, one of the chapters devoted to the articulated name of four letters *Yod, He, Vav, He*, or Tetragrammaton, that the full apprehension of the proper name of God that will overcome the limitations of the names deriving from actions is something expected in the future and not yet realized. He finds support for this assertion in *Zechariah* 14, 9:

And when the names deriving from the actions pertaining to Him, may He be exalted, were multiplied, they produced in the fantasy of some men the thought that He has many attributes, just as there is a multiplicity of actions from which these names derive. Hence

Scripture promises that an apprehension that will put an end to this delusion will come to men. Thus it says: *'In that Day shall the Lord be one, and His name one,'* which means that in the same way as He is one, He will be invoked at that time by one name only, by that which is indicative only of the essence and which is not derivative.³

According to Maimonides' interpretation, the name promised in *Zechariah* will be truly indicative of the divine essence. Moreover, in his explanation of the divine names, he had pointed to the equivalence between the articulated name of four letters and "I am that I am," which would be the most proper name of God. I have already noted the difficulties of interpretation that the confusion between "essence" and "existence" in the Latin translation produces in Aquinas' reading of Maimonides' position, since the assertion that we can only apprehend God's existence excludes the apprehension of the divine essence. The apprehension of existence with no hint of the thing's essence is contrary to the nature of the human intellect.

Maimonides dismisses this apparent contradiction in I, 64, where he proposes different meanings of the articulated name, among them that of the true divine essence:

Know that the name *Y.H.V.H.* sometimes is intended to signify the name exclusively, as in his saying: 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'. ... *The term is sometimes intended to signify the essence and true reality of Him, may He be exalted, as for instance: 'And they shall say to me: What is His name?' The term is sometimes intended to signify His commandment. ... Similarly the glory of Y.H.V.H. is sometimes intended to signify the created light that God causes to descend in a particular place in order to confer honor upon it in a miraculous way: 'And the glory of Y.H.V.H. abode upon Mount Sinai'. ... The expression is sometimes intended to signify His essence and true reality, may He be exalted, as when he says, 'Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory,' and was answered: 'For man shall not see Me and live.'*⁴

³ *Guide*, I, 61, 148-149. Cf. *Dux*, I, LX, fol. XXIIIv: Cum autem multiplicata fuerint huiusmodi nomina ab operibus sumpta induxerunt partem hominum ad credendum quod Creator habet agnominationes multas secundum multitudinem operum a quibus sumuntur. Ideoque promisit propheta hominibus apprehensionem intellectus qui removebit ab eis laborem istum, dicens: 'In die illa erit Dominus unus, et nomen eius unum', quod est dicere: sicut ipse est unus sic vocabitur uno nomine tantummodo. Et hoc est illud nomen quod significat substantiam eius tantummodo, non quod sit decus ab opere.

⁴ *Guide*, I, 64, 156.

The Latin translation, however, dissociates the articulated name from this text and reads that the name that expresses God's essence is Adonai and not the Tetragrammaton.⁵

Despite Maimonides' reference to "I am that I am" as the proper name of God and his association of this name with the Tetragrammaton, he seems to think that the divine name lacks a proper *ratio*, a meaning known to the created intellect, because the divine essence is unknown to the created intellects in this life. This name is more suitable for pointing to the divine being than the other divine names precisely because we do not know its *ratio*, whereas of the others we know only the name's *ratio* as attributed to creatures from which we apprehend perfections. But, if this is so, its status as the best indicator of the divine essence would not be so obvious. There must be a higher meaning of the proper name of God that goes beyond this explanation. What is the name declared in *Zechariah* that is truly indicative of the divine essence? By elimination, only the second and last senses that Maimonides gives to the articulated name above fits the text. He illustrates this meaning with the words that Moses addresses to God in *Exod.* 3, 13 (asking for His true name) and in *Exod.* 33, 20 (asking Him to see "His glory", namely, His essence). God's answer to Moses in the second reference is essential to understanding Maimonides' position on the possibility of the apprehension of the divine essence if read in light of *Zech.* 14, 9. It reveals that, since according to *Exod.* 33, 20 God cannot be directly seen in this life and according to *Zech.* 14, 9 there will be a time when God will be known in his essence, this will happen only in the Days of the Messiah.⁶ This is confirmed by his subsequent explanations.

⁵ *Dux*, I, LXIII, fol. XXVIr: Scias quod hoc nomen quod dicitur Adonai quandoque dicitur de nomine ipso tantum; sicut dicitur, non assumes nomen Dei tui in vanum, et multa alia similia. Quandoque intentio est in ipso substantia Creatoris et veritas eius, sicut dicitur: 'Dicent mihi quod est nomen eius.' Quandoque ponitur per voluntate Creatoris: 'et erit nomen Domini,' sicut si diceret verbum Domini, vel preceptum Domini. ... Similiter, gloria Domini: 'hoc est lux creata quae ostenditur in aliquo loco ratione sanctitatis et sublimitatis in modum miraculi, sicut dicitur: 'habitavit gloria Domini super montem Sinai.' Et iterum: 'Gloria Domini implevit tabernaculum.' Quandoque dicitur de substantia et veritate Creatoris, sicut dixit Moyses: 'ostende mihi gloriam tuam,' et responsum est: 'non videbit me homo et vivet.'

⁶ About Maimonides' interpretation of *Exod.* 33, 20 cf. W.Z. Harvey, "The Knowledge of God According to Thomas Aquinas, Yehuda Romano and Ḥasdaï Crescas". For the references to this verse in Maimonides' works cf. 226.

Elaborating on the timing and conditions for such apprehension, *Guide I*, 62 focuses on other names that were known to the Sages in the past and taught only in secret, stressing that their plurality does not imply multiplicity in God and that their goal was not a simple utterance but to teach a true notion about Him. It seems from the previous explanations that the true notion apprehended in this life is only God's existence, which is the single affirmative thing that can be said about Him. When recalling two examples of such names, he asserts that one had twelve letters and the other forty-two.⁷ Obviously — he notes — they are in fact a number of words called “name”, all of which together direct the mind toward the divine essence,⁸ but they are diverse from the articulated name of four letters and of any other name:

The term articulated name is never applied to the name having twelve letters or to the name having forty-two letters. For the articulated name is the name that is peculiar to Him, as we have made clear, whereas the two others necessarily taught some sort of divine science.⁹

Since these names were known in the past they are also apprehensions of a different kind than that declared by Zechariah. They were, however, names that provided certain positive knowledge of God in this life:

⁷ *Dux*, I, LXI, fol. XXVr: “In my opinion the most probable supposition is that the name that had twelve letters was not one name but two or three, the sum of the letters of which came to twelve, and that they meant with it the name of four letters, as we use today the name Adonay. Now this name also, namely, that having twelve letters, is undoubtedly indicative of a notion more particularly separated than that indicated by the name Adonay.” Cf. *Guide*, I, 62, 150.

⁸ *Ibid.* “Now it is known to everyone who is intelligent that it is in no way possible that forty-two letters should form one name; these were certainly several names, the number of the letters of which amounted to forty-two. There is no doubt that these names were indicative of several notions (*rationes*) that led men to the true science of the essence of Him, in the way we have stated.” Note the gist given by the Latin translation to Maimonides' words in the last sentence, which read: “There is no doubt that these words were necessarily indicative of several notions and that these notions *came near to a representation of the essence of Him*, may He be exalted, in the way we have stated.” Cf. *Guide*, I, 62, 151.

⁹ *Guide*, I, 62, 151. The Latin translation again misses the original idea and asserts that these two names lead in fact to the knowledge of God, and not to “some sort of divine science”: “They never said that the name having twelve letters or the name having forty-two letters was the separated name. For the articulated name is the name that is peculiar to Him, as we have made clear, whereas the two others led men necessarily to the knowledge of the Creator.”

These words that had numerous letters were called 'name' only because of their being indicative of one notion only, like the other names originated without any derivation. And these words were numerous only with a view to making the notion in question understood. For sometimes many words are used in order to make a single notion understood. Understand this accordingly, and know that that which was taught were the notions indicated by these names and not merely the pronunciation, devoid of all representation, of the letters.¹⁰

These names were restricted to a few chosen individuals who, according to the Sages' judgement, could attain the requisite level. Maimonides describes the features of the suitable person to be taught such names, according to the Talmud, and the reward for it:

The name having forty-two letters is holy and sanctified and is only transmitted to one who is discreet, has reached the middle of his life, is not prone to anger or to drunkenness, does not arouse criticism by his way of life, and speaks agreeably with people. And he who knows it is heedful thereof and observes it in purity, is beloved on high and popular below. He is feared by the people, his learning is preserved by him, *and he inherits the two worlds, this world and the next.*¹¹

The relation between the two chapters suggests that his "next world" is yet another reference to that day when God will be known by one notion and His single name apprehended by the intellect. Maimonides is referring here to the '*Olam ha-Ba*', the afterlife, which is preceded by the *Yemot ha-Mashiah*, the Days of the Messiah. These Days are in fact associated with the expression "the next world" elsewhere in Maimonides' works:

And for this reason will desire all of Israel, their Prophets and their Sages, the Days of the Messiah, so that they will rest of their works that do not let them busy themselves with the Torah and the precepts, and they will find repose and abound in wisdom, so that they will inherit the life of the next world.¹²

In this sense, human beings will attain great knowledge in the Days of the Messiah, the knowledge of the Name, which will secure for them the '*Olam ha-Ba*':

The Sages and the Prophets will not desire the Days of the Messiah in order to govern the world or in order to subjugate the gentiles ... but so that they may be free for the Torah and the wisdom and not have

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.* 151-152. Cf. T.B., Qiddushin, 71^a.

¹² Cf. *Mishneh Torah*, *Sefer ha-Madda*, *Hilkhot Teshuva* 9, 2.

any opponent and obstacle and therefore may inherit the life of the next world.¹³

Maimonides provides no answer in these texts to the question whether the knowledge experienced at that time will be a direct knowledge of the divine essence or an improved knowledge similar to that of the senses. We have to look in other passages for Maimonides' position on the issue, which will be examined in the next section.

(b) *Zechariah 14, 9 in the Works of Aquinas*

Maimonides' reference to *Zechariah* 14, 9 also finds a place in Aquinas' *Quaestio de attributis* and in six other works contemporary and subsequent to it, i.e., after 1265. Interestingly, it is nowhere to be found in his previous production. This fact suggests that, by the time he reviewed the Parisian *Commentary on the Sentences* and wrote the *Quaestio*, he was particularly involved in examining the possibility of the direct contemplation of the divine essence by a created intellect and reviewed *Guide* I, 61 in that perspective.

In the *Respondeo ad quartum*, immediately after commenting on Maimonides' solution to the issue of the divine attributes, Aquinas adds:

If, however, our intellect were to see God in Himself, it would be able to give one single name to this *ratio*, and that will happen *in patria*. That is why it is said in *Zechariah*, last, 9: '*In that Day shall the Lord be one and His name one.*' That single name would not mean only goodness or only wisdom or something of the sort, but it would include all these meanings.¹⁴

The text of *Zechariah* introduces a new element in Aquinas' consideration of the knowledge of God's attributes in this life, namely, a kind of apprehension that will take place "*in patria*" and that will consist of a direct contemplation of God's essence.

Aquinas quotes this verse in seven works, in texts dealing with the issue of the knowledge of God and in the context of knowledge in the world to come. Four of them are contemporary with the *Quaestio* and two subsequent. There is no trace of the verse in

¹³ Cf. *Sefer Shofetim*, *Hilkhot Malakhim* 12, 4.

¹⁴ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, *Respondeo*.

works prior to 1265-1266, the date of the *Quaestio de attributis*. Of these works, the *Roman Commentary*, *De Potentia*, *Summa contra gentiles* and *Compendium Theologiae* are dated between 1265-1268, while the *Reportatio super Epistolam ad Ephesios* is from c.1270 and the *Commentarium super Epistolam ad Romanos* from c.1273. All but one (*Super Ep. ad Ephesios*) give the same interpretation to the verse, the *Quaestio de attributis* being the most comprehensive explanation of Aquinas' position on the issue. I will first give the full quotation of the text and then the parallel ones in the other works:

Quaestio de attributis:

Since God is perfect in every way according to one and the same thing, the intellect can neither comprehend His perfection completely nor, it would follow, name Him by one single conception, necessitating it to have diverse notions of Him, which are diverse *rationes*, and to adopt diverse names that signify these *rationes*. These names, then, are not synonyms, since they signify different *rationes*. If, however, our intellect were to see God in Himself, it would be able to give one single name to this *ratio*, and that will happen *in patria*. That is why it is said in *Zachariah*, last, 9: 'In that Day shall the Lord be one and His name one.' That single name would not mean only goodness or only wisdom or something of the sort, but it would include all these meanings.¹⁵

These are the parallel texts, which display small variations among them:

Roman Commentary:

We can only name God from perfections found in things. And since these perfections are multiple in these things, it is necessary that we attribute several names to God. Through these diverse notions of God that our intellect apprehends we express what in God is only one. But if we were to see His essence in itself there would be no need of a

¹⁵ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Resp.: Intellectus enim noster non potest una conceptione diversos modos perfectionis accipere: tum quia ex creaturis cognitionem accipit, in quibus sunt diversi modi perfectionum secundum diversas formas: tum quia hoc quod in Deo est unum et simplex, plurificatur in intellectu nostro, etiam si immediate a Deo reciperet; sicut multiplicatur processio suae bonitatis in aliis creaturis. Unde, cum Deus secundum unam et eandem rem sit omnibus modis perfectus, una conceptione non potest integre perfectionem eius apprehendere, et per consequens nec nominare; et ideo oportet quod diversas conceptiones de eo habeat, quae sunt diversae rationes, et quod diversa nomina imponat significantia rationes illas. Unde nomina illa non sunt synonyma, in quantum significant rationes diversas. Si autem intellectus noster Deum per seipsum videret, illi rationi posset imponere nomen unum: quod erit in patria; et ideo dicitur *Zach.*, ult., 9: 'in die illa erit Dominus unus, et nomen eius unum.' Illud autem nomen unum non significaret bonitatem tantum, nec sapientiam tantum, aut aliquid huiusmodi, sed significata omnium istorum includeret.

plurality of names, as there would be a simple notion of Him according to His essence, which is simple, and this is what we expect in the day of our glory, when ‘*the Lord shall be one and His name one,*’ as it is said in *Zechariah*.¹⁶

Quaestio Disputata De Potentia:

The cause of the diversity or multiplicity of names is on the part of our intellect, which cannot attain the contemplation of the divine essence as it is but sees it through many imperfect similarities that are reflected in creatures as in a mirror. Accordingly if it [the intellect] were to see that essence it would not be in need of many names, nor it would require several notions. It is for this reason that the Word of God, who is His own perfect apprehension, is only one. Hence it is said in *Zechariah* 14, 9: ‘*The Lord shall be one and His name one,*’ when the divine essence will be clearly seen and the knowledge of God will not be grasped through creatures anymore.¹⁷

Summa Contra Gentiles:

Since we cannot know Him naturally unless we grasp Him through His effects, it is necessary that the names by which we signify His perfection be diverse, the perfections found in things being also diverse. But if we could apprehend His essence as it is and apply a proper name to Him, we would express it with one single name. And this has been promised to those who will see Him in essence, *Zech.*, last: ‘*In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one.*’¹⁸

¹⁶ *Roman Commentary*, ll. 45-54: Non autem possumus aliquid nominare nisi secundum quod intelligimus, cum nomina sint signa intellectuum. Non autem possumus nominare Deum nisi ex perfectionibus in huiusmodi rebus inventis. Et cum huiusmodi perfectiones in rebus istis multiplices sint, oportuit multa nomina Deo imponere, quibus diversas conceptiones, quas intellectus noster de Deo concipit, manifestaremur que in Deo unum sunt. Si autem essentiam eius in seipsa videremus, non requireretur nominum multitudo, sed esset simplex notitia eius; sicut est et simplex essentia, quod quidem in die nostre glorie expectamus, quando ‘erit Dominus unus et nomen eius unum,’ sicut dicitur in *Zacharia*.

¹⁷ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 6, Resp.: Diversitatis ergo vel multipliciter nominum causa est ex parte intellectus nostri, qui non potest pertingere ad illam Dei essentiam videndam secundum quod est, sed videt eam per multas similitudines eius deficientes, in creaturis quasi in speculo resultantibus. Unde si ipsam essentiam videret, non indigeret pluribus nominibus, nec indigeret pluribus conceptionibus. Et propter hoc, Dei verbum, quod est perfecta conceptio ipsius, non est nisi unum; propter hoc dicitur *Zach.* 14, 9: ‘in die illa erit Dominus unus et erit nomen eius unum,’ quando ipsa Dei essentia videbitur et non colligetur Dei cognitio ex creaturis.

¹⁸ *SCG I*, c. 31: Quia enim eum non possumus cognoscere naturaliter nisi ex effectibus deveniendo in ipsum, oportet quod nomina quibus perfectionem ipsius significamus, diversa sint, sicut et perfectiones in rebus inveniuntur diversae. Si autem ipsam essentiam prout est possemus intelligere et ei nomen proprium adaptare, uno nomine tantum eam exprimeremus. Quod promittitur his qui eum per essentiam videbunt, *Zach.*, ult.: ‘In die illa erit Dominus unus et nomen eius unum.’

Compendium Theologiae:

And since we cannot name something unless we do it as we understand it (because names are the intellect's signs) we can only name God according to perfections found in things, which are originated in Him. And since these are multiple in things we are obliged to attribute many names to God. However, if we were to see His essence in itself, there would be no need of a plurality of names, as there would be a simple notion of Him according to His essence, which is simple, and this is what we expect in the day of our glory, as it is written in *Zechariah*, last: '*In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one.*'¹⁹

The lapse of time between the first five and the two later texts is reflected in the dissimilarity in redaction. Moreover, the *Reportatio on the Letter to the Ephesians* places the passage in a different context and interpretation, referring to *Zechariah's* insight of God's unity as one of the reasons for the unity of the Church:

He says: I say that you must have one body and one spirit, because you are in the unity of the Church, which is one. First, because it has one guide, that is Christ, and in regard to the one Lord, speaks not many, according to whose diverse wills you should dissent. It says in *Hebr.* III, 6: 'Christ is like a Son in his house.' *Act.* II, 36: 'May all the House of Israel most certainly know that God made this Jesus, whom you crucified, their Lord and Christ.' *I Cor.*, VIII, 6: "Our one Lord Jesus Christ." *Zach.*, XIV, 9: '*In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one.*' Second, because His law is one. The Church's law is the law of faith. *Rom.* III, v. 27: 'Where is, then, your glory now? It is excluded. By which law, that of deeds? No, but by the law of faith.'²⁰

¹⁹ *Compendium Theol.* Lib. 1, c. 24: Et quia non possumus aliquid nominare nisi secundum quod intelligimus (sunt enim nomina intellectuum signa), Deum non possumus nominare nisi ex perfectionibus in aliis rebus inventis, quarum origo in ipso est: et quia hae in rebus istis multiplices sunt, oportet multa nomina Deo imponere. Si autem essentiam eius in se ipsa videremus, non requireretur nominum multitudo, sed esset simplex notitia eius, sicut est simplex essentia eius: et hoc in die gloriae nostrae expectamus, secundum illud *Zachar.*, ultimo: 'in illa die erit Dominus unus, et nomen eius unum.'

²⁰ *Super ad Eph.*, c. 4, lc. 2: Dicit ergo: dico quod debetis habere unum corpus et unum spiritum, quia estis in unitate Ecclesiae, quae est una. Primo, quia habet duces unum, scilicet Christum, et quantum ad hoc dicit unus dominus, non plures, pro quorum diversis voluntatibus oporteat vos discordare. Dicitur enim *Hebr.* III, 6: 'Christus est tamquam filius in domo sua'. *Act.* II, 36: 'certissime ergo sciat omnis domus Israel, quia et dominum eum et christum Deus fecit hunc Iesum, quem vos crucifixistis'. *I Cor.*, VIII, 6: 'unus dominus noster Iesus Christus'. *Zach.*, XIV, 9: 'in illa die erit dominus unus, et nomen eius unum'. Secundo, quia lex eius est una. Lex enim Ecclesiae est lex fidei. *Rom.* III, V. 27: 'ubi est ergo nunc gloriatio tua? Exclusa est. Per quam legem? Factorum? Non, sed per legem fidei'.

The *Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, instead, retains the original context with the following words:

First we should consider what are the things that are known about God. And he mentions three: First, there are invisible things in Him - which means the divine essence-that, as mentioned before, cannot be seen by us. *Io.* I, 18: 'No one has ever seen God,' that is in His essence, while living this mortal life. *I Tim.* 1, 17: 'Eternal King, immortal, invisible.' But he says 'invisible things' in plural because the essence of God is not known to us according to what it really is, i. e. as one in itself. It will be thus known to us *in patria*, when '*The Lord shall be one and his name one,*' as it is said in *Zech.*, last. But it manifests itself to us through certain similarities discovered in creatures, which participate in multiple ways in what in God is one, and our intellect contemplates the unity of the divine essence according to this under the notions of goodness, wisdom, power and the rest, which are one in God.²¹

The last reference summarizes the doctrine contained in the *Quaestio de attributis* and recalls that day, *in patria*, when God will be clearly known in Himself.

Besides, the *Quaestio* adds something that is absent in these parallel texts. Taking into account the information provided by Zechariah, Aquinas comments that the possibility of a direct contemplation of God is still a mystery, since the human intellect will remain finite even *in patria*:

But if, upon seeing God's essence, the intellect were to impose a name to the thing seen and to name it by means of the apprehension that it [the intellect] had of it [God's essence], it would still be necessary for the intellect to impose several names, because it is impossible for a conception of the created intellect to represent in full the perfection of the divine essence.²²

²¹ *Super ad Rom.*, 1, lc. 6: Primo considerandum est quae sunt ista, quae de Deo cognoverunt. Et ponit tria. Primo quidem invisibilia ipsius, per quae intelligitur Dei essentia, quae, sicut dictum est a nobis videre non potest. *Io.* I, 18: Deum nemo vidit unquam, scilicet per essentiam, vita mortali vivens. *I Tim.* c. I, 17: 'regi saeculorum immortalis, invisibili'. Dicit autem pluraliter invisibilia quia Dei essentia non est nobis cognita secundum illud quod est, scilicet prout in se est una. Sic erit nobis in patria cognita, et tunc 'erit Dominus unus et nomen eius unum', ut dicitur *Zac.* Ult. Et autem manifesta nobis per quasdam similitudines in creaturis repertas, quae id quod in Deo unum est, multipliciter participant, et secundum hoc intellectus noster considerat unitatem divinae essentiae sub ratione bonitatis, sapientiae, virtutis et huiusmodi, quae in Deo unum sunt.

²² *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Resp.: Sed tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam videret, et nominaret mediante conceptione quam de ea habet, oporteret adhuc quod imponeret plura nomina: quia impossibile est quod conceptio intellectus creati repraesentet totam perfectionem divinae essentiae.

In other words, the multiplicity of names and notions stems from the nature of God and of the human intellect. For this reason angels are likewise bound to praise God through different names, because none of them can comprehend the divine essence. This — he adds — would be also a reason in favor of the existence of the eternal Word, the Son, who is alone the perfect expression of the plenitude of God.²³ If the thing apprehended were finite, the human intellect would be able to comprehend it in its entirety in one single notion. However, the divine being is infinite and the summit of all perfection, being the source of all. As Aquinas puts it:

That God exceeds our intellect is, on the part of God Himself, due to the plenitude of His perfection, and on the part of the intellect, because it is insufficient to comprehend such perfection. Then, it is clear that the plurality of *rationes* is not only on the part of our intellect but also on the part of God Himself, inasmuch as His perfection overcomes any apprehension of our intellect. And therefore the multiplicity of these *rationes* stands for something real in God, which is not a multiplicity but the fullness of perfection from which it follows that all these notions are suited to Him.²⁴

The survey of Aquinas' seven references to *Zechariah* 14, 9 confirms that the *Quaestio de attributis* can be considered a paradigmatic text both chronologically and doctrinally. It is not possible to say which of the five works composed in the period 1265-1268 was written first, their composition being so close in time that they can be considered simultaneous, but the *Quaestio* was definitely composed in 1265-1266 and therefore at the beginning of that period. The text's historical background stresses Aquinas'

²³ *Ibid.* Unde una re visa diversas conceptiones formaret, et diversa nomina imponeret, sicut etiam Chrysostomus dicit, quod angeli laudant Deum, quidam ut majestatem, quidam ut bonitatem, et sic de aliis, in signum quod ipsum non vident visione comprehendente; sed conceptio perfecte repraesentans eum est verbum increatum; et ideo est unum tantum. Sic ergo patet quod pluralitas nominum venit ex hoc quod ipse Deus nostrum intellectum excedit.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Quod autem Deus excedat intellectum nostrum, est ex parte ipsius Dei, propter plenitudinem perfectionis ejus, et ex parte intellectus nostri, qui deficienter se habet ad eam comprehendendam. Unde patet quod pluralitas istarum rationum non tantum est ex parte intellectus nostri, sed etiam ex parte ipsius Dei, in quantum sua perfectio superat unamquamque conceptionem nostri intellectus. Et ideo pluralitati istarum rationum respondet aliquid in re quae Deus est: non quidem pluralitas rei, sed plena perfectio, ex qua contingit ut omnes istae conceptiones ei aptentur.

careful choice of the quotation, which does not appear anywhere in his previous writings. This, and the number of quotations of the same reference in such a short period of time points at a late discovery of an important biblical support for his position on the possibility of the knowledge of God in the afterlife.

Moreover, Aquinas reviewed carefully the sources used for the *Parisian Commentary* during this period. This quotation is found in Maimonides' *Guide I*, 61, a place that — as seen in Chapter 2 — was a point of reference for the *Commentary* because of its examination of the articulated name of God and *Exod.* 3, 14, and was most probably reviewed along with the others he quoted in his first redaction of the *Commentary on the Sentences* when composing the *Quaestio de attributis*. It is only during this review that Aquinas appropriates *Zechariah* as a pathfinder for his reflection on the knowledge of God's essence. Aquinas' use of *Zechariah* at this later stage suggests a direct link between the two quotations. Finally, Aquinas' interpretation of the verse in all but one reference heralds his conviction that knowledge through the divine attributes is insufficient, since they are produced taking the divine manifestation in the world as a departure point. He assumes that there is a final stage of the human intellect that will enable a very different knowledge of God. This knowledge's nature remains a mystery since it excludes the use of the senses and it cannot be explained through the common human means of apprehension in this world. Besides, its existence is revealed by a prophecy, which is a nonconventional apprehension in this life of future events and of knowledge that will be natural *in patria* and is related to faith. The role of these modes of knowledge for the apprehension of God will be examined in Chapter 4.

The premise underlying these statements is that Scripture advocates a direct knowledge of God in later days and that possibility must be explained. According to their interpretation of the passage in *Zechariah*, both Maimonides and Aquinas acknowledge two stages in the development of the intellectual faculty: Maimonides distinguishes between "this world and the next" but does not elaborate on the kind of apprehension that will be possible in the latter. Aquinas talks about knowledge *in via* and knowledge *in patria*, meaning this life and the afterlife. Before drawing conclusions about this text's role in the positions of the two authors we must explore other locations in their work which

are more explicit on these two states of the intellect. I will first analyze some references of Aquinas which clarify the issue, and then collate them with parallel passages in the *Guide*.

2. *The Stages of the Intellect*

(a) *Aquinas' Distinction 'in via/in patria'*

The expression *in patria* or *in statu patriae*, which Aquinas alternates with “the day of our glory” in some of the previous quotations of *Zechariah*, is often found with its counterpart *in via* or *in statu viae* in his exploration of the problem of the knowledge of God from the very beginning of his academic activity. These expressions refer to the two possible states of the human intellect, the latter meaning the “journeying” in this life and the former the afterlife. The afterlife or *status in patria* comprises in its turn a first stage, when the soul is separated from the body but continues to exist and operate its spiritual faculties, and a second and final one, with the resurrection of the bodies in a state of glory. Moreover, these expressions often appear in Aquinas’ works in the context of faith and prophecy, experienced as alternative sources that provide in this life some of the knowledge of God that is expected in the other, through the authority of God who reveals.

This distinction can be found already in his earliest works. For instance, the beginning of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, devoted to demarcating the domains of philosophy and theology according to their goals, enables him to give a primary account of these two states:

All who understand correctly place the end of human life in the contemplation of God. Such contemplation is twofold: one through creatures, which is imperfect for the reason already stated and in which the philosopher puts contemplative happiness. This is the happiness of the way [*viae*] and all philosophical knowledge, which results from [apprehending] the creatures’ *rationes*, aims at it. Another is the contemplation of God by which He will be directly contemplated in His essence. This [contemplation] is perfect, will be *in patria* and is possible to human beings according to the assumption of faith.²⁵

²⁵ *In I Sent.*, Prol., q. 1, a. 1, Solutio: Omnes qui recte senserunt posuerunt finem humanae vitae Dei contemplationem. Contemplatio autem Dei est dupliciter. Una per creaturas, quae imperfecta est, ratione iam dicta, in qua

Philosophical contemplation can be easily explained, since it is due to the natural capacity of apprehension of the physical world. Besides, Aquinas also acknowledges the existence of a desire for the contemplation of God that is not satisfied with the apprehension of created perfections pointing to their universal cause. As a response to that desire, theological reflection — the milieu of the *Commentary on the Sentences* — seeks to uncover what can be rationally revealed of the content of faith, including the direct contemplation of God that Aquinas identifies with the complete fulfillment of human life. There is no experience *in via* of what the state *in patria* means for a created being but faith, relying on Zechariah and other prophets, advocates such possibility. Based on the theological principle that faith does not destroy or ignore nature, but presupposes it,²⁶ Aquinas undertakes the search for proofs in the human nature that support such a prospect or at least demonstrate that it is not contradictory to the nature of the human intellect. According to that principle, if faith endorses the direct contemplation of the divine essence, the intellect's constitution should enable it even if that possibility cannot be actualized *in via*.

Actually, the knowledge of God *in via* is so poor that it can be equated to ignorance, if compared to the perfect apprehension expected *in patria*. Thus, in his answer to *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, which is strongly reminiscent of the Pseudo-Dionysian negative theology and chronologically the first text with an explicit reference to Maimonides, Aquinas quotes St. John Damascenus as saying that the human intellect displays a natural capacity for the comprehension of all created realities, but that this is not the case for that of the eternal God, of whom we only know His existence and what He is not:

‘Who is’ means an indeterminate being and not what it is, and since *in statu viae* we only know of Him that He is and not what He is except through negation, and we can only name Him according to what we know, therefore we most properly call [God] ‘Who is.’

contemplatione philosophus, felicitatem contemplativam posuit, quae tamen est felicitas viae; et ad hanc ordinatur tota cognitio philosophica, quae ex rationibus creaturarum procedit. Est alia Dei contemplatio, qua videtur immediate per suam essentiam; et haec perfecta est, quae erit in patria et est homini possibilis secundum fidei suppositionem.

²⁶ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 10, ad 9.

In the end — he asserts — even the notion of being should be removed in order to attain a state of perfect detachment from the limitations of an imperfect apprehension. This effort leads to a state of ignorance, which — according to Thomas — is inherent to life on earth.²⁷

This is, however, a partial answer to the problem of the knowledge of God in Aquinas' view, since it does not take into account the afterlife. Ignorance of the divine reality in the first stage of human life is due to the fact that it is natural for the intellect to proceed from that perceived by the senses towards the intelligible, from the effects towards the causes, from the later towards the prior, "but *in patria* there will be a different way of apprehending."²⁸ There is a clear hierarchy between these two states, of which the first is only the way, the means, for the attainment of the goal that is the knowledge of God *in patria*.²⁹ This is so to the point that the most perfect apprehension of God *in via* can never be equated to that which will take place *in patria*, and it is the reason for our incapacity to understand the kind of knowledge experienced in the afterlife.³⁰

²⁷ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4: Ad ultimum autem etiam hoc ipsum esse, secundum quod est in creaturis, ab ipso removemus; et tunc remanet in quadam tenebra ignorantiae, secundum quam ignorantiam, *quantum ad statum viae pertinet*, optime Deo conjungimur, ut dicit Dionysius, et haec est quaedam caligo, in qua Deus habitare dicitur.

²⁸ *Ibid.* d. 17, q. 1, a. 4, Resp.: Dicit Philosophus quod intellectus noster se habet ad manifestissima naturae, sicut oculus vespertilionis ad lucem solis. Cuius ratio est, quia cum intellectus noster potentialis sit in potentia ad omnia intelligibilia, et ante intelligere non sit in actu aliquod eorum: ad hoc quod intelligat actu, oportet quod reducatur in actum per species acceptas a sensibus illustratas lumine intellectus agentis; quia, sicut dicit Philosophus, sicut se habent colores ad visum, ita se habent phantasmata ad intellectum potentialem. Unde cum naturale sit nobis procedere ex sensibus ad intelligibilia, ex effectibus in causas, ex posterioribus in priora, secundum statum viae, quia in patria alius modus erit intelligendi; ideo est quod potentias animae et habitus non possumus cognoscere nisi per actus, et actus per objecta. Cf. also d. 48, q. 1, a. 4: Secundum Philosophum, innata est nobis via a posterioribus in priora, et ita a creaturis in creatorem. Ad quod dicendum, quod hoc tenet in eis quae naturali cognitione cognoscimus, quae ex sensu principium sumit; sed in his quae per fidem cognoscimus, nostra cognitio ipsi veritati primae innititur. Unde oportet quod a prima veritate, quae est Deus, in ea quae ab ipso sunt procedamus.

²⁹ *In II Sent.*, d. 15, q. 3, a. 3, ad 3: Creaturae sunt sicut via, per quam devenitur in cognitionem creatoris. Perfectio autem non consistit in via, sed in termino viae.

³⁰ *In III Sent.*, d. 13, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2: Hoc intelligendum est de capacitate intellectualis naturae circa finem, ultra quam nulla capacitas alicuius rei extenditur;

In order to explain the intellect's nature and the substantial difference of knowledge in these two states, Aquinas draws an analogy between the physical light, which enables seeing created objects, and the intellectual light that makes cognition possible. He also distinguishes and compares their ways of operating:

The way for the sense of sight to perceive is by fashioning through light a form visible in act. If we transfer the name of vision to the intellect, properly understood, we see when the intellectual form appears in our intellect by means of the intellectual light. This light can be natural, like the one with which we apprehend man's essence, and so on; or it can be supernatural, like the one with which we will see God *in patria*. Then, a composite is said to be seen intellectually when its apprehension stems from the above mentioned vision, as we see by natural light the first principles that we know instantaneously; or by supernatural light, like the vision of prophecy. Finally, the things that we can discern rationally in these principles are said to be seen, like the things that we know by demonstrative proof.³¹

Regarding intellectual apprehension, he observes that some of the content of human knowledge does not proceed from the physical world, since there are things we know about God that cannot come from that source. Thus, there must be a supernatural light originating in God, who is also its object, besides the intellectual light that enables this grasping of the essences of created beings. This second light — adds Aquinas — is that according to which the intellects are rendered capable of contemplating God *in patria*.

It is also possible to distinguish between the different objects of these two modes of knowledge. For instance, the intellect's

sicut intellectus in statu viae, quantumcumque proficiat, numquam pervenit ad modum intelligendi qui erit in patria. Also cf. d. 27, q. 3, a. 1, arg. 3: Cognitio patriae excedit cognitionem viae, in quantum homo in patria videt Deum per essentiam immediate.

³¹ *Ibid.* d. 24, q. 1, a. 2, Resp.: Modus autem quo sensus videt, est in quantum species visibilis in actu per lumen formatur in visu; unde transferendo nomen visionis ad intellectum, proprie intelligendo, videmus quando per lumen intellectuale ipsa forma intellectualis fit in intellectu nostro. Sive illud lumen sit naturale, sicut cum intelligimus quidditatem hominis, aut alicujus huiusmodi; sive sit supernaturale, sicut quo Deum in patria videbimus. Et ulterius videri per intellectum dicuntur illa complexa quorum cognitio ex praedicta visione consurgit; sicut per lumen naturale videmus principia prima quae cognoscimus statim, ut terminos; sive per lumen supernaturale, sicut est visio prophetiae. Et ulterius etiam ea quae in ista principia resolvere possumus per rationem dicuntur videri, sicut ea quae scimus demonstrative probata.

natural light enables for the apprehension of the first principles of knowledge, whereas among the capabilities for the apprehension stemming from the supernatural light we find the prophetic visions and the knowledge of God by faith. Faith, prophecy, and direct apprehension of the divine essence *in patria* are therefore related, since they are originated by the same source, God. Moreover, there are degrees of perfection among them, since knowledge *in patria* is a perfect — in human terms — and direct contemplation of God's essence, whereas the most perfect knowledge *in via* can in no way achieve that:

Faith cannot be of things seen, because the intelligible form that is the object of faith, i. e. God, eludes our intellect's constitution, and cannot be reached *in statu viae*.³²

A similar distinction between different stages and ways of knowledge is also a major issue in the *Guide*, and an examination of Aquinas' references to Maimonides in this context shows further contributions of the *Guide* to his thought.

In *De Veritate*, Aquinas focuses on the relationship between these two stages with an explicit reference to Maimonides' teachings. He distinguishes between three possible ways for the knowledge of God: by direct contemplation of the divine essence, through material things, or through the intelligible effects of God. The first way is the knowledge experienced *in patria*. The two others are indirect apprehensions of God *in via*. Then he defines in what sense something is said to be natural to man, a clarification essential to the legitimacy of the knowledge of God in both states. These are Aquinas' words:

The knowledge of God can take place in different ways, namely in His essence, through the physical things, or also through the intelligible effects. Likewise we must distinguish which of these are natural to man. Something can be according to nature and against nature regarding one and the same thing depending on its different states, because the thing's nature is not the same while in the process of becoming and after it became a perfect being, as **Rabbi Moses** says, like the perfect size is natural to man when he has reached the

³² *Ibid.* in fine: Et secundum hoc patet quod fides non potest esse de visis: quia forma illa intelligibilis quae principaliter est objectum fidei, idest Deus, formationem intellectus nostri subterfugit, et non est ei pervius in statu viae, ut dicit Augustinus. Nec iterum ea quae sunt fidei, ad principia visa reducere possumus demonstrando.

perfect age, but it would be against nature for a baby to be born with that size. It thus should be said that *it is natural to the human intelligence to know God in some manner in any of its states*, but that in its beginning, that is *in statu viae*, it is natural for it to know God through perceptible creatures, while it is natural for it to achieve knowledge of God in Himself in its consummation, that is *in statu patriae*. Thus, if man *in statu viae* were to be elevated to the knowledge of God according to the state *in patria*, this would be against nature, as it would be against nature for a newly born baby to have a beard.³³

A similar idea though with a different example is found in *Guide I*, 33, as follows:

It is necessary that children may be educated and those who are of deficient intellect taught according to their intellects' capacity. ... But if they just begin with the study of this spiritual science, they will not only encounter difficulties in their opinions and beliefs, but might even fall in plain unbelief. This is nothing different to my eyes than what follows: it is as if someone wanted to feed a suckling with wheaten bread and meat and wine. He would undoubtedly kill him, not because these aliments are bad or unnatural for man, but because the one who eats them is too weak to digest them so as to derive a benefit from them.³⁴

³³ *De Veritate*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1: Cognoscere Deum contingit multipliciter: scilicet per essentiam suam, et per res sensibiles, aut etiam per effectus intelligibiles. Similiter etiam distinguendum est de eo quod est homini naturale. Uni enim et eidem rei est aliquid secundum naturam et contra naturam, secundum eius status diversos; eo quod non est eadem natura rei dum est in fieri, et dum est in perfecto esse, ut dicit Rabbi Moyses; sicut quantitas completa est naturalis homini cum ad aetatem pervenerit perfectam, et alia huiusmodi, esset autem contra naturam puero, si in perfecta quantitate nasceretur. Sic igitur dicendum est, quod intelligentiae humanae secundum quemlibet statum est naturale aliquo modo cognoscere Deum; sed in sui principio, scilicet in statu viae, est naturale ei quod cognoscat Deum per creaturas sensibiles. Est autem ei naturale quod perveniat ad cognoscendum Deum per seipsum in sui consummatione, id est in statu patriae. Et sic si in statu viae eleveetur ad hoc quod cognoscat Deum secundum statum patriae, hoc erit contra naturam, sicut esset contra naturam quod puer mox natus haberet barbam.

³⁴ *Guide I*, 33, 70-71. Cf. *Dux*, I, XXXII, fol. XIIr: Necessse est ut exercentur parvuli et doceantur illi qui sunt brevis intellectus secundum potentiam suae apprehensionis. ... Sed si tantum inceperit in ista sapientia spiritali studere, non solum proveniet inde labor in opinionibus et credulitatibus; verum etiam proveniet ad incredulitatem manifestam. Hoc autem non videtur aliter in oculis meis, nisi sic: sicut si aliquis vellet pascere infantem pane triticeo, et carne, et vino, sine dubio interficeret ipsum. Non quia sunt mali cibi, vel quia non conveniunt naturae humanae, sed propter debilitatem comestoris, quia non potest eos digerere, ut inde proveniat ei utilitas.

Aquinas creatively interprets and develops Maimonides' parable. He argues that in this life it is natural for human beings to know God through the physical world, by apprehending created perfections that reflect the Creator's nature in one way or another. This justifies the existence of the divine attributes as expressions of the knowledge of God. At this stage it is against nature to know God in His essence, and therefore it is not possible to explain how such a kind of apprehension takes place, but after the intellect has reached the "perfect size", namely *in patria*, that knowledge is natural also to human beings. Therefore any current experience of the knowledge that will be natural *in patria* considered from the point of view of what can be known in this life is called supernatural, but this does not mean that knowledge of God by means other than the senses and reasoning is against human nature in absolute terms. I will return to this text in Chapter 4 in connection with Aquinas' justification of faith.

The next *quaestio* of *De Veritate* elaborates on the distinction between the modes of knowledge of God *in via*, namely the natural (reason) and the supernatural (faith and prophecy), and the cause for the insufficiency inherent in knowledge attained by faith as opposed to that of the *lumen glorie* by which the intellect directly contemplates God *in patria*. The difference between the natural and the supernatural light — Aquinas explains — is in their diversity of origin, since the intellect is endowed with its own light — the agent intellect — from birth, whereas God directly grants the light of faith or that of prophecy when and to whom He wants, a light fully developed only *in patria*. The reason for the insufficiency in faith-based perception is the intellect's imperfect participation in that supernatural light as long as it is bound by the limitations of the senses. When we will participate perfectly in that spiritual light — Aquinas asserts —, and this will happen *in patria*, we will see everything that we now believe without seeing.³⁵ Therefore, the gap between the two supernatural ways of apprehension — faith and direct contemplation — is not just one of degree, of more or less vision, but that between what is seen and what is not.

³⁵ *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 1, ad 8: Lux illa spiritualis perfecte participaretur a nobis: quod erit in patria, ubi ea quae nunc credimus, perfecte videbimus.

Finally Aquinas observes that, since according to Aristotle the most perfect operation of the intellect is the apprehension of the most noble being that can be understood and God is the summit of the hierarchy of intelligible beings, it can be concluded that the human intellect's supreme perfection is the perfect apprehension of God. On this account it can be said that the possibility of a direct contemplation of the divine essence *in patria* is reasonable and in conformity with the nature of the human intellect, despite the fact that it cannot be demonstrated because it exceeds the intellects' natural aptitudes displayed *in via*. Again, the qualifying term "supernatural" is only to distinguish it from the knowledge acquired through the ordinary channels common to all without a direct or added divine intervention, and it does not mean that it is against human nature in general terms, but only in the developing stage.³⁶

However, in Aquinas' view, the limitations by which human beings are bound *in via* are not only due to the natural disposition of the human intellect but also to the damaging consequences that original sin had on man's capacity for the knowledge of God. Following an explanation on the issue in the same *quaestio*, he concludes:

After sinning, man needs three means in order to see God: creatures, from which he ascends to the knowledge of God; the similarity of God that he grasps in creatures; and the light that perfects him by addressing him to God, be it natural like the agent intellect, or by

³⁶ *Ibid.* q. 18, a. 1, Resp.: Hominis autem, in quantum homo, est perfectio non consistit nisi in actu intellectus, ex quo habet quod homo sit. In operatione autem intellectus possunt differentes gradus distingui dupliciter. Uno modo ex diversitate intelligibilium. Quanto enim quis excellentius intelligibile intelligit, tanto excellentior est eius intelligentia; unde, ut dicitur in X *Ethic.*, perfectissima operatio intellectus est intellectus bene dispositi ad optimum intelligibile; sicut et pulcherrima visio corporalis est visus bene dispositi ad pulcherrimum sub visu iacentium. Alio modo in operatione intellectus accipiunt gradus ex modo intelligendi. Possibile est enim unum et idem intelligibile a diversis diversimode intelligi, ab uno perfectius, ab alio minus perfecte. Non est autem possibile ut ultimus terminus perfectionis humanae accipiatur secundum aliquem modum intelligendi: quia in istis modis intelligendi possunt considerari infiniti gradus, quorum unus alio perfectius intelligit. Nec est aliquis ita perfecte intelligens quo non possit excogitari alium perfectius intelligere nisi Deus qui infinita limpидitate omnia intelligit. Unde oportet quod ultimus terminus humanae perfectionis sit in intelligendo aliquod perfectissimum intelligibile, quod est essentia divina. In hoc igitur unaquaeque rationalis creatura beata est, quod essentiam Dei videt, non ex hoc quod ita limpide, vel plus vel minus eam videt.

grace like the light of faith or wisdom. Before sin, man needed only two means: the similarity of God and the light that elevates and directs the mind [towards God]. The blessed [i.e. *in patria*] require just one medium, the light of glory that elevates the mind.³⁷

Although it is not against nature, the expected contemplation of the divine essence *in patria* far exceeds the natural dispositions of the intellects, and therefore it is required that God grant by participation an added light to make it possible *de facto*. Moreover, the presence of sin means that not all human beings necessarily attain the perfect development of their knowledge of God. According to Aquinas, human beings should make themselves ready for that contemplation through the exercise of their natural capacity, but the completion of that process requires that the last step be granted by God with the “light of glory that elevates the mind,” as a reward for that effort that is up to Him to bestow.

Last, Aquinas clarifies in *Super Boetium de Trinitate* his earlier assertion in *In I Sent.*, d. 8 that *in via* only God’s existence and what God is not can be known, a statement that plainly taken contradicts his explanations on the knowledge of the divine perfections in this life. He explains that God exceeds infinitely any created form and therefore any similarity imprinted in the human intellect would not be enough to make Him known in his essence. Besides, the intellect cannot know God in his essence *secundum statum viae* because it is habituated to the forms apprehended by the senses. He can only be known through His effects. But effects are twofold: first, those matching their cause, which provide full knowledge of its essence. Second, effects that are defective in relation to their cause and therefore cannot make its essence known but only show its existence. This is the case of the natural knowledge of God.³⁸ However — he adds — this kind of

³⁷ *Ibid.* ad 1, in fine: Patet igitur quod homo post peccatum triplici medio indiget ad videndum Deum: scilicet ipsa creatura, ex qua in divinam cognitionem ascendit; et similitudine ipsius Dei, quam ex creatura accipit; et lumine, quo perficitur ad hoc ut in Deum dirigatur: sive sit lumen naturae, ut intellectus agentis, sive gratiae, ut lumen fidei vel sapientiae. In statu vero ante peccatum indigebat duplici medio: scilicet medio quod est similitudo Dei; et quod est lumen elevans vel dirigens mentem. Beati autem uno tantum medio indigent, scilicet lumine gloriae elevante mentem.

³⁸ *De Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 2, Resp.: Similitudo etiam quaecumque impressa ab ipso in intellectum humanum non sufficeret ad hoc quod faceret eius

knowledge admits degrees, inasmuch as the cause can be better apprehended through its behavior towards the effect. According to this, the human intellect can improve its knowledge of God through His effects in a threefold manner: by understanding the divine omnipotence; through the perception of a hierarchy of perfections and the progressive divine similarity in created beings that points towards God's eminence; and by perceiving the infinite distance between the cause and its effects. Thus says Dionysius that beings apprehend God as causing all, exceeding all in perfection, and having all limitation and defect removed from Him.³⁹ In fact, Aquinas outlines here that faith and Scripture confirm Aristotle's assertion regarding the intellect's perfection that he had recalled in *De Veritate*:

The human mind is most enhanced in this improved apprehension, when a new illumination reinforces its natural light, as in the case of the light of faith and the gifts of wisdom and understanding, through

essentiam cognosci, cum in infinitum excedat quamlibet formam creatam, ratione cuius intellectui per formas creatas pervius non potest esse Deus, ut Augustinus dicit. Nec etiam in statu huius viae cognoscitur Deus a nobis per formas pure intelligibiles, quae sint aliqua similitudo ipsius propter connaturalitatem intellectus nostri ad phantasmata, ut dictum est. Unde relinquitur quod solummodo per effectus formam cognoscatur. Effectus autem est duplex: quidam, qui adaequatur virtuti suae causae, et per talem effectum cognoscitur plenarie virtus causae, et per consequens quiditas ipsius; alius effectus est, qui deficit a praedicta aequalitate, et per talem effectum non potest comprehendi virtus agentis et per consequens nec essentia eius; sed cognoscitur tantum de causa quod est. Et sic se habet cognitio effectus ut principium ad cognoscendum de causa an est, sicut se habet quiditas ipsius causae, cum per suam formam cognoscitur. Hoc autem modo se habet omnis effectus ad Deum. Et ideo non possumus in statu viae pertingere ad cognoscendum de ipso nisi quia est.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Et tamen unus cognoscentium quia est alio perfectius cognoscit, quia causa tanto ex effectu perfectius cognoscitur, quanto per effectum magis apprehenditur habitudo causae ad effectum. Quae quidem habitudo in effectu non pertingente ad aequalitatem suae causae attenditur secundum tria, scilicet secundum progressionem effectus a causa et secundum hoc quod effectus consequitur de similitudine suae causae et secundum hoc quod deficit ab eius perfecta consecutione. Et sic tripliciter mens humana proficit in cognitione Dei, quamvis ad cognoscendum quid est non pertingat, se an est solum. Primo, secundum quod perfectius cognoscitur eius efficacia in producendo res. Secundo, prout nobiliorum effectuum causa cognoscitur, qui cum eius similitudinem aliquam gerant, magis eminentiam eius commendant. Tertio in hoc quod magis ac magis cognoscitur elongatus ab omnibus his, quae in effectibus apparent. Unde dicit Dionysius in libro *De divinis nominibus* quod cognoscitur ex omnium causa et excessu et ablatione.

which the mind is said to be elevated above itself in contemplation by knowing that God is above all that is naturally apprehended.⁴⁰

It is in this sense that this so-called ignorance adds up to a mere non-knowledge of God:

Our mind best improves in knowledge when it grasps that God's essence is above anything that can be apprehended *in statu viae*, thus knowing that He exists even though His essence remains unknown.⁴¹

From these discussions it becomes clear that Aquinas' distinction of two stages of the intellect had been a component of his argument on the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God from his first approaches to the issue. The distinction *in via/in patria* is, according to him, achieved by faith and supported by reason.

It appears from some of Aquinas' statements that the difference between knowledge of God *in via* and *in patria*, if the intellect is left to its natural development, is that between knowing God's existence and knowing his essence. However, by asserting the legitimacy of the divine attributes, Aquinas acknowledges that an approximation to the knowledge of God's essence is possible by means of analogy with the created perfections. In fact, the most perfect apprehension of the divine essence in this life is through the notion of being, since it is the most universal and encompassing of all perfections. This is what he calls natural knowledge of God *in via*. Further, he acknowledges the possibility of a direct apprehension of the divine essence by means other than that through creatures *in patria*, i.e., in the afterlife. This possibility is advocated only by faith, although some experimental data also point in that direction. In any case, this contemplation cannot be

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* in fine: In hoc autem profectu cognitionis maxime iuvatur mens humana, cum lumen eius naturale nova illustratione confortatur; sicut est lumen fidei et doni sapientiae et intellectus, per quod mens in contemplatione supra se elevari dicitur, in quantum cognoscit Deum esse supra omne id, quod naturaliter comprehendit. Sed quia ad eius essentiam videndam penetrare non sufficit, dicitur in seipsam quodammodo ab excellenti lumine reflecti, et hoc est quod dicitur *Gen.* 32 super illud: 'vidi Dominum facie ad faciem', in glossa Gregorii: 'visus animae, cum in Deum intenditur, immensitatis coruscatione reverberatur'.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* a. 1: Secundum hoc dicimur in fine nostrae cognitionis Deum tamquam ignotum cognoscere, quia tunc maxime mens in cognitione profecisse invenitur, quando cognoscit eius essentiam esse supra omne quod apprehendere potest in statu viae, et sic quamvis maneat ignotum quid est, scitur tamen quia est.

demonstrated but only buttressed by showing that the nature of the human intellect does not oppose it. Still, it cannot be explained how the created intellect, given its natural limitations, can apprehend the divine essence *in patria*, unless a direct intervention of God is assumed to take place in order to render it capable of attaining such knowledge. Besides that, Aquinas states that even in that case the created intellects can only produce a multiplicity of notions and express that knowledge through a multiplicity of names, as it happens *in via*, due to their own inability to comprehend the fullness of the divine perfection.

Moreover, he points to experience, which shows that some individuals already possess part of the knowledge expected in the afterlife in the form of faith and prophecy, though very defectively if compared to the final stage of that apprehension. This demands a separate analysis of the kind of intellectual illumination involved in each of these two states. The fact that there is a different intellectual illumination for each stage and that they are not completely heterogeneous due to their having the same object justifies the distinction between a natural and a supernatural knowledge that pervades Aquinas' explanations on the two states of the intellect. According to it, supernatural is any apprehension of God not explained by the actual stage of development of the intellect, which requires a divine intervention. In absolute terms, Aquinas upholds the knowledge of God as natural to the human intellect in all its states and advocates a different definition of what natural means according to each one. In the end, the existence of sin determines the extent of the grasp of God on the part of man, but not on the part of God, who does intervene to enable the individuals who deserve it to attain the beatific vision.

(b) Maimonides' Distinction 'In this World/In the Next'

In several locations in the *Guide* Maimonides points to the existence of different stages in the development of the human intellect towards an apprehension of God. However, while he devotes several chapters of the *Guide* to reflect on the extent and limits of the human intellect in its current condition, his definition of the kind of apprehension of God experienced in a future state is unclear. He definitely advocates the possibility of apprehending

notions that are clear and unequivocal indications of God's essence. The first chapters of the *Guide* explore and ratify the possibility of a true apprehension of the divine nature in absolute terms. For instance, when Maimonides explains the term "figure" as found in Holy Scripture, he asserts:

The term is also used to designate the true notion grasped by the intellect. It is with a view to this third meaning that the word 'figure' is used with reference to God, may He be exalted. Thus it says: 'And the figure of the Lord shall he look upon' [*Numbers* 12, 8]. The meaning and interpretation of this verse are: he grasps the truth of the Lord.⁴²

Moreover, like Aquinas, Maimonides acknowledges degrees in this true apprehension of God. When explaining the meaning of "to approach", "to touch", and "to come near", he writes:

For nearness to Him, may He be exalted, consists in apprehending Him; and remoteness from Him is the lot of him who does not know Him. And there are very many gradations in being near to or far from Him in this respect. ... Sometimes the word is intended to signify the approach of one body to another, and sometimes union through the cognition and apprehension of a certain thing. For one who apprehends a thing that he did not apprehend before has, as it were, approached a thing that previously had been remote from him. Understand this.⁴³

In any case, this nearness suggests a close apprehension of God. Maimonides, like Aquinas in the case of the direct contemplation *in patria*, equates this kind of apprehension to an intellectual "vision" of God:

Know that the three words 'to see' (*ra'oh*), 'to look at' (*habbit*) and 'to vision' (*hazoh*) are applied to the sight of the eye and that all three of them are also used figuratively to denote the grasp of the intellect. ... Every mention of 'seeing,' when referring to God, may He be exalted, has this figurative meaning. ... In the same way the word 'to look at' is applied to the act of turning the eye toward a thing. ... The word is also used figuratively to designate the mind's turning and directing itself to the contemplation of a thing until it grasps it. ... Every mention of 'looking,' when referring to God, may He be exalted, is in this figurative sense. ... The word 'to vision' is likewise used to designate eye's seeing. ... The word is used in the same figurative sense when it is said: 'And they visioned God.' Know this.⁴⁴

⁴² *Guide* I, 3, 27.

⁴³ *Ibid.* I, 19, 45.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* I, 4, 27-28.

In these references, it is unclear whether Maimonides intends a direct contemplation of God's essence like the one *in patria* that Aquinas advocates or an improved natural apprehension in this life. However, when referring to Moses' knowledge of God in other places, Maimonides emphasizes his extraordinary grasp of the divine being in this life. Thus, when explaining the verbs "to ascend and to descend" and their use in Holy Scripture, he recalls again the prophet's unique experiences of God and asserts that he needed a divine intervention to improve his intellectual capacity. After asserting that when Scripture says "and Moses ascended to God" it means the removal of his prophetic state for the sake of a better one (beatific contemplation?), he adds that this is "in addition to the fact that Moses ascended to the top of the mountain upon which the created light had descended."⁴⁵ Thus, he reached a state above any other, where he would receive this "created light" that had descended from God, which can be interpreted as a sort of supernatural participation in God's knowledge.

In other passages on Moses' cognoscitive status, Maimonides is even more explicit regarding the divine contribution to his apprehensions. When explaining the meaning of the term "to pass", he comments the saying "And the Lord passed by before his face" in the following terms:

Moses, peace be on him, demanded a certain apprehension — namely, that which in its dictum 'But my face shall not be seen,' is named 'the seeing of the face' — and was promised an apprehension inferior to that which he had demanded. It is this latter apprehension that is named 'the seeing of the back' in its dictum: 'And thou shalt see My back.'⁴⁶

Moses asked for knowledge of God face to face or direct apprehension of the divine essence in this life, and was denied it. Instead — Maimonides explains — he was endowed with "the knowledge of acts ascribed to Him", which are the multiplicity of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* I, 10, 37. Cf. *Dux*, I, X, fol. VIIv: Et coniungitur ei quod dicitur quod fuit super cacumen montis, super quem descendit gloria creata. The Latin translation renders "created glory" instead of "created light". It is unclear which kind of knowledge Maimonides is referring to, but the translator seems to understand it as a supernatural apprehension, perhaps knowledge by faith or prophecy.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* I, 21, 48.

the divine actions in the world through which the created intellects know God's existence.

The knowledge that Maimonides refers to necessitates divine intervention and therefore it cannot be the common apprehension of God's actions in the world through causality, the apprehension of the physical world and God's actions that he mentions in the chapters about the divine names. This apprehension, although "hidden and inaccessible in its very nature", is in Maimonides view attainable on condition that God grants special aid:

Every perfect man – after his intellect has attained the cognition of whatever in its nature can be grasped — when longing for another apprehension beyond that which he has achieved, cannot but have his faculty of apprehension deceived or destroyed ... *unless divine help attends him*. As Scripture says: 'And I will cover thee with My hand until I have passed.'⁴⁷

These words were addressed to Moses, and Maimonides stresses that few individuals reach that state. Regarding the conditions for such knowledge, he notes that the contemplation of the truth of God is not instantaneous and should not be taken for granted. This knowledge is a reward for not hurrying to draw erroneous conclusions regarding the divine essence before being able to grasp it:

We say that man should not hasten too much to accede to this great and sublime matter at the first try, without having made his soul undergo training in the sciences and the different kinds of knowledge, having truly improved his character, and having extinguished the desires and cravings engendered in him by his imagination.⁴⁸

The condition for the apprehension of God on the part of the candidate is a long process of intellectual and moral struggle that only a few chosen are able to complete. Maimonides proposes Moses as a model for having succeeded in this. However, he could not do it alone, requiring divine intervention to render him capable of attaining that contemplation as a reward for his excellence of disposition:

[For this reason] God let overflow upon him so much of His bounty and goodness that it became necessary to say of him: and the figure

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 49. Cf. *Dux*, I, XXI, fol. IXr: ... nisi auxilium spirituale de coelis adiuverit ipsum.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* I, 5, 29.

of the Lord shall he look upon. The Sages, may their memory be blessed, have stated that this is a reward for his having at first hidden his face so as not to look upon God.⁴⁹

Now the question rises, what is the nature of this divine help, of this covering of the hand of God? Aquinas would point here to divine grace, a supernatural gift that would answer the longing of the perfect man for a superior knowledge, a gift that would be imperfect knowledge of these far reaching matters *in via* and perfect and definitive *in patria*. Maimonides, who also acknowledges the accomplished man's longing for further apprehension, only refers to a special divine protection so as not to have his intellectual faculty destroyed, which was all Moses could obtain at first in answer to his petition. His aim is to outline the natural limitation of the created intellect and the dangers posed to the ones who defy it. Aquinas explicitly places the end of this process beyond physical death, when the soul's detachment from the senses is complete, whereas Maimonides points here to an early stage in which any positive apprehension of God should be discarded as misleading and individuals should beware of any direct or higher knowledge due to the danger posed to the intellectual faculty of falling into error. Thus, when explaining the nature of intellectual knowledge, he writes:

For this reason it behooves to explain the matter to those whose souls grasp at human perfection and, by dint of expatiating a little on the point in question just as we have done, to put an end to the fantasies that come to them from the age of infancy.⁵⁰

Besides, a perfect natural knowledge of God is not the only possibility that Maimonides acknowledges. For instance, when writing about the biblical use of the verb "to eat" he asserts:

They [the Sages and Scripture] often designate knowledge as water. Thus: 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye for water.' Inasmuch as this use has become so frequent and widespread in the Hebrew language that it has become, as it were, the first meaning, the words meaning hunger and thirst are likewise employed to designate lack of knowledge and of apprehension. Thus: 'I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord;' 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.'

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* I, 26, 57.

This use is frequent. Jonathan ben Uziel, peace be on him, translates the verse, 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,' by the words: 'With joy shall you receive a new teaching from the chosen of the righteous.' Consider accordingly that he interprets the word "water" as being the knowledge *that will be received in those days*.⁵¹

Maimonides' use of the expression "in those days" is strongly reminiscent of Zechariah's "in that day shall the Lord be one and his name one". Accordingly, this expression points again to a state of perfect intellectual development that will take place in an indeterminate future, and which is likely to be identified either with the Messianic era or with Aquinas' *patria*. However, he fails to clarify the extent of such knowledge. It can be concluded from these references that Maimonides' main interest is to define the limits of a natural knowledge of God in this life, as is shown by the fact that he devotes most of the following chapters to that issue, preferring not to elaborate overmuch on the extent and nature of the apprehension of God in the other life.

In this context, he observes that in this life it is possible to distinguish between objects of apprehension that are within the intellect's natural power and those that it is not capable of apprehending due to their higher nature. Moreover, the intellect may apprehend one state of existing things while not being cognizant of other states. In addition there are great differences in capacity between the individuals of the species.

Maimonides also notes that man does not long for things the knowledge of which is totally above human reaching, in as much

⁵¹ *Ibid.* I, 30, 64. Cf. *Dux*, I, XXIX, fol. XIr: Similiter etiam vocaverunt sapientiam aquam, sicut dicitur: 'Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas,' usi sunt sapientes multipliciter hoc verbo, et attribuerunt verbum sitis et famis privationi sapientiae et intellectus. Sicut dicitur: 'Mittam famem in terram,' non famem panis, nec sitim aquae, sed sitim verbi Dei. Et: 'Sitivit anima mea ad Dominum,' et multa alia. Et Ionathas transtulit, 'Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris,' id est, recipietis doctrinam novam in gaudio ab electis iustorum. Et in aqua, intellige sapientiam *quae erit in diebus illis*. Cf. also *Guide* III, 11, 441: "It holds out this promise, saying: 'And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb.' Then it gives the reason for this, saying that the cause of the abolition of these enmities, these discords, and these tyrannies, will be the knowledge that men will then have concerning the true reality of the deity. For it says: 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*' Know this." Cf. *Dux*, III, XII, fol. LXXVv: the translation of this passage omits the reference to water and ends with the words: ... quia repleta est terra sapientia Domini. Cf. also *Hilkhot Malakhim*, 12, 5.

as he is aware of the impossibility of such knowledge. On the other hand, things that are very difficult to grasp are nevertheless the goal of constant search:

There are things for the apprehension of which man will find that he has a great longing. The sway of the intellect endeavoring to seek for, and to investigate, their true reality exists at every time and in every group of men engaged in speculation. ... Now it is not within the power of the human intellect to give a demonstration of these matters.⁵²

Maimonides refers here explicitly to some issues in the domains of Metaphysics and Natural Science. He does not say whether he includes the apprehension of God's essence among them, but the experience of man's longing for this knowledge permeates the *Guide*. He also draws a parallelism between the apprehension of the senses and that of the intellect very similar to Aquinas' own:

You who study my Treatise, know that something similar to what happens to sensory apprehensions happens likewise to intellectual apprehensions in so far as they are attached to matter. For when you see with your eye, you apprehend something that is within the power of your sight to apprehend. If, however, your eyes are forced to do something they are reluctant to do ... and if you force your eye, in spite of its reluctance, to find out the true reality of the thing, your eye shall not only be too weak to apprehend that which you are unable to apprehend, but also too weak to apprehend that which was previously within your power to apprehend.⁵³

While Aquinas' comparison aimed at leaving room for the possibility of a supernatural enlightenment in matters above human capacity, Maimonides' words express hope for a better apprehension in the future and include a warning against attempting to grasp these issues solely with the untrained natural strength. Neither contrary nor exactly the same, their statements are rather complementary. Aquinas considers faith to be that supernatural light experienced in this life that enhances the

⁵² *Guide* I, 31, 65-66.

⁵³ *Ibid.* I, 32, 68. Cf. *Dux*, I, XXXI, fol. XIv: Scito tu inspector libri mei, quoniam accidit apprehensioni intelligibilium, quia pendent de materia, simile eius quod contingit appraehensioni sensibilium, quoniam cum inspexeris oculis, rem appraehendes ex ea quod est in potestate visus ut appraehendat, quod si presseris visum tuum et aceruis ipsum, ut inspicias longius quam sit in potestate visus ... et presseris visum ut veritatem ipsius rei percipias, non solum deficies in appraehensione ipsius rei, sed debilitabitur visus in comprehensione illius rei quam poteris ante comprehendere.

natural knowledge of God as a pledge of the perfect knowledge attainable in the world to come through the light of glory. Maimonides stresses the importance of taking into account the intellect's natural development in order to discard early and wrong notions of God affected by the knowledge of the physical world and to encourage a true apprehension based on the capability of a fully developed intellect.

Summarizing, the expression "this world and the next" can be considered parallel to Aquinas' *in via* and *in patria* only in a restricted sense. The examination of the texts of the *Guide* related to this distinction confirms and expands on the conclusions drawn from Maimonides' use of Zechariah's prophecy. These references contain Maimonides' answers to the questions about the possibility of a true apprehension of God in this life, and whether the condition for it is human disposition only or divine intervention as well.

Moreover, the features of the eligible disciple described in *Guide* I, 62 point to a demanding ethical training and behavior, something that Aquinas claims also for the ones who reach the direct contemplation of God *in patria*. Obviously, there is a great difference between Aquinas' unequivocal statements about the beatific vision or light of glory when the intellect will see God directly in his essence and Maimonides' explanations, from which it would be excessive to draw this interpretation. The latter acknowledges a positive apprehension of God, at least for some individuals, "in this world", including "a clear indication of His essence". He also advocates an improved apprehension of God in "the other world", which could be identified with the Days of the Messiah without rejecting a possible but less certain allusion to the afterlife.

In conclusion, the analysis of these references have outlined two issues that are at the center of Aquinas' interest in the *Guide*: the prime importance of taking man's gradual development into account in order to define the extent of his grasp of the divine reality, and the danger of overcoming the natural limits of this grasp. In fact, Aquinas' distinction between the stage of the intellect in its current condition (*in via*) — when man needs faith in order to reach full development — and its future state in the world to come (*in patria*) — when the apprehension of the divine essence will be granted according to Zechariah's prophecy — aims at stressing

what cannot be said or known about God, when this assertion is binding and why. By doing that, Aquinas points to God's transcendence and defines what is indeed natural to the human intellect in its first stage, namely, the knowledge by reason, faith, and prophecy.

Their common interest in the definition of the stages is pervaded by a difference in approach and some similarities in the explanation. Whereas Maimonides emphasizes the limitations of the apprehension in this life, Aquinas is more interested in stressing that the final perfection — which is only achieved *in patria* — is possible. The latter distinguishes between human knowledge as its activity evolves in this life (*in statu viae*) and the use of the same faculty in the state of glory (*in statu patriae*) in a bid to solve the epistemological difficulties. He attempts to solve the tension between the need for a true knowledge of God along with the requirements of such a goal that include that the possibility be grounded in the nature of the human intellect, and the difficulty of combining its natural limits with the infinite divine being. Maimonides' texts on "the other world" leave the epistemological implications of this belief unanswered and therefore could not serve as a basis for Aquinas' own analysis of the knowledge *in patria*. Maimonides does not inquire how the human intellect will overcome its natural limitations in order to enable a direct contemplation of God, a possibility that he suggests in some of his texts, whereas Aquinas answers this question by resorting to the existence of grace, an added intellectual light.

Regarding the similarities in their explanation, both of them rely on the same parallelism — of Aristotelian origin — between physical light and the intellectual light that makes knowledge possible for the description of the intellect's nature. This comparison, as in the case of the biblical source, serves their different purposes. It allows Maimonides to stress the limitations of the intellect's capacities in its current condition, and Aquinas to advocate the possibility of enhancement of the intellectual faculty by an added light partially in this life and fully in the afterlife. In general, both acknowledge divine intervention as an extraordinary but possible way for the improvement of the intellectual apprehension. Maimonides restricts that possibility to Moses and to an undetermined — apparently few — number of learned. Aquinas regards it as a chance given to all if certain

conditions are met, in an imperfect way *in via* and perfectly *in patria*. Faith and prophecy would be the channels for its manifestation *in via*.

They also agree that, if compared to the knowledge enjoyed in the next world — *in patria*, — knowledge in this world can be termed ignorance. In the case of the knowledge of God, apprehension *in via* is so far from that *in patria* that it amounts to nearly nothing, except the knowledge of His existence and what God is not, in regard to His effects. This is what makes it possible to distinguish it from a mere absence of knowledge, and it is against this background that their statements on man's ignorance of God's nature should be read.

In short, Maimonides' contribution to Aquinas' reflection on the intellect's different stages are his recurrent remarks about the need to take into account that a fully developed intellectual capacity is the outcome of a gradual process that spans the whole life. A survey of other related references to Maimonides in Aquinas' works reveals further contributions of the *Guide* to this aspect of the problem of the knowledge of God to which allusion is made in the *Quaestio de attributis* by way of *Zechariah* 14, 9.

Chapter 4 focuses on Aquinas' reading of the *Guide* in search of Maimonides' answers to the reasons for the intellect's difficulty in apprehending elevated matters in this life and the need for faith and prophecy to overcome it. It identifies *Guide* I, 34 as the basis for Aquinas' explanation on the need for faith for the knowledge of God in its current state, and *Guide* II, 17 for his explanation on the limitation of the intellect in matters such as the beginning of the world, which was wrongly used at the time to demonstrate the existence of the Creator. It also examines other references to Maimonides on faith and prophecy as alternative modes of knowledge that give notice of the future apprehension of the divine essence in the afterlife.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE QUAESTIO DE ATTRIBUTIS AND THE LIMITS OF NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

Aquinas' *Quaestio de attributis* discusses two important features in the complex problem of the knowledge of God: the intellect's natural limitation that prevents it from apprehending God perfectly in this life, and the existence of ways for overcoming that limitation both in this life and in the afterlife. Both dimensions find biblical support in *Zechariah* 14, 9, which — as argued in Chapter 3 — Maimonides uses as a background for his expectations of a more spiritual future and his warnings against trying to overcome the current limits ahead of time, and Aquinas in order to support his explanations on the extent of the future apprehension of God in the world to come.

Such an apprehension was already advocated in the prologue to the *Commentary on the Sentences*, where Aquinas outlines a twofold way for human beings to attain happiness that I need to recall now: the first is the contemplation of God through creatures and the second a direct contemplation of the divine essence that, in Aquinas words, “is perfect, will be *in patria* and is possible to human beings according to the assumption of faith”.¹ This latter stage is deemed to be the final one but also above the reach of human beings if only their natural disposition *in via* is considered. Faith appears then as a peculiar mode of knowledge that overcomes that limitation *in via* and gives notice of the future apprehension *in patria*. Aquinas repeatedly stresses this tension between the final end foreseen and the present impossibility experienced, and to that purpose quotes again the *Guide*.

In fact, a survey of Aquinas' references to Maimonides in this context reveals *Guide* I, 34 and II, 17 as key texts in his explanation of a comprehensive doctrine of the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God. Maimonides enumerates in the first text five causes that prevent the instruction of the multitude in matters that are attainable by reason alone, and explains why so few

¹ *In I Sent.*, Prol., q. 1, a. 1, Sol.

individuals actually have the capacity to be taught difficult matters. *Guide* II, 17 notes that there are certain philosophical questions that elude the intellect due to its objective limitation, and cannot be answered with certainty. Aquinas interprets these two chapters of the *Guide* as reinforcing the case in favor of the capacity of the human intellect to attain knowledge of God in all stages of its development.

This chapter is devoted to *Guide* I, 34 and its contribution to Aquinas' explanation of the role of faith. His use of *Guide* II, 17 will be the subject of Chapter 5. I will divide the present chapter into two sections: The first examines Maimonides' Five Causes that prevent the instruction of the multitude on sublime matters in *Guide* I, 34 and in Aquinas' works, and the second focuses on the latter's other early reference to the *Guide* in the context of the role of faith and prophecy for the knowledge of God in this life.²

1. *The Five Causes that Prevent the Instruction of the Multitude*

This section is divided into two subsections. The first analyzes Maimonides' text and his own use of the passage and the second is devoted to Aquinas' references to the text.³

(a) *The Five Causes in the Guide of the Perplexed*

Maimonides devotes *Guide* I, 34 to enumerating the five reasons that, in his opinion, prevent many from apprehending sublime truths such as those of *Metaphysics*.⁴ The preceding two chapters contain several warnings regarding the danger of attempting to surpass the intellect's natural limits. I examined some of these texts at the end of Chapter 3, and they serve as an introduction to Maimonides' explanations on the Causes. For instance, *Guide*

² The texts of the Five Causes quoted here are my translation from the Latin critical edition of the chapter (cf. Appendix III). I have added Pines' English translation from Arabic in footnotes, to facilitate collation of the two versions.

³ For an examination of this text in the context of Aquinas' doctrine of natural truths, cf. P. Synave, "La révélation des vérités divines naturelles d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin".

⁴ *Dux* I, XXXIII, fol. XIIv: Scias quod quinque sunt causae quae impediunt vel prohibent incipere addiscere sapientiam spiritualement, et innuere vel significare quae expedit innui super illa et detegere quae sunt in ipsa, genti.

I, 32 begins with a comparison between what happens to the eye that is forced to contemplate something too small for its capacity and the intellect that tries to apprehend things too far from matter. Besides not being able to grasp that difficult reality — Maimonides observes — both the eye and the intellect become too weak to apprehend what is within their capacities.⁵ However, Maimonides concedes that the purpose of his warning is not to deprive the intellect of the things that it is possible to apprehend, but only to make it known that “the intellects of human beings have a limit at which they stop”.⁶

Guide I, 33 clarifies that the correct method for the study of Metaphysics is by a gradual approach from the easy matters towards the most difficult ones. Thus, he notes at the beginning of the chapter that “to begin with this science is very harmful, I mean the divine science”.⁷ Recalling again the stages of development of a human being, he compares this danger with “that of someone feeding a suckling with wheaten bread and meat and giving him wine to drink”.⁸ Then he adds:

When, however, a man grows perfect and the mysteries of the Torah are communicated to him either by somebody else or because he himself discovers them ... he attains a rank at which he pronounces the above-mentioned correct opinions to be true.⁹

Finally, at the end of the chapter, Maimonides announces:

I shall make clear to you the cause that prevents the instruction of the multitude in the veritable methods of speculation and that prevents their being taught to begin to grasp the essences of things as they are.¹⁰

It is clear from these remarks that the explicit context of Maimonides’ Five Causes is that of the study of the sciences, particularly of Metaphysics. However, some elements mentioned in his explanation may direct the reader to a higher knowledge, that of the truth of God. For instance, the First Cause recalls the common image of knowledge as water, which he had also mentioned in I, 30. I already argued in Chapter 3 that, in the context of

⁵ *Guide I*, 32, 68.

⁶ *Ibid.* 70.

⁷ *Ibid.* I, 33, 70.

⁸ *Ibid.* 71. Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1.

⁹ *Ibid.* 71-72.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 72.

Maimonides' explanations in this and other works, this kind of knowledge can be equated either to that obtained in the present life or to that received in the Days of the Messiah, or to the after-life. These are his words:

The first cause is the depth and subtlety and obscurity of the notions. Thus Solomon said: 'That which was is exceeding deep: who can find it out?' And he said: 'But wisdom, where can it be found?' Now it is not fitting to begin with the deep and hidden wisdom. Know that one of the parables known to our people is that *likening wisdom to water*, a parable that the Sages explained in several ways, one of them being that he who knows how to swim can bring up pearls from the bottom of the sea, whereas he who does not know, drowns. For this reason, no one should put himself in danger and swim except he who has exercised his soul in learning.¹¹

The Latin translator draws the conclusion of the parable where Maimonides had just suggested the analogy, but the text is faithful to the original.

The Second Cause stresses the nature of the human intellect, which develops over a long period. This fact was also pointed to in *Guide I*, 33, and I have noted in Chapter 3 that Aquinas attributes great importance to this aspect of Maimonides' doctrine as the basis for his justification of the possibility of the contemplation of God in the afterlife and of the need of faith in this life:

The second cause is the insufficiency of the human intellect at its beginnings. *For man is not granted his ultimate perfection at the outset*, but perfection exists in him rather potentially, and it is minimal in his beginnings. Accordingly it is said: 'Man is born a wild ass.' Nor is it necessarily obligatory in the case of every individual who is endowed with some thing in potency, that this thing should pass from potency to act, but it is possible that it remains in its defective state either because of certain external obstacles or because of defect of discipline

¹¹ *Dux I*, XXXIII, fol. XIIv. Cf. *Guide I*, 34, 72-73: "The first cause is the difficulty, subtlety, and obscurity of the matter in itself. Thus Scripture says: 'That which was is far off and exceeding deep: who can find it out?' And it is said: 'But wisdom, where shall it be found?' Now it is not fitting in teaching to begin with what is most difficult and obscure for the understanding. One of the parables generally known in our community is that *likening knowledge to water*. Now the Sages, peace be on them, explained several notions by means of this parable; one of them being that he who knows how to swim brings up pearls from the bottom of the sea, whereas he who does not know, drowns. For this reason, no one should expose himself to the risks of swimming except he who has been trained in learning to swim."

and training, in what would transform that potentiality into actuality. Accordingly it is clearly said that not many are wise, because the things that prevent the acquisition of perfection are many, and the ones that produce doubts are countless. And if this is so, When would man be ready with perfect preparation and the leisure required for learning and training his soul, so that what subsists in him in potency should be transformed into actuality?¹²

Four variations from the original appear in the Latin translation. First, Maimonides had written that the individual lacks perfection in his beginnings, whereas the translator chooses to assert that perfection is minimal at that stage. Second, Maimonides had pointed to certain obstacles as the cause for the individual to remain in his defective state, and the translator adds that these obstacles are external. Third, the Latin omits the reference to the Sages. Last, the translator substitutes a reference to the countless things that produce doubts for Maimonides' reference to the numerous distractions that hinder perfection.

The Third Cause is yet another call to attention in reference to the long process of development of the human capacity for the apprehension of the higher things. Among them God is the highest, and Maimonides acknowledges in several places of the *Guide* that man's goal is the apprehension of Him. Even if he explicitly devotes these causes to the study of the physical world, it is possible to read them under that second perspective, the one that Aquinas will choose:

The third cause lies in the number of complements and preliminaries. *For man has in his nature a desire and love to seek the limits or ends, and wants to reach the end of everything. But he often finds complements*

¹² *Ibid.* Cf. *Guide* I, 34, 73: "The second cause is the insufficiency of the minds of all men at their beginnings. *For man is not granted his ultimate perfection at the outset; for perfection exists in him only potentially, and in his beginnings he lacks this act. Accordingly it is said: 'And man is born a wild ass.'* Nor is it necessarily obligatory in the case of every individual who is endowed with some thing in potency, that this thing should become actual. Sometimes it remains in its defective state either because of certain obstacles or because of paucity of training in what transforms that potentiality into actuality. Accordingly it is clearly said: 'Not many are wise.' The Sages too, may their memory be blessed, have said: 'I saw the people who have attained a high rank, and they were few.' For the obstacles to perfection are very many, and the objects that distract from it abound. When should he be able to achieve the perfect preparation and the leisure required for training so that what subsists in a particular individual in potency should be transformed into actuality?"

tedious and refuses to engage in them. Know, however, that if an end could be achieved without the complements that precede it, the latter would not be complements, but futile distractions. Now if you would awaken a man — even though he were dull and dumb — as one awakens a sleeping individual, and if you were to ask him: Does not your soul desire to know the ways of heavenly spheres, what their number is and what their configuration is, and what is contained in them, and what the angels are, and how the world as a whole was created, and what the end of its creation is in view of the arrangement of its various parts with one another, and what the soul is, and how it is created in the body, and whether the human soul can be separated from the body, and, if it can, in what manner and with what distinction in view, and if you put the same question to him with regard to the truth of other subjects of this kind, no doubt you would find that his soul desires to know them with a natural desire, but he would wish this desire to be allayed, and the knowledge of all this to be achieved by means of one or two words. If, however, you would lay upon him the obligation to abandon his occupation for a week's time until he should understand all this, he would not do it. He would be satisfied with deceptive and false imaginings through which his soul would be at ease, and he would dislike being told that there are things whose knowledge requires many preliminaries and a long time for investigation and understanding.¹³

The Latin text is faithful to the original. These explanations about the Third Cause continue and contain two more remarks

¹³ *Ibid.* fol. XIIv-XIIIr. Cf. *Guide I*, 34, 73-74: "The third cause lies in the length of the preliminaries. *For man has in his nature a desire to seek the ends*; and he often finds preliminaries tedious and refuses to engage in them. Know, however, that if an end could be achieved without the preliminaries that precede it, the latter would not be preliminaries, but pure distractions and futilities. Now if you would awaken a man — even though he were the dumbest of all people — as one awakens a sleeping individual, and if you were to ask him whether he desired at that moment to have knowledge of the heavenly spheres, namely, what their number is and what their configuration, and what is contained in them, and what the angels are, and how the world as a whole was created, and what its end is in view of the arrangement of its various parts with one another, and what the soul is, and how it is created in time in the body, and whether the human soul can be separated from the body, and, if it can, in what manner and through what instrument and with what distinction in view, and if you put the same question to him with regard to other subjects of research of this kind, he would undoubtedly answer you in the affirmative. He would have a natural desire to know these things as they are in truth; but he would wish this desire to be allayed, and the knowledge of all this to be achieved by means of one or two words that you would say to him. If, however, you would lay upon him the obligation to abandon his occupation for a week's time until he should understand all this, he would not do it, but would be satisfied with deceptive imaginings through which his soul would be at ease. He would also dislike being told that there is a thing whose knowledge requires many premises and a long time for investigation."

that highlight Maimonides' understanding of the nature of faith. They will be examined in the next subsection.

The Fourth Cause focuses on the moral dispositions (*habitus*) that limit or render the individual capable of the study of high matters. I have also mentioned this aspect of Maimonides' teaching on the knowledge of God in relation to Moses' apprehension.¹⁴ On this occasion, Maimonides explicitly identifies the science that he is considering with the apprehension of God:

The fourth cause is to be found in the natural aptitude. For it has been demonstrated that the bodily complexion accompanies the soul's dispositions, and only whoever has chosen good dispositions and practices them, and is endowed with a tranquil and peaceful sensibility, is able to achieve intellectual and perfect dispositions of the soul. There are in fact many who have a natural complexion with which perfection is in no way compatible. ... It is accordingly indubitable that preparatory moral training should be carried out before, so that man should be in a state of extreme uprightness and perfection, "For the perverse is an abomination to the Lord, but His secret is with the righteous." For this reason the teaching of this science to the young is disapproved of, since it is impossible for them to receive it because of the inconstancy of their natures and because their minds are occupied with the flame of growth. When, however, this flame that moves them is extinguished, and they reach a degree of wisdom and intelligence, and they control their hearts, and their complexion calms down, they then may call upon their souls to raise themselves up to this rank, *which is that of the apprehension of the Creator*, that is to the spiritual science that is designated as the "Account of the Chariot".¹⁵

¹⁴ Cf. *Guide*, I, 5, 29.

¹⁵ *Dux*, I, XXXIII, fol. XIIIr. Cf. *Guide*, I, 34, 76-77: "The fourth cause is to be found in the natural aptitudes. For it has been explained, or rather demonstrated, that the moral virtues are a preparation for the rational virtues, it being impossible to achieve true, rational acts — I mean perfect rationality — unless it be by a man thoroughly trained with respect to his morals and endowed with the qualities of tranquillity and quiet. There are, moreover, many people who have received from their first natural disposition a complexion of temperament with which perfection is in no way compatible. ... It is accordingly indubitable that preparatory moral training should be carried out before beginning with this science, so that man should be in a state of extreme uprightness and perfection; 'For the perverse is an abomination to the Lord, but His secret is with the righteous.' For this reason the teaching of this science to the young is disapproved of. In fact it is impossible for them to absorb it because of the effervescence of their natures and of their minds being occupied with the flame of growth. When, however, this flame that gives rise to perplexity is extinguished, the young achieve tranquillity and quiet; and their hearts submit and yield with respect to their temperament. They then may call upon their souls to raise themselves up to this rank, *which is that of the apprehension of Him*, may He be exalted; I mean thereby the divine science that is designated as the 'Account of the Chariot'."

The Fifth Cause is also related to the moral disposition of the person who attempts to achieve the knowledge of the divine science, who should be detached from the material pursuits and from the senses in order to contemplate the spiritual realities:

The fifth cause are the occupations of men and the necessities of the bodies, which are the first perfection; and more particularly if the needs of a wife and of children are added; and even more especially if there is in them, superadded to that, a demand for the superfluities of life, which becomes an established disposition as a result of bad customs and a bad conduct of life. Because if even a perfect man, as we have mentioned, were to occupy himself much with these necessary things and all the more if he were to occupy himself with unnecessary things, and if his desire for them should grow strong, he would find that the desire of his soul for the acquisition of wisdom had grown weak and had been submerged in the sea of passions, and his love for wisdom would be like the weakness of the will and heart. He accordingly would not grasp things that otherwise would have been within his power to grasp; or else we would grasp them with hardship and a confused apprehension, a mixture of apprehension and failure to apprehend.¹⁶

Maimonides' last remarks in this chapter echo those in *Guide* I, 33, to which Aquinas devotes *De Veritate*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1. There are certain things that individuals cannot apprehend due to the weakness of their intelligence. Maimonides acknowledges the existence of a few who can grasp these matters, since he is apparently writing about metaphysical knowledge:

Therefore, according to all these opinions, these secrets were only necessary for solitary individuals who are very few, not for the multitude. For this reason, they should be hidden from the one who is at

¹⁶ *Ibid.* fol. XIIIv. Cf. *Guide*, I, 34, 79: "The fifth cause is to be found in the fact that men are occupied with the necessities of the bodies, which are the first perfection; and more particularly if, in addition, they are occupied with taking care of a wife and of children; and even more especially if there is in them, superadded to that, a demand for the superfluities of life, which becomes an established disposition as a result of a bad conduct of life and bad customs. Things are so that if even a perfect man, as we have mentioned, were to occupy himself much with these necessary things and all the more if he were to occupy himself with unnecessary things, and if his desire for them should grow strong, he would find that his theoretical desires had grown weak and had been submerged. And his demand for them would slacken and become intermittent and inattentive. He accordingly would not grasp things that otherwise would have been within his power to grasp; or else we would grasp them with a confused apprehension, a mixture of apprehension and failure to apprehend."

the beginnings of his instruction and he should be prevented from reaching them, *just as a small baby is prevented from taking coarse foods and from lifting heavy weights.*¹⁷

Summarizing, according to Maimonides, the main obstacle to grasping the true essence of things and the divine matters is the gradual development of the human mind and the lengthy initiation in these issues on the part of the individual, and their inherent sublimity. As Maimonides puts it, these explanations can be applied either to the study of Metaphysics, to which he refers also in other places as “the divine science”, or to the apprehension of the divine essence devoid of imagination and other deceptions of the senses.

Aquinas, without disagreeing with Maimonides in the above, applies these Causes to some individuals who are not able to grasp in this life natural truths that are necessary for later reaching the knowledge of God *in patria*, as it will become apparent in the next subsection.

(b) *The Five Causes in Aquinas' Works*

Aquinas quotes *Guide* I, 34 in three places: *In III Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3; *De Veritate* q. 14, a. 10; and *De Trinitate* q. 3, a. 4. None of them gives the full quotation, but only a summary of Maimonides' Five Causes in Aquinas' own words. The text is explicitly attributed to Maimonides in the three cases. There are some differences of form among these versions, though not in content. The most complete rendering is in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, and the most complete explanation of Aquinas' interpretation of the passage is in *De Veritate*. *De Trinitate* contributes an explanation that provides the clues for bridging the gap between Maimonides' and Aquinas' differences of interpretation. In all the cases, Maimonides' Causes are examined in the context of the justification and the need of the knowledge of God attained through faith. The *Commentary* quotes it in answer to the question whether things of which there

¹⁷ *Dux*, I, XXXIII, fol. XIIIv. Cf. *Guide*, I, 34, 79: “In view of all these causes, these matters are only for a few solitary individuals of a very special sort, not for the multitude. For this reason, they should be hidden from the beginner, and he should be prevented from taking them up, *just as a small baby is prevented from taking coarse foods and from lifting heavy weights.*”

is no natural knowledge should be believed, whereas *De Veritate* and *De Trinitate* inquire whether faith is necessary to attain the final end of human nature.

In III Sent. d. 24, q. 1, a. 3

This article deals with the nature of faith and its role for the attainment of human beings' ultimate end. First, Aquinas distinguishes objects of knowledge of two kinds: things above human reason and things that are above the intelligence of some individuals, but not of all. Strictly speaking — he argues — the faith's essence is to grant knowledge of the things of the first kind. The reason for its existence is that God has given to human beings a final end beyond their nature: participating in God's own happiness and holiness (*beatitudo*), i.e., a participation in the divine nature. This end, however, is far beyond the scope of their natural capacity, and therefore it is difficult to grasp it and to discover the means needed for the attainment of such a goal. Besides — he explains — they are endowed with the capacity to choose their intermediate goals, which can be the means for the final one or lead the individual away from it. Therefore — asserts Aquinas — it is consistent with this state of affairs to be offered the knowledge of things related to our last end, all the more if that knowledge is not fully attainable through natural reasoning. Faith, which is a divine gift, would be the act of knowledge and the intellectual disposition (*habitus*) that provides this information.¹⁸

Aquinas adds that this act of knowledge, although given by grace, does not destroy the data or operations of natural knowledge, because grace presupposes nature and perfects it. Therefore the intellect upon examining some of the attainments of faith finds them in accord with those reached by natural reasoning, such as the existence of God, divine oneness, incorporeality,

¹⁸ *In III Sent.*, d. 24, q. unica, a. 3, Respondeo: in fide sunt quaedam quae sunt supra rationem humanam simpliciter, de quibus essentialiter est fides; et quaedam quae sunt supra rationem humanam alicuius, quamvis non supra rationem cuiuslibet hominis; et ad utraque necessarium fuit dari fidem. Quia enim homini Deus providit finem qui est supra naturam hominis, scilicet plenam participationem suae beatitudinis; oportet autem eum qui in finem tendit, si libero arbitrio agat, cognoscere finem ex cuius consideratione dirigitur in his quae sunt ad finem; ideo oportuit ut homo alicuius rei cognitionem haberet quae naturalem cognitionem eius excedit: quae quidem cognitio homini datur per gratiam fidei.

intelligence, etc. This coherence between the attainments of faith and those of reason prove faith reasonable despite the fact that the intellect cannot grasp other issues.¹⁹ As for the need for faith in things that are within the range of natural grasp, Aquinas reinterprets Maimonides' Five Causes in order to answer the question.

The First Reason does not depart from Maimonides' explicit intention in the *Guide*, and can be applied both to the understanding of the divine science, namely Metaphysics, and to that of divine matters, i.e., the apprehension of God:

All this was necessary for the five reasons that **Rabbi Moses** says [in the First Part, chapter 33]. First, the sublimity of the matter in so far as it is above the senses, by which our life is nourished to the point that it is not easy to detach from the senses and imagination, this being necessary for the apprehension of the divine and spiritual things, as Boethius says.²⁰

The Second Reason is somewhat less similar to Maimonides' original text. He had pointed to the gradual change from potentiality into actuality in the training of every individual initiated in the sciences. Aquinas, however, points to the fact that in the case of the knowledge of God, the natural limitation of the human intellect and the sublimity of the goal hinder many from knowing it even if there is no external obstacle:

Second, because although the human intellect is naturally directed to the apprehension of divine matters, it cannot set itself in action. And since not everybody has a trained teacher at hand, God provides the light of faith that elevates the mind to these matters.²¹

The Third Reason is the difficulty of attaining natural knowledge of the divine due to the number and extent of the preambles

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Sicut autem est in gratia perficiente affectum quod praesupponit naturam, quia eam perficit; ita et fidei substernitur naturalis cognitio, quam fides praesupponit, et ratio probare potest; sicut Deum esse, et Deum esse unum, incorporeum, intelligentem, et alia huiusmodi; et ad hoc etiam sufficienter fides inclinatur, ut qui rationem ad hoc habere non potest, fide eis assentiat.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Quod quidem necessarium fuit propter quinque, ut dicit Rabbi Moyses in Prima parte, capit. 33. Primo propter altitudinem materiae secundum elevationem a sensibus, quibus vita nostra connutritur; unde non est facile sensum et imaginationem deserere; quod tamen est necessarium in cognitione divinorum et spiritualium, ut dicit Boethius.

²¹ *Ibid.* Secundo, quia quamvis intellectus hominis naturaliter ordinatus sit ad divina cognoscenda, non tamen potest in actum exire per seipsum. Et quia cuilibet non potest adesse doctor paratus, ideo Deus lumen fidei providit, quod mentem ad huiusmodi elevet.

needed. Since this knowledge is necessary for all regardless of their capacity of study, faith is needed:

Third, because the apprehension of divine matters by way of reason demands many preliminaries, since nearly all philosophy is ordered to the knowledge of divine things, which only few individuals can know. This reason requires the existence of faith, so that all may have knowledge of the divine matters.²²

The Fourth Reason that not everyone is endowed with the suitable intellectual or moral capacity for grasping these truths:

Fourth, because some are naturally weak, they still need a guide in life to lead them to the apprehension of divine matters.²³

The Fifth Reason is the distractions of daily life, which obstruct the contemplation of God:

Fifth, because human beings busy themselves with the basics of life, a diligent consideration of divine things eludes them.²⁴

The conclusion is clear: First, some of the attainments of faith agree with the data of natural apprehension, and therefore it would not be justifiable to reject the examples of apprehension provided by this kind of knowledge as a whole due to the inherent impossibility to demonstrate its main issues. Aquinas concludes that faith in sublime matters is reasonable. Second, faith is also necessary for the attainment of man's final end because this goal is above human reach aided solely by natural capabilities. Without that knowledge added to what can be apprehended naturally, the final end would be beyond the range of understanding of the majority of individuals and they would be unable to choose it or to reject it.

De Veritate, q. 14, a. 10

De Veritate explores the relations between faith and reason, the nature of the knowledge of the existence of God, the extent of

²² *Ibid.* Tertio, quia ad cognitionem divinorum per viam rationis multa prae- exiguntur, cum fere tota philosophia ad cognitionem divinorum ordinetur: quae quidem non possunt nisi pauci cognoscere; et ideo oportuit fidem esse ut omnes aliquam cognitionem haberent de divinis.

²³ *Ibid.* Quarto, quia quidam naturaliter sunt hebetes, et tamen cognitione divinorum indigent qua in vita dirigantur.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Quinto, quia homines occupantur circa necessaria vitae, et retrahuntur a diligenti consideratione divinorum.

what is intellectually natural to man, and — again — the need for a supernatural knowledge of what can be attained through reason alone. In this framework, Aquinas inquires whether faith is necessary for the attainment of the ultimate end of man. He enumerates a long list of arguments supporting a negative answer.

First, the book of Deuteronomy asserts that God would not have made a creature with an essential defect in its nature. In this case, the defect would be that of lacking the natural tools for the attainment of its own end. Since every created being is naturally endowed with all the necessary means to attain its goals, it would be unreasonable to think that man lacks the ones that would enable him to fulfill his own nature.²⁵ Moreover, reason dictates that the ultimate end of human beings is the achievement of happiness in this life. Further, they have been endowed with all the natural means for the attainment of earthly happiness, as any other animal, whereas nothing seems to prove that their ultimate end is eternal happiness. However — Aquinas argues — man is endowed with intellect, which already possesses a certain capacity for the attainment of things above the physical world. In fact the intellect resembles the divine nature, enabling a certain participation in the divine according to its own limited and intellectual nature. This fact points to a last end other than bodily happiness, and the objection is therefore not legitimate.²⁶

Another reason against the need of faith is that the faculty needed for the attainment of an end in a rational creature is not only knowledge, but also the capacity to perform the actions necessary for the achievement of the ultimate end. A human being

²⁵ *De Veritate* q. 14, a. 10, arg. 1: Ut enim dicitur *Deuter.* XXXII, vers. 4, Dei perfecta sunt opera. Sed non est aliquid perfectum nisi provideatur ei de his quae sunt sibi necessaria ad finem proprium consequendum. Ergo unicuique rei ex conditione suae naturae provisae sunt illa quae sufficiunt ad ultimum finem consequendum. Sed ea quae sunt fidei, sunt supra cognitionem homini ex naturali conditione competentem. Ergo fides per quam huiusmodi accipiuntur sive cognoscuntur, non est homini necessaria ad suum finem consequendum.

²⁶ *Ibid.* arg. 2: Sed dicebat, quod homini ex sua conditione naturali sunt provisae illa quae sunt necessaria ad finem naturalem consequendum, cuiusmodi est felicitas viae, quae ponitur a philosophis; non autem ad consequendum finem supernaturalem, qui est beatitudo aeterna. Sed contra, homo ex natura conditionis suae ad hoc factus est ut sit particeps aeternae beatitudinis: ad hoc enim Deus rationalem naturam capacem sui instituit, ut habetur in II Sententiarum, dist. 1. Ergo in ipsa natura hominis debuerunt sibi esse indita principia per quae ipsum finem consequi posset.

may have the knowledge of his last end but is not endowed with the operational disposition (*habitus*) necessary for it, and the disposition that he receives by grace is not essentially different from that which he can develop himself.²⁷ Moreover, if we consider the intellectual faculty, it would not be consistent with the dignity of human beings to have less autonomy in the fulfillment of its operations than irrational animals have of their own. If instinct can fulfill its goals without external help, all the more should be expected from the spiritual faculties.²⁸ The opposite would not befit the dignity of intellectual faculties over the bodily ones.²⁹ This also applies to human beings as a whole compared to the irrational creatures and their goals. Since the former are more perfect, they should likewise be more autonomous than the latter.³⁰ Besides, Scripture asserts that “whoever is quick to believe is light of heart” [*Eccli.* XIX, 4]. Therefore faith seems to be considered a defect rather than a virtue.³¹

Moreover, reason seems to be the main divine voice that instructs us regarding our ultimate end because God is the

²⁷ *Ibid.* arg. 3: Praeterea, sicut ad consequendum finem est necessaria cognitio, ita et operatio. Sed ad consequendum finem supernaturalem non dantur nobis habitus virtutum ordinantes in alia opera quam in quae ordinamur per naturalem rationem; sed ad eadem opera perfectiori modo facienda: castitas enim infusa et acquisita eundem actum habere videntur, scilicet a delectationibus venereis refrenare. Ergo nec propter consequendum finem supernaturalem oportuit nobis aliquem habitum cognitivum infundi ordinatum ad alia cognoscenda quam naturaliter cognoscere possumus, sed ad eadem perfectiori modo: et sic videtur quod habere fidem non apparentium rationi, non fuit necessarium ad salutem.

²⁸ *Ibid.* arg. 4: Praeterea, potentia non indiget habitu propter id ad quod naturaliter determinatur; sicut patet de potentiis irrationabilibus, quae sine habitu medio sua opera perficiunt, ut cum ergo homo sit eis perfectior, videtur quod cognitio naturalis sit sibi sufficiens ad Deum. Ergo non indiget habitu fidei ad hoc quod in cognitionem Dei ducatur.

²⁹ *Ibid.* arg. 13: Praeterea, potentiae rationales sunt nobiliores quam naturales. Sed naturales non indigent habitibus ad suos actus. Ergo nec intellectus indiget habitu fidei ad suos actus.

³⁰ *Ibid.* arg. 5: Praeterea, perfectius est quod per seipsum potest consequi finem quam quod non potest per seipsum. Sed alia animalia ex principiis naturalibus possunt consequi fines suos. Inde, cum homo sit eis perfectior, videtur quod cognitio naturalis sit ei sufficiens ad consequendum finem suum; et sic non indiget fide.

³¹ *Ibid.* arg. 6: Praeterea, illud quod reputatur in vitium non videtur esse necessarium ad salutem. Sed quod aliquis sit credulus, reputatur in vitium; unde dicitur *Eccli.* XIX, 4: qui cito credit, levis est corde. Ergo credere non est necessarium ad salutem.

author of nature and nature provides human beings with an intellectual faculty that suffices for the attainment of their goals. Therefore, when comparing the information provided by reason with that provided through other means which are more supernatural or extraordinary, like the prophets and the apostles, attention goes first to reason, especially if the information conveyed by faith seems to contradict what the former provides.³² Besides, if faith represents knowledge of the future because it is given for the things that are still not seen it is unnecessary, since it disappears as soon as the goal has been achieved.³³ Faith stands in place of the future knowledge in heaven and also takes the place of the actual information provided by natural reasoning, and therefore it is not desirable in itself.³⁴ Another argument excluding the usefulness of the act of faith is the fact that heretics believe in some contents of the true faith and still lack the supernatural gift granted by God, because otherwise they would hold the complete truth.³⁵ One more reason: the information acquired through faith has passed through several prophets and apostles, and it was probably changed with time and so many intermediaries. Faith, therefore, does not seem to be the best means to accept conclusions, especially if these refer to vital

³² *Ibid.* arg. 7: Praeterea, cum Deo summe sit credendum, illi magis debemus credere per quem magis constat Deum esse locutum. Sed magis constat Deum loqui per naturalem rationis instinctum quam per aliquem prophetam vel apostolum; cum hoc certissimum sit Deum esse auctorem totius naturae. Ergo his quae dictat ratio, magis debemus adhaerere quam his quae praedicantur per apostolos vel prophetas, de quibus est fides. Cum igitur huiusmodi videantur interdum dissonare ab his quae ratio naturali dictat, sicut cum dicunt Deum trinum et unum, vel virginem concepisse, et alia huiusmodi; videtur quod non sit conveniens fidem habere de huiusmodi.

³³ *Ibid.* arg. 8: Praeterea, illud quod evacuatur altero adveniente, non videtur esse propter illud necessarium: non enim evacuaretur, nisi haberet aliquam oppositionem ad ipsum; oppositum autem non inducit ad suum oppositum, sed magis abducit. Sed fides evacuatur, gloria adveniente. Ergo non est necessaria propter gloriam consequendam.

³⁴ *Ibid.* arg. 9: Praeterea, nihil indiget, ad suum finem consequendum, eo per quod destruitur. Sed fides destruit rationem; ut enim dicit Gregorius, fides non habet meritum cui humana ratio praebet experimentum. Ergo ratio fide non indiget ad suum finem consequendum.

³⁵ *Ibid.* arg. 10: Praeterea, haereticus non habet habitum fidei. Sed contingit quod haereticus aliqua vera credit quae sunt supra facultatem rationis; sicut credit filium Dei incarnatum, quamvis non credat eum passum. Ergo non est necessarius habitus fidei ad cognoscendum ea quae sunt supra rationem.

issues.³⁶ Moreover, faith would diminish the merit of attaining the ultimate end, being a gift from God that makes human effort meaningless.³⁷

Finally, Aquinas also proposes three *sed contra*. The first is a quotation from the letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews asserting that without faith it is impossible to please God.³⁸ The second concludes that if this is so, whoever does not have faith will be damned and therefore faith is necessary for attainment of eternal life.³⁹ The third gives the argument of reason that if the ultimate end of man is so sublime, the means for its attainment should likewise be high. Since grace is higher than nature, it is in accord with the goal's dignity to require supernatural intervention and this is faith's role.⁴⁰

Aquinas plainly answers that to have faith in things that are above reason is necessary for the attainment of eternal life. The *Responsio* is based on Maimonides' considerations in *Guide* I, 34. Aquinas points out that it is evident in nature that anything assigned for higher perfection in the created world necessitates the external action of a more perfect agent. Moreover, the change is not immediate, but there is a process through which the individual improves until he develops the fullness of his potential.⁴¹ The same applies to human skills, which are acquired

³⁶ *Ibid.* arg. 11: Praeterea, quando aliquid confirmatur per plura media, si unum illorum non habet firmitatem, tota confirmatio efficacia caret; ut patet in deductionibus syllogismorum, in quibus una de multis propositionibus falsa vel dubia existente, probatio inefficax est. Sed ea quae sunt fidei, in nos per multa media devenerunt. A Deo enim dicta sunt apostolis vel prophetis, a quibus in successores eorum, et deinceps in alios et sic usque ad nos pervenerunt per media diversa. Non autem in omnibus istis mediis certum est esse infallibilem veritatem: quia cum homines fuerint et decipi et decipere potuerunt. Ergo nullam certitudinem habere possumus de his quae sunt fidei; et ita stultum videtur his assentire.

³⁷ *Ibid.* arg. 12: Praeterea, illud non videtur necessarium ad vitam aeternam consequendam quod meritum vitae aeternae diminuit. Sed cum difficultas operetur ad meritum, habitus, qui facilitatem facit, meritum diminuit. Ergo habitus fidei non est necessarius ad salutem.

³⁸ *Ibid.* sc. 1; Cf. *Hebr.* XI, 26.

³⁹ *Ibid.* sc. 2: Praeterea, illud est necessarium ad salutem, quo non habito, homo damnatur. Sed fides est hujusmodi; marci ultimo: qui vero non crediderit, condemnabitur. Ergo fides est necessaria ad salutem.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* sc. 3: Altior vita altiori cognitione indiget. Sed vita gratiae altior (est) quam vita naturae. Ergo indiget aliqua cognitione supernaturali, quae est cognitio fidei.

⁴¹ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 10, *Responsio*: Dicendum, quod habere fidem de his quae sunt supra rationem, necessarium est ad vitam aeternam consequendam.

only through exercise and whose development is contingent upon a teacher. The learning process requires that all the things that the disciple has yet to understand in their first principles need to be accepted by faith until he has fully developed his capacities. Aquinas' explanation is reminiscent of that of Maimonides:

We see something similar in human actions, and principally in education. Man is imperfect in knowledge at the beginning. In order for him to acquire the perfection of science he needs someone to instruct him, who can lead him to the perfection of science, and this he cannot do unless he himself possesses that science perfectly by knowing the reasons of the things related to it. He does not give the disciple the reasons of the matters that he intends to teach immediately upon beginning instruction, because in that case he [the disciple] would instantaneously in the beginning possess the science in a perfect way, but teaches certain things whose reasons the disciple does not yet know upon starting instruction; he will know them after becoming proficient in the science. Hence it is said that it is necessary for one who learns to believe, otherwise it is not possible to reach perfect knowledge.⁴²

This example taken from the experience of training in natural skills can be applied to the final end of human beings, to which Aquinas refers as a "perfect knowledge of God". Since they are not able to attain it by themselves they need to be led by God at the beginning and this would be the task of the gift of faith, necessary while *in statu viae*. He distinguishes again between the two stages in the development of the intellectual faculty:

Quod hinc accipi potest. Non enim contingit aliquid de imperfecto ad perfectum adduci nisi per actionem alicujus perfecti. Nec perfecti actio ab imperfecto statim in principio perfecte recipitur; sed primo quidem imperfecte et postmodum perfectius, et sic inde quousque ad perfectionem perveniat. Et hoc quidem manifestum est in omnibus rebus naturalibus quae per successionem temporis perfectionem aliquam consequuntur.

⁴² *Ibid.* Et similiter etiam videmus in operibus humanis, et praecipue in disciplinis. In principio enim homo imperfectus est in cognitione. Ad hoc autem quod perfectionem scientiae consequatur, indiget aliquo instruente, qui eum ad perfectionem scientiae ducat; quod facere non posset, nisi ipse perfecte scientiam haberet, utpote comprehendens rationes eorum quae sub scientia cadunt. Non autem in principio suae doctrinae statim ei qui instruitur, tradit rationes scibilium de quibus instruere intendit: quia tunc statim in principio perfecte scientiam haberet qui instruitur; sed tradit ei quaedam, quorum rationes tunc, cum primo instruitur discipulus, nescit; sciet autem post profectum in scientia. Et ideo dicitur, quod oportet addiscentem credere: et aliter ad perfectam scientiam pervenire non posset, nisi scilicet supponeret ea quae sibi in principio traduntur, quorum rationes tunc capere non potest.

The last perfection for which man is intended consists of the perfect apprehension of God, which he can only attain through divine intervention and instruction by He who is perfectly knowledgeable of Himself. Man in his beginnings is not immediately capable of this apprehension, and therefore he must arrive at this perfect knowledge by means of some kind of belief, by which he may be lead until he reaches it. Some of these beliefs are such that cannot be perfectly apprehended in this life because they completely exceed the human reason's capacity. These must be believed while we are *in statu viae*. We will see them perfectly *in statu patriae*.⁴³

As in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas distinguishes again here between two kinds of information conveyed by faith. Some of it is subject to knowledge in this life but only after long preliminaries, whereas in other cases, it will only be clearly known in the after-life. Aquinas specifies that Maimonides' Five Causes apply here only to truths that, being difficult to grasp, are nevertheless demonstrable. Since they are reasonable, whenever an individual cannot attain them by himself he is required to accept them by faith:

We can attain a perfect knowledge of some of these things in this life, like the things about God of which there can be demonstrative proof. These, however, must be believed at the beginning, for the five reasons that **Rabbi Moses** gives. The first one is these issues' depth and subtlety, since they are most disassociated from the senses and therefore man is unfit to know them perfectly at the outset. The second cause is the human intellect's weakness in its beginnings. The third is the number of preliminaries for their demonstration, which man can only learn after a very long period. The fourth is the lack of disposition for knowledge in some, due to their perverse temperament. The fifth is the need for an occupation in order to provide the necessary goods in this life.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Ibid.* Ultima autem perfectio ad quam homo ordinatur, consistit in perfecta Dei cognitione: ad quam quidem pervenire non potest nisi operatione et quasi instructione divina, qui est sui perfectus cognitor. Huius autem perfectae cognitionis statim homo in sui principio capax non est; unde oportet ut accipiat per viam credendi aliqua, per quae manuducatur ad perveniendum in perfectam cognitionem. Quorum quaedam talia sunt, quod in hac vita perfecta cognitio de eis haberi non potest, quae totaliter vim humanae rationis excedunt: et ista oportet credere quamdiu *in statu viae* sumus; videbimus autem ea perfecte *in statu patriae*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Quaedam vero sunt ad quae etiam in hac vita perfecte cognoscenda possumus pervenire, sicut illa quae de Deo demonstrative probari possunt; quae tamen a principio necesse est credere, propter quinque rationes, quas Rabbi Moyses ponit. Quarum prima est profunditas et subtilitas istorum

Aquinas' argument is clear: if man were to rely just on rational demonstrations to accept truths that are essential for the attainment of his goal, very few individuals would actually grasp them.⁴⁵

He answers the objections as follows: man is endowed with all the means needed for the attainment of natural goals. However, given an end that is above his natural capacities at a certain stage, his duty is to look for the means that make it possible for him to be fit for such an end. What enables him to attain that goal is not the possession of a natural capacity to reach it, but the capacity to perform the actions that are means for the attainment of that goal. According to Aquinas, in this case the action needed for attaining a supernatural end is the capacity or openness for the reception of the gift of faith and he argues that such disposition exists in any human being, not just in a few individuals.⁴⁶ Moreover, the designation of human nature for eternal happiness is not due to man's nature itself but to divine kindness, and therefore to demand that human nature display the means for its attainment is unnecessary.⁴⁷ In fact, the actions of an individual who seeks such an end operate in

cognoscibilium, quae sunt remotissima a sensibus: unde homo non est idoneus in principio perfecte ea cognoscere. Secunda causa est debilitas humani intellectus in sui principio. Tertia vero est multitudo eorum quae praeexiguntur ad istorum demonstrationem, quae homo non nisi in longissimo tempore addiscere potest. Quarta est indispositio ad sciendum, quae inest quibusdam propter pravitatem complexionis. Quinta est necessitas occupationum ad providendum necessaria vitae.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Ex quibus omnibus apparet quod, si oporteret per demonstrationem solummodo accipere ea quae necessarium est cognoscere de Deo, paucissimi ad hoc pervenire possent, et hi etiam non nisi post longum tempus. Unde patet quod salubriter est via fidei hominibus provisa, per quam patet omnibus facilis aditus ad salutem secundum quodcumque tempus.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* ad I: Ad primum igitur dicendum, quod homini in conditione suae naturae perfecte providetur in quantum ad finem illum consequendum qui est in potestate naturae, dantur principia sufficientia ut sint causa illius finis. Ad finem autem qui facultatem naturae excedit, dantur principia, non quae sint causae finis, sed quibus homo est capax eorum per quae pervenitur ad finem; ut enim dicit Augustinus, posse habere fidem et caritatem naturae est hominum; habere autem, est gratia fidelium.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Ad secundum dicendum, quod ab ipsa prima institutione natura humana est ordinata in finem beatitudinis, non quasi in finem debitum homini secundum naturam ejus, sed ex sola divina liberalitate. Et ideo non oportet quod principia naturae sufficiant ad finem illum consequendum, nisi fuerint adjuncta donis superadditis ex divina liberalitate.

regard to the means for the attainment of that end, and cannot affect the end itself.⁴⁸

The answer to the fourth objection continues that although we cannot say that the intellect's nature displays a demand for its own fulfillment with the gift of faith, it is still possible to say that nature has been created with the purpose of being perfected by divine grace.⁴⁹ What makes man greater than animals in dignity is not the fact that he is endowed by nature with sufficient means for the fulfillment of his goals, but the fact that he has been given a much higher end than that of animals, above his own natural capacity. This is also the reason for human beings to be endowed with intellect: no other natural faculty would have enabled man to provide for himself all the means necessary for the attainment of his ultimate end. The intellect's nature is not, therefore, comparable to that of the other faculties animals are endowed with.⁵⁰ The sixth argument is, according to Aquinas' answer, not legitimate, because Scripture refers in that passage only to belief in superficial or unnecessary things. True faith is related to belief in God, who is the highest and most necessary object of knowledge.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Ad tertium dicendum, quod ille qui distat a fine, potest habere cognitionem finis, et affectionem; non autem operari circa finem, sed solum circa ea quae sunt ad finem. Et ideo ad perveniendum in finem supernaturalem in statu viae indigemus fide, qua ipsum finem cognoscamus, ad quem cognitio naturalis non attingit. Sed ad ea quae sunt ad finem, virtus naturalis attingit, non tamen prout sunt ordinata in finem illum. Et ideo non indigemus habitibus infusis ad operandum alia quam quae dictat ratio naturalis, sed ad eadem perfectiori modo faciendum; non sic autem est ex parte cognitionis, ratione iam dicta.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Ad quartum dicendum, quod ad ea quae sunt fidei, non naturaliter determinatur intellectus quasi ea naturaliter cognoscat; sed quodammodo naturaliter ordinatur in ipsa cognoscenda, sicut natura dicitur ordinari ad gratiam ex divina institutione. Unde hoc non removet quin habitu fidei indigeamus.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Ad quintum dicendum, quod homo perfectior est aliis animalibus, nec tamen determinata sunt sibi ab ipsa natura ea quae sunt necessaria ad finem consequendum, sicut aliis animalibus, propter duas rationes. Primo, quia homo ad altiorem finem ordinatur; et ideo etiam si pluribus auxiliis indigeat ad ipsum consequendum, et sibi naturalia principia non sufficiant, nihilominus perfectior erit. Secundo, quia hoc ipsum est in homine perfectionis, quia multiplices vias potest habere ad consequendum suum finem. Unde non poterat ei una via naturalis determinari, sicut aliis animalibus; sed loco omnium, quae natura aliis animalibus providit, data est homini ratio, per quam et necessaria huius vitae sibi praeparare potest, et disponere se ad recipienda divinitus auxilia futurae vitae.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* Ad sextum dicendum, quod esse credulum in vitium sonat, quia designat superfluitatem in credendo, sicut esse bibulum superfluitatem in bibendo. Ille autem qui credit Deo, non excedit modum in credendo, quia ei non potest nimis credi; unde ratio non sequitur.

Regarding the role of prophets and apostles as transmitters of the word of God, Aquinas notes that, if they are truly divine messengers, they can in no way teach things contrary to reason. Whenever there is something that seems to contradict it, it is due to its being too sublime for a total comprehension by a limited intellect.⁵² Moreover, the limitation of faith as an indirect source for the knowledge of God does not mean that it is useless. It fulfills its mission while the intellect is still not at the utmost of its capacity and has yet to be perfected by the grace given *in statu patriae*.⁵³ It will be substituted in the afterlife by the perfection of the immediate knowledge granted in glory. The ninth argument has been answered already by stressing that knowledge granted by faith can never be contrary to the one grasped through reason, because grace counts on nature and perfects it.⁵⁴

Aquinas also distinguishes between what is believed due to the supernatural virtue of faith and what is believed due to a mere human conviction. Therefore, in the case of a heretic, who accepts some of the contents of the faith but rejects others, he cannot be considered to have the gift of faith. If he had it, that light would necessarily make him accept all of its contents. Also the pagans — Aquinas adds — correctly believe some things pertaining to the divine matters, yet they do not have the true faith.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibid.* Ad septimum dicendum, quod per apostolos et prophetas nunquam divinitus dicitur aliquid quod sit contrarium his quae naturalis ratio dicitur. Dicitur tamen aliquid quod comprehensionem rationis excedit; et pro tanto videtur rationi repugnare, quamvis non repugnet; sicut et rustico videtur repugnans rationi quod sol sit maior terra et quod diameter sit asimeter costae; quae tamen sapienti rationabilia apparent.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Ad octavum dicendum, quod fides evacuatur in gloria propter id quod est imperfectionis in ipsa: et secundum hoc habet aliquam oppositionem ad perfectionem gloriae; sed quantum ad id quod est cognitionis in fide, est necessaria ad salutem. Hoc enim non est inconveniens ut aliqua imperfecta quae ordinantur ad perfectionem finis, cessent fine veniente, sicut motus veniente quiete, quae est eius finis.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Ad nonum dicendum, quod fides non destruit rationem, sed excedit eam et perficit, ut dictum est.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Ad decimum dicendum, quod haereticus non habet habitum fidei, etiamsi unum solum articulum discredat; habitus enim infusi per unum actum contrarium tolluntur. Fidei etiam habitus hanc efficaciam habet, ut per ipsum intellectus fidelis detineatur ne contrariis fidei assentiat; sicut et castitas refrenat a contrariis castitati. Quod autem haereticus aliqua credat quae sunt supra naturalem cognitionem, non est ex aliquo habitu infuso, quia ille habitus dirigeret eum in omnia credibilia aequaliter; sed est ex quadam aestimatione humana, sicut etiam pagani aliqua supra naturam credunt de Deo.

Regarding belief in things transmitted to us through human messengers, they are recognized as divine messengers only because God singled them out by performing miracles on their behalf and they confirmed their mission with words divinely dictated. These are the only things related to these emissaries that ought to be believed as part of the contents of the faith.⁵⁶

The answer to the twelfth objection states that an acquired disposition cannot diminish the action's merit, because the merit is due to the difficulty of attaining the goal to which the action is directed. Therefore, the intellectual disposition of faith can never be considered an obstacle for meriting eternal life. The only defect in this regard would be the lack of will for the attainment of that goal.⁵⁷ Finally, what makes the spiritual faculties different from the natural ones is their openness to different goals, their natural indetermination regarding different objects. Therefore they need a disposition to lead the faculty in one direction, towards one specific object rather than others. An added disposition is not needed in the case of the lower, bodily faculties, because they are determined towards one fixed and given goal.⁵⁸

Summarizing, Aquinas' assertions contain two principles. First, the intellect's nature is undetermined, i.e., free, because it enables contact with any object, natural or above its nature. This means openness to the physical world, to the spiritual created beings — souls and angels — and to the infinite and absolutely simple being of God. The intellect is diverse in this aspect from lower human capacities, which are designed to attain one single objective. Although the intellect is limited due to its created

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Ad undecimum dicendum, quod omnia media per quae ad nos fides venit, suspicione carent. Prophetis enim et apostolis credimus ex hoc quod Deus eis testimonium perhibuit miracula faciendo, ut dicitur *Marc.*, cap. XVI, 20: sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis. Successoribus autem apostolorum et prophetarum non credimus nisi in quantum nobis ea annuntiant quae illi in scriptis reliquerunt.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* Ad duodecimum dicendum, quod duplex est difficultas: quaedam ex ipsius conditione operis; et talis difficultas operatur ad meritum; alia est ex indispositione vel tarditate voluntatis; et talis potius diminuit meritum; et hanc aufert habitus, et non primam.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Ad decimumtertium dicendum, quod potentiae naturales sunt determinatae ad unum, et non indigent habitu determinante, sicut rationabiles, quae sunt ad opposita.

nature, the objects it can reach are virtually not so — neither in number nor in their perfection, — contrary to what happens with lower human faculties, which are limited in themselves and in the objects they can attain. The contact with its objects is always according to its nature, i.e., as an intellectual apprehension, in the way expounded in the *Quaestio de attributis*. This indetermination explains the need for faith, as a disposition externally originated and granted to enlighten the intellect in issues related to its final end that are not attainable at the early stages.

Second, Aquinas assumes that man's ultimate end is eternal happiness and that he therefore needs additional information about the divine being and His actions not provided by the natural operations of the intellect. This happiness would be attained through the fulfillment of each human faculty, beginning with the higher ones. Intellectual happiness would be achieved by enjoying perfect knowledge of God.

Super Boetium de Trinitate, q. 3, a. 4

Aquinas' third and last reference to Maimonides' *Guide I, 34* is found in his Commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate*, which has a long introduction dealing with the very possibility of the human knowledge of the divine.⁵⁹ The first chapter is devoted to the role of faith for the knowledge of God, with similar conclusions to those mentioned in *De Veritate*. The third and last chapter reviews the hierarchy of speculative sciences and the nature, role and extent of each one of them: natural philosophy, mathematics, and the divine science, namely, Metaphysics. According to this hierarchy, natural philosophy would deal with the things affected by movement and matter;⁶⁰ mathematics with the same things as the previous science but without taking these accidents into account, that is, in an abstract way;⁶¹ divine science with the things devoid of matter and movement.⁶² Finally, Aquinas reviews the different operations of the intellect performed in each of these sciences: reasoning, deduction, and speculation or contemplation.

⁵⁹ Cf. *De Trinitate*, q. 1 and 2.

⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.* q. 5, a. 2.

⁶¹ Cf. *ibid.* a. 3.

⁶² Cf. *ibid.* a. 4.

The last articles are devoted to the role of the imagination and other possible ways for the knowledge of God.

In the articles on the possibility of accepting the belief in three Persons in one single God, Aquinas quotes Maimonides' Five Causes that prevent the instruction of the multitude.⁶³ He recalls some of the same objections already analyzed in the text of *De Veritate* that question the need of faith if man is already endowed with natural reason.⁶⁴ He also considers the objection that human nature, which is supposed to be perfect due to its being a work of God, should not be in need of the gift of faith for its completion.⁶⁵ Moreover, it would not be consistent with God's wisdom to set a goal too sublime for a creature. If human beings' final end is so far from the creature's natural reach that it is above reason, the possibility of not attaining it would be too high.⁶⁶ Besides, a matter in which natural reason cannot say anything does not seem suitable for human beings, because it puts them in great danger of error. And if faith were necessary for salvation, the consequence would be more damaging to man than helpful.⁶⁷ Apart from that, qualified theologians

⁶³ *Ibid.* q. 3, a. 4: Utrum hoc sit verae fidei confessio quod Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus singulus est Deus, et tres sunt unus Deus absque omni inaequalitatis distantia.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Ad primum sic proceditur. Videtur quod non fuerit necessarium humano generi fidem habere. Ut enim dicitur *Eccl.* 7, quid necesse est homini maiora se quaerere? quasi dicat: nihil. Sed ea quae per fidem traduntur sunt homine maiora, utpote rationem ejus excedentia; alias ad ea cognoscenda sufficeret ratio causans scientiam nec requireretur fides. Ergo non fuit necessarium homini, ut ea quae sunt fidei extra doceretur.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* arg. 2: Praeterea, Deus naturam humanam in sua conditione perfecte instituit, unde dicitur *Deut.* 32: Dei perfecta sunt opera. Sed ex his, quae menti humanae in sua conditione sunt indita, non potest homo pertingere ad cognoscendum ea quae sunt fidei; alias possent per scientiam haberi, quae causatur ex hoc quod conclusiones resolvuntur in principia naturaliter nota. Cum igitur perfectum dicatur aliquid, cui nihil deest eorum quae debet habere, ut dicitur in V *Metaphysicae*, videtur quod homo fide non indigeat.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* arg. 3: Praeterea, unusquisque sapiens ad perveniendum ad finem viam eligit levissimam et ab impedimentis remotissimam. Sed difficillimum videtur credere ea quae supra rationem sunt et valde hominibus periculosum, cum multi a salutis statu decidunt propter hoc quod non credunt. Ergo videtur quod Deus qui est sapientissimus non debuerit viam fidei praeparare hominibus ad salutem.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* arg. 4: Praeterea, ubicumque est acceptio aliquorum cognitorum sine iudicio, est via facilis ad errorem. Sed non habemus aliquid in nobis, per quod possimus iudicare de his quae per fidem accipimus, cum iudicarium naturale se ad huiusmodi non extendat, utpote supra rationem exsistentia. Ergo patet

dissuade others from taking a road that would make them leave that of reason.⁶⁸

However, some arguments support the need of faith. The first, already seen in *De Veritate*, is that of Scripture, which pleads for the strengthening of faith.⁶⁹ Besides, the need for man to know the truth derives from his being designated for happiness — this applies to each faculty —, and faith as a source of knowledge cooperates in the fulfillment of the intellect.⁷⁰ Moreover, faith is necessary for the existence of society because it is not possible to live in it without human faith, which enables trust in one another.⁷¹

In the *Responsio*, Aquinas places the act of faith in the hierarchy of the sciences in the following location:

It should be said that faith has something in common with opinion and something in common with science and understanding; for this reason Hugh of St. Victor places it between science and opinion. It possesses certainty and fixed agreement in common with science and understanding, in which it differs from opinion, since the latter acknowledges one of the opposites with fear of the other, and from doubt, which hesitates between the two. However, unlike science and understanding, it has in common with opinion that it is about things that are not accessible to the intellect.⁷²

via facilis ad errorem. Et ita videtur esse homini potius noxium quam utile, ut dirigatur in Deum per fidem.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* arg. 5: Praeterea, ut dicit Dionysius, malum hominis est praeter rationem esse. Sed homo fidei inhaerens a ratione discedit, et in hoc etiam assuescit rationem contemnere. Ergo videtur quod via ista sit hominibus noxia.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* Sed contra est quod dicitur *Hebr.* 11: sine fide impossibile est placere Deo. Sed hoc est homini maxime opportunum, ut Deo placeat, sine quo nihil boni facere aut habere potest. Ergo fides est homini maxime necessaria.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Praeterea, homini maxime necessarium est veritatem cognoscere, cum gaudium de veritate cognita sit beatitudo, ut Augustinus dicit. Sed, sicut dicit Dionysius 7 c. *De divinis nominibus*, fides collocat credentes in veritate et in eius veritatem. Ergo fides est homini maxime necessaria.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* Praeterea, illud, sine quo non potest conservari humana societas, est humano generi maxime necessarium, cum homo sit naturaliter animal politicum, ut dicitur in VIII *Ethicorum*. Sed sine fide humana societas non potest conservari, quia oportet quod unus homo alii credat in promissis et in testimoniis et in aliis huiusmodi quae sunt necessaria hominibus ad commanendum. Ergo fides humano generi est maxime necessaria.

⁷² *Ibid.* Resp.: Dicendum quod fides habet aliquid commune cum opinione et aliquid cum scientia et intellectu, ratione cuius ponitur media inter scientiam et opinionem ab Hugone de Sancto Victore. Cum scientia siquidem et intellectu commune habet certum et fixum assensum, in quo ab opinione differt, quae accipit alterum contrariorum cum formidine alterius, et a dubitatione quae fluctuat inter duo contraria. Sed cum opinione commune habet quod est de rebus quae non sunt intellectui pervia, in quo differt a scientia et intellectu.

Aquinas states that the difficulty of perceiving certain matters can be due either to the object's nature or to the intellect's limitation. Regarding the object, difficulty can be because of the object's weak or transient nature, or because of its remoteness from the senses.⁷³ Since God is not transient but the most permanent of all beings, He is most evident and knowable in Himself. Therefore, the fact that the divine being is not easily knowable to us at the outset is due to the weakness of our nature and our attachment to the senses. For this reason, the human way for the knowledge of God goes from things less knowable in their nature but best known to us through the senses to the most knowable of all things but most difficult to the human intellect. This explains the need for faith in earthly life, because — as he has already pointed in *De Veritate* and as Maimonides observes in the Second Cause — human beings are not designed for knowing all things perfectly from the beginning.⁷⁴

The core of Aquinas' explanation is again based on Maimonides' *Guide* I, 34 in a similar approach to that in *De Veritate*, and effectively divides the original Maimonidean argument in order to serve two purposes. First, he establishes an analogy between the difficulty of metaphysical issues, which is the explicit context of Maimonides' Five Causes in that chapter, and the knowledge of God, which can be a second reading of that chapter as seen above. He asserts that human beings cannot attain by themselves

⁷³ *Ibid.* Quod autem aliquid non sit patens humanae cognitioni, potest ex duobus contingere, ut dicitur in II *Metaphysicae*, scilicet ex defectu ipsarum rerum cognoscibilium et ex defectu intellectus nostri. Ex defectu quidem rerum, sicut in rebus singularibus et contingentibus quae a nostris sensibus sunt remotae, sicut sunt facta hominum et dicta et cogitata, quae quidem talia sunt, ut uni homini possint esse nota et alii incognita. Et quia in convictu hominum oportet quod unus utatur altero sicut se ipso in his, in quibus sibi non sufficit, ideo oportet ut stet illis quae alius scit et sunt sibi ignota, sicut his quae ipse cognoscit. Et exinde est quod in conversatione hominum est fides necessaria, qua unus homo dictis alterius credat, et hoc est iustitiae fundamentum, ut Tullius dicit in libro *De officiis*. Et inde est quod mendacium nullum sine peccato est, cum per omne mendacium huic fidei tam necessariae derogetur.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Ex defectu vero nostro sunt non apparentia res divinae et necessariae, quae sunt secundum naturam maxime notae. Unde ad harum inspectionem non sumus statim a principio idonei, cum oporteat nos ex minus notis et posterioribus secundum naturam in magis nota et priora naturaliter pervenire. Sed quia ex vi illorum, quae ultimo cognoscimus, sunt nota illa quae primo cognoscimus, oportet etiam a principio aliquam nos habere notitiam de illis quae sunt per se magis nota; quod fieri non potest nisi credendo.

the divine truths at the outset and are required to believe them until they reach their ultimate perfection in the afterlife, in the same way that students must believe many metaphysical principles at the beginning of their training:

And this is evident in the hierarchy of sciences because the science of the highest causes, that is Metaphysics, is the last to be accessible for human knowledge, and at the beginnings of any science it is necessary to assume certain things that are only later fully apprehended. For this reason in any science there are assumptions that the student must believe. Since the end of human life is happiness, which consists of the full apprehension of the divine, it is necessary for human life directed towards happiness to have faith in the divine matters at once, expecting to know these things fully upon achieving the final human perfection.⁷⁵

Second, he recalls the distinction between truths that have been revealed but can be attained by reason and the ones that are far above the natural intellectual capacity and must necessarily be revealed if they are to be known. They all belong to the contents of faith, but the latter essentially characterize faith as a divine gift. Regarding those that can be grasped in a rational way while still *in via*, Aquinas says that they needed to be revealed and are also subject to the assent of faith for the Five Maimonidean Reasons.⁷⁶ This is the third and last version of the text:

It is possible to have knowledge of these things and some have it, but it is necessary to have faith for the five reasons that **Rabbi Moses** gives. The first is the depth and subtlety of the matter that causes the divine things to be hidden to the human intellect. For this reason and so that man may not lack knowledge of these things he is allowed to know the divine matters at least by faith, *Eccl. 7*: 'Far off is the exceeding depth: who can find it out?'. Second, due to the weakness of the human intellect at the beginnings. It needs faith by which it apprehends the divine things at its very start because it only achieves its

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Et etiam hoc patet in ordine scientiarum, quia scientia quae est de causis altissimis, scilicet metaphysica, ultimo occurrit homini ad cognoscendum, et tamen in scientiis praeambulis oportet quod supponantur quaedam quae in illa plenius innotescunt; unde quaelibet scientia habet suppositiones, quibus oportet addiscentem credere. Cum ergo finis humanae vitae sit beatitudo, quae consistit in plena cognitione divinorum, necessarium est ad humanam vitam in beatitudinem dirigendam statim a principio habere fidem divinorum, quae plene cognoscenda exspectantur in ultima perfectione humana.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Ad quorum quaedam plene cognoscenda possibile est homini pervenire per viam rationis etiam in statu huius vitae.

perfection in the end, so that it may never be devoid of knowledge of the divine. Third, due to the many preliminaries demanded by the apprehension of God according to the way of reason. For this, indeed, the knowledge of almost all sciences is required, since the apprehension of divine things is the end of all [of them]; preliminaries that in fact very few attain. And therefore the way of faith has been divinely provided, so that the multitude may not remain devoid of such knowledge. Fourth, because many individuals are ill disposed by their natural temperament for the perfection of the intellect acquired through reason, and therefore the way of faith has been provided so that these also may not lack the knowledge of the divine matters. Fifth, due to the many activities in which individuals must busy themselves, since it is impossible for them to grasp by way of reason what they need to know about God, and this is why the way of faith has been granted in relation to the things that some grasp and that are set out for others to believe.⁷⁷

Aquinas has differentiated two sources of human knowledge: the physical world and God who chooses to inform the creature of things necessary for its own fulfillment that it would not be able to know otherwise. According to him, faith grants knowledge common to the two sources but in a supernatural way, reinforcing the natural aptitudes of the human intellect *in via*:

There are certain divine matters that human reason can in no way apprehend fully, but that perfect knowledge of them is expected in the future life when there will be full happiness, like the unity and

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Et horum quamvis possit haberi scientia et a quibusdam habeatur, tamen necessarium est habere fidem propter quinque rationes, quas Rabbi Moyses ponit. Prima, scilicet propter profunditatem et subtilitatem materiae, per quam occultantur divina ab hominum intellectu. Unde ne sit homo sine eorum qualicumque cognitione, provisum est ei ut saltem per fidem divina cognoscat, Eccl. 7: alta profunditas, quis cognoscet illam? Secunda, propter imbecillitatem intellectus humani a principio. Non enim provenit ei sua perfectio nisi in fine; et ideo ut nullum tempus sit ei vacuum a divina cognitione, indiget fide, per quam ab ipso principio divina accipiat. Tertio, propter multa praeambula, quae exiguntur ad habendam cognitionem de Deo secundum viam rationis. Requiritur enim ad hoc fere omnium scientiarum cognitio, cum omnium finis sit cognitio divinatorum; quae quidem praeambula paucissimi consequuntur. Unde ne multitudo hominum a divina cognitione vacua remaneret, provisus est ei divinitus via fidei. Quarto, quia multi hominum ex naturali complexione sunt indispositi ad perfectionem intellectus consequendam per viam rationis; unde ut hi etiam divina cognitione non careant, provisus est fidei via. Quinto, propter occupationes plurimas, quibus oportet homines occupari; unde impossibile est quod omnes consequantur per viam rationis illud quod est de Deo necessarium ad cognoscendum, et propter hoc est via fidei procurata, et hoc quantum ad illa quae sunt ab aliquibus scita et aliis proponuntur ut credenda.

trinity of the one God. And man is guided to that knowledge not as something due to his nature, but by divine grace alone. Thus it is necessary that some suppositions are offered that must first be believed, as it happens in other sciences, as said before. And for this reason it is said in *Is. 7* according to another verse: if you do not believe, you will not understand. And suppositions of this kind are these things that are believed in so far as they are addressed to all and are not known or understood by anybody.⁷⁸

Summarizing, Aquinas' use of the Five Maimonidean Causes again serves three purposes: First, stressing the need for faith as an intellectual disposition that God provides during the first stage of human life. Second, justifying that some of the contents of the faith can be divinely revealed despite the fact that it is also attainable by human reasoning. Third, asserting that some things can be known only by faith.

Aquinas' answers to the first objections are similar to the ones given in *De Veritate*. The objects of knowledge given by faith are far beyond man's natural capacity, but he is additionally imbued with an intellectual light to match them.⁷⁹ The natural capacities he is endowed with are sufficient for the attainment of his natural goals.⁸⁰ Moreover, the information conveyed by faith necessary for man's eternal happiness could not be grasped only with the help of natural reasoning. Further, History shows that philosophers committed many errors when considering the final end of man and the means for its attainment. Therefore it was

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Quaedam vero divinorum sunt, ad quae plene cognoscenda nullatenus ratio humana sufficit, sed eorum plena cognitio expectatur in futura vita, ubi erit plena beatitudo, sicut unitas et trinitas unius Dei. Et ad hanc cognitionem homo perducetur non ex debito suae naturae, sed ex sola divina gratia. Unde oportet quod hujus etiam perfectae scientiae quaedam suppositiones primo ei credendae proponantur, ex quibus dirigatur in plenam cognitionem eorum quae a principio credit, sicut et in aliis scientiis accidit, ut dictum est; et ideo dicitur *Is. 7* secundum aliam litteram: nisi credideritis, non intelligetis. Et hujusmodi suppositiones sunt illa quae sunt credita quantum ad omnes et a nullo in hac vita scita vel intellecta.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Ad primum ergo dicendum quod licet ea quae sunt fidei sint maiora homine naturae viribus consideratis, non sunt tamen maiora homine divino lumine elevato. Et ideo non est necesse homini, ut hujusmodi propria virtute quaerat, sed est ei necesse, ut divina revelatione ea cognoscat.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Ad secundum dicendum quod Deus in prima rerum conditione hominem perfectum instituit perfectione naturae, quae quidem in hoc consistit, ut homo habeat omnia quae sunt naturae debita. Sed supra debitum naturae adduntur postmodum humano generi aliquae perfectiones ex sola divina gratia, inter quas est fides quae est Dei donum, ut patet *Eph. 2*.

suitable for humankind to be instructed also by faith, that provided a common knowledge.⁸¹

Regarding the difficulty of the way to the knowledge of God through the gift of faith, Aquinas explains that in any kind of knowledge the individual is helped by an inclination, as a conviction or assent of the will to the data. This is clear in the case of natural knowledge, which presents the information in the light of first principles and logical inferences, clear to all. In this sense, faith is an intellectual assent based on the trust in the source of information and also on the confirmation given by reason, which can provide arguments in favor of the contents of faith, and should be regarded as necessary for the intellect as the first principles for a demonstration.⁸²

Testimony to the existence of an inclination or conviction besides the objective data entailed by any act of knowledge is provided by the fact that, even when dealing with a rational demonstration, human beings often fail in their conclusions, or consider what is not a demonstration to be one. This is due to the natural weakness of the human intellect. However, God Himself

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Ad tertium dicendum quod cuilibet in beatitudinem tendenti necessarium est cognoscere in quibus beatitudinem quaerere debeat, et qualiter. Quod quidem facilius fieri non poterat quam per fidem, cum rationis inquisitio ad talia pervenire non possit nisi multis praecognitis quae non est scire. Nec etiam potuit cum minori periculo, cum humana inquisitio propter imbecillitatem intellectus nostri sit facilis ad errorem, et hoc aperte ostenditur ex ipsis philosophis, qui per viam rationis finem humanae vitae quaerentes et modum perveniendi in ipsum in errores multiplices et turpissimos inciderunt, adeo sibi invicem dissentientes, ut vix duorum aut trium esset de his per omnia una concors sententia, cum tamen per fidem videamus in unam sententiam etiam plurimos populos convenire.

⁸² *Ibid.* Ad quartum dicendum quod quodcumque acceptis aliquo modo assentitur, oportet esse aliquid quod inclinatur ad assensum, sicut lumen naturaliter inditum in hoc quod assentitur primis principiis per se notis et ipsorum principiorum veritas in hoc quod assentitur conclusionibus scitis et aliquae verisimilitudines in hoc quod assentimus his quae opinamur; quae si fuerint aliquantum fortiores, inclinant ad credendum, prout fides dicitur opinio iuvata rationibus. Sed illud, quod inclinatur ad assentiendum principiis intellectis aut conclusionibus scitis, est sufficiens inductivum et ideo etiam cogit ad assensum et est sufficiens ad iudicandum de illis quibus assentitur. Quod vero inclinatur ad opinandum qualitercumque vel etiam fortiter, non est sufficiens inductivum, unde nec cogit, nec per hoc potest perfectum haberi iudicium de his quibus assentitur. Unde et in fide qua in Deum credimus non solum est acceptio rerum quibus assentimus, sed aliquid quod inclinatur ad assensum; et hoc est lumen quoddam, quod est habitus fidei, divinitus menti humanae infusum.

puts the light of faith in the intellect, and therefore there is no weakness in it.⁸³ Therefore, God is the source of faith in two ways: as the origin of the intellectual supernatural light, and as the object of the knowledge provided by it. Natural knowledge has an innate use of the first principles. Analogously, the disposition of faith is infused and allows drawing conclusions from the principles of faith according to the nature of the intellect even if the data of faith originates from listening to revelations.⁸⁴ The answer to the last objection discriminates two ways of abandoning the path of reason. One is a fault: by relying only or mostly on physical data, reason is abandoned completely or diminished. The other way is by exceeding the natural limits of the intellect by an infusion of divine grace. This would be the case with the knowledge of faith, which would not be a defect but an excess of knowledge in relation to what is available to reason.⁸⁵

In conclusion, Aquinas maintains one and the same interpretation in reference to *Guide* I, 34. In the three passages mentioned from the *Commentary on the Sentences*, *De Veritate* and *De Trinitate*, there are two parameters. One is in regard to

⁸³ *Ibid.* Quod quidem sufficientius est ad inducendum quam aliqua demonstratio, per quam etsi numquam falsum concludatur, frequenter tamen in hoc homo fallitur, quod putat esse demonstrationem quae non est. Est sufficientius etiam quam ipsum lumen naturale quo assentimus principiis, cum lumen illud frequenter impediatur ex corporis infirmitate, ut patet in mente captis. Lumen autem fidei, quod est quasi quaedam sigillatio primae veritatis in mente, non potest fallere, sicut nec Deus potest decipi vel mentiri, unde hoc lumen sufficit ad iudicandum. Hic tamen habitus non movet per viam intellectus, sed magis per viam voluntatis; unde non facit videre illa quae creduntur nec cogit assensum, sed facit voluntarie assentire.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Et sic patet quod fides ex duabus partibus est a Deo, scilicet et ex parte interioris luminis quod inducit ad assensum et ex parte rerum quae exterius proponuntur, quae ex divina revelatione initium sumpserunt. Et haec se habent ad cognitionem fidei sicut accepta per sensum ad cognitionem principiorum, quia utrisque fit aliqua cognitionis determinatio. Unde sicut cognitio principiorum accipitur a sensu et tamen lumen quo principia cognoscuntur est innatum, ita fides est ex auditu, et tamen habitus fidei est infusus.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Ad quantum dicendum quod vivere secundum rationem est bonum hominis in quantum est homo, vivere autem praeter rationem potest uno modo sonare in defectum, sicut est in illis qui vivunt secundum sensum, et hoc est hominis malum. Alio modo potest sonare in excessum, ut cum homo divina gratia adducitur in id quod est supra rationem; et sic praeter rationem vivere non est hominis malum, sed bonum supra hominem. Et talis est cognitio eorum quae sunt fidei, quamvis et ipsa fides non omnibus modis sit praeter rationem; hoc enim naturalis ratio habet, quod assentiendum est his quae a Deo dicuntur.

faith, according to which the information it conveys is of two kinds: natural — within the range of the intellect *in via* — and supernatural — far beyond its range. The Five Maimonidean Causes that explain why obstacles restrict the capacity of many individuals for the natural knowledge of God support the need for faith in things naturally attainable *in via*. The other parameter is the example of human experience in mastering the sciences as a model of the process of acquisition of knowledge. Maimonides makes the need for faith in the educator a strong point of the *Guide*, whereby the explanation of important principles is postponed for a time when the disciple is advanced in the science. Aquinas illustrates with this human experience the need for faith in things above human grasp *in via*, which are necessary for the attainment of perfect knowledge of God later *in patria*. The educator in this case is God. Both the natural and the supernatural contents of the faith must be believed *in via* to ensure reaching the goal of human existence, but some individuals can confirm through reason the natural truths that have also been revealed, and this adds to the trustworthiness of faith as a secure mode of knowledge.

Finally, I have outlined Aquinas' description of faith as a supernatural way of knowledge *in via* through his interpretation of *Guide* I, 34. However, this does not prove that the reading of that chapter of the *Guide* shaped in any way his position on the issue. Actually, the preceding conclusions point to a use of the *Guide* independent of Maimonides' own understanding of the nature of faith, despite the fact that it is possible to deduce from their explanations some common aspects and differences in the positions of the two philosophers. A survey of Aquinas' citations of Maimonides shows that the three texts examined are the single references to him on the issue. I will now review Maimonides' references to faith in I, 34, which confirm these agreements and disagreements, and Aquinas' article on the possibility of the apprehension of God in this life in Book IV of the *Commentary on the Sentences*, which contains his last explicit reference to the author of the *Guide* on the related issue of prophecy in this work. This text elaborates on the limits of the knowledge of God *in via* and contains Aquinas' explanation of examples of experiences that seem to contradict these limits.

2. *Maimonides and Aquinas on the Role of Faith and Prophecy*

Chapter 3 reviewed Aquinas' reference to Maimonides in *De Veritate*, q. 13, a. 1, ad 1, where the former illustrates the difference between human beings in this life and in the afterlife by pointing out that it would be unnatural for a human being to have as a toddler the same characteristics and capabilities that he has as a grown up. Aquinas infers that the same would apply to someone having in this life the fully developed intellectual faculty with the kind of grasp that can be natural to man only after death. Therefore, although a perfect — but limited — knowledge of God is the ultimate end of human beings in the afterlife, the current state of their faculties in this life does not show it to be evident. He concludes that although it is impossible to demonstrate the direct knowledge of God in the afterlife this is nevertheless a reasonable belief, in keeping with the assumption that pervades his explanations in the *Quaestio de attributis*.

This is the background to his references to Maimonides in connection with the justification of faith for the knowledge of God in this life. Maimonides' presence in the works of Aquinas on this issue is very limited. Besides, Aquinas addresses the extraordinary cases of some individuals who claim to have had supernatural experiences of an apprehension of God that seems to belong to the afterlife, in order to find a rational explanation for these cases. His explanations demarcate the boundaries between the extent of the knowledge of God in this life and that of the apprehension of the divine essence *in patria*. Here, too, he quotes Maimonides, but his presence in Aquinas' thought on the issue is much more restricted than in previous references.

Aquinas makes a personal adaptation of the Five Maimonidean Causes, focusing on the role of faith. Regarding this issue, Maimonides' *Guide* I, 34 mentions its pedagogic role, necessary for the individual as long as he is not capable of grasping the divine truths on his own, in his explanations about the Third Cause that prevents the instruction of the multitude. Agreeing with Aquinas, he points to the created beings as the only way to achieve knowledge of the existence of God and of certain truths about Him in this life. However, he differs from Aquinas' position in considering faith necessary for attributing to God certain

knowledge apprehended in the created world, whereas the only knowledge that does not need to be based on faith is that of His existence:

These created things are the ones participating in being [*ente*] except Himself. There is, moreover, no way to apprehend Him except it be through the things He has made; *and they demonstrate that He is [or His being] and what ought to be believed about God* or denied in regard to Him.⁸⁶

In other words, Maimonides understands that the things that are affirmed and denied regarding God as described in the chapters of the *Guide* on the negative attributes are in fact contents of the faith. Such knowledge is not achieved by way of demonstration or rational apprehension, but are things that are believed about God. Aquinas, instead, acknowledges that both the existence of God and the divine perfections are apprehended by natural reasoning, and leaves faith for other issues related to the divine essence and man's final end.

Further, Maimonides — like Aquinas — advocates the need for believing things that the individual is still not capable of attaining due to the length of the preliminary studies:

Accordingly if we never in any way acquired an opinion by way of tradition and were not conducted toward the notions by means of parables, and if we did not follow the perfect discipline in true matters, and were to believe the things that we must accept only if they were demonstrated — which would be impossible except after lengthy preliminary studies — this state of affairs would lead to all people dying without having known whether there is a Creator for the world, or whether there is not, much less whether a proposition should be affirmed with regard to Him or a defect denied.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Dux*, I, XXXIII, fol. XIIv. Cf. *Guide* I, 34, 74: "This totality [of the things He has made] includes everything comprised in what exists except only Him. There is, moreover, no way to apprehend Him except it be through the things He has made; *for they are indicative of His existence and of what ought to be believed about Him*, I mean to say, of what should be affirmed and denied in regard to Him."

⁸⁷ *Dux*, *ibid.* fol. XIIIr. Cf. *Guide*, *ibid.* 75: "Accordingly if we never in any way acquired an opinion through following traditional authority and were not correctly conducted toward something by means of parables, but were obliged to achieve a perfect representation by means of essential definitions and by pronouncing true only that which is meant to be pronounced true in virtue of a demonstration — which would be impossible except after the above-mentioned lengthy preliminary studies — this state of affairs would lead to all people dying without having known whether there is a deity for the world, or whether there is not, much less whether a proposition should be affirmed with regard to Him or a defect denied."

Maimonides understands religious faith as the rational response to traditional authority, which is necessary as long as the individual has not reached intellectual perfection. In this sense, his position coincides with that of Aquinas. However, the latter also acknowledges that among the contents of the faith there are some with a source other than the merely natural examples of apprehension obtained from the physical world through the senses. According to Aquinas, strictly speaking, faith is the acceptance of a truth grounded on the authority of God who reveals it, and which cannot be known otherwise in this life.

This kind of knowledge is specially relevant to the problem of the apprehension of God *in via*, inasmuch as the content of an act of faith deals specifically with the nature of God and His actions in the world. For this reason the contents of the faith are for Aquinas intrinsically related to prophecy, since the source is God himself but its messages are conveyed to the common individuals through the prophets and other messengers of God. Since the prophets are also human, an analysis of the peculiar act of knowledge of a vision or revelation represents in Aquinas' view an experience even closer to the limits of the human intellect as regards the knowledge of God than a mere act of faith in the prophet's words. His last reference to Maimonides in the *Commentary on the Sentences* deals precisely with this kind of knowledge, and shows that his interest in the *Guide* in this context is restricted to the degrees of prophecy that Maimonides enumerates in *Guide* II, 45. I will not address the issue of the degrees, as it is not this study's aim.⁸⁸ The importance of this quotation lies in the fact that it belongs to the same period as the works containing the references to *Guide* I, 34, which serve as the background for the composition of the *Quaestio de attributis*, and completes Aquinas' explanation on the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God in this life, confirming the conclusions drawn from the previous texts examined.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ For Aquinas' reference to Maimonides' degrees of prophecy in the *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 174, a. 3, cf. W.Z. Harvey, "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible."

⁸⁹ Aquinas wrote *De Veritate* and *De Trinitate* in 1257-1259. In the same period he reviewed the first three Books of the *Sentences* introducing several corrections and additions, and composed Book IV. The final redaction of this work can be placed in this same period, due to some elements that make it different from the first three books of the *Sentences*. One of them is the fact that its length

In Book IV of the *Commentary* Aquinas inquires whether it is possible to know the essence of God in this life, and his answer recalls faith and prophecy as two supernatural modes of knowledge.⁹⁰

He begins the article with the authorities that advocate the possibility of a direct contemplation of God in this life, who are the prophets and the apostles. Thus, Isaiah reports his vision of God in His glory.⁹¹ Jacob saw God “face to face”,⁹² and also Job saw God “with his eyes”.⁹³ Moses reportedly saw God “plainly, and not by riddles”.⁹⁴ St. Paul similarly recorded a personal experience of having been taken to the “third heaven”, which stands for the place where the angels contemplate the essence of God.⁹⁵

almost doubles that of the previous ones. If we take into account that the extent of the others correspond to one academic year each, the conclusion is that it is not the result of Aquinas’ teachings of the year 1255-1256, but that he wrote it independently; probably later. The other element is the fact that at the time of the final redaction of this work, Aquinas already had secretaries helping him, as can be seen from the handwriting in the fragments of the original ms. This points to a latter period than 1252-1256, when it is not likely that a young bachelor still to be appointed *Magister* would have had an assistant at his disposal. Cf. Alarcón, *Evolución léxica*. 81-82.

⁹⁰ *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7: Utrum Deus in statu viae possit per essentiam videri.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* arg. 1: Videtur quod Deus in statu viae possit per essentiam videri. Quia dicitur *Isai.* 6, 1: vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum; et plena erat omnis terra majestate ejus; et seraphim clamabant. Sed ille cujus majestate omnis terra impletur, est ille qui essentialiter est Deus. Ergo Isaias vidit Deum per essentiam in statu viae existens.

⁹² *Ibid.* arg. 2: Praeterea, videre Deum facie ad faciem, est videre Deum per essentiam, ut patet 1 *Corinth.* 13, sic enim beatam visionem Apostolus nominat. Sed Jacob in statu viae existens vidit Deum facie ad faciem; unde dicit *Genes.* 32, 30: vidi Dominum facie ad faciem, et salva facta est anima mea. Ergo aliquis in statu viae potest videre Deum per essentiam.

⁹³ *Ibid.* arg. 3: Praeterea, *Job* 42: auditu auris audivi te, nunc autem oculus meus videt te. Visus autem est de rebus praesentibus, auditus autem de absentibus. Ergo postquam Job cognoverat Deum quasi absentem per auditum, adhuc in hac vita existens vidit Deum quasi praesentem per essentiam.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* arg. 4: Praeterea, de Moysse dicitur *Num.* 12, 8: palam, et non per aenigmata, videt Deum. Sed omnis visio Dei vel est per aenigma, vel per essentiam, ut patet 1 *Corinth.* 13, ergo Moyses in statu viae existens vidit Deum per essentiam.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* arg. 5: Praeterea, 2 *Corinth.* 12, super illud: raptum hujusmodi usque ad tertium caelum, dicit glossa, quod Deus ostendit Apostolo vitam, in qua videntus est in aeternum; et ita ad hoc raptus est Apostolus ut ipsum Deum in se, non in aliqua figura, videret; et infra dicitur, quod in tertio ordine angelorum sunt throni, cherubim, et seraphim, qui vicinius Deum contemplantur; ad quorum similitudinem Deum vidisse dicitur Apostolus. Ex quibus omnibus aperte ostenditur quod ipse vidit Deum per essentiam; et sic idem quod prius.

These testimonies agree in the description of that kind of knowledge as an intellectual vision, which is that of the things that are apprehended in their essence, and they all seem to witness the possibility of knowing the essence of God in this life.⁹⁶

Moreover — Aquinas adds — if it is possible to love God directly in this life, it should likewise have to be possible to know Him directly.⁹⁷ Besides, the human intellect can apprehend God directly and without intermediary, because it does not derive that knowledge from any other being it has previously apprehended on his way to God. Therefore, the human intellect can have an essential knowledge of God in this life.⁹⁸ The essence of God is also the truth's ultimate measure. If man has the capacity to judge and discern the truth, it means that he knows the divine essence.⁹⁹ The same applies when considering the intellectual light with which man is endowed, which is a reflection of the divine light.¹⁰⁰ A similar conclusion is reached after considering the intellect's divine origin. If God has created human reason directly, then the latter has to have the capacity to see God directly.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* arg. 6: Praeterea, secundum Augustinum, 12 *Super Genes. ad litteram*, visione intellectuali videntur ea quae sunt in anima per sui essentiam, sed visio intellectualis est de rebus ipsis intelligibilibus non per aliquas similitudines, sed per suas essentias, ut ipse dicit. Ergo cum Deus per suam essentiam sit in anima viatoris, videtur quod per essentiam suam ipsum videat.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* arg. 7: Praeterea, affectus magis est corruptus per peccatum quam intellectus; quia peccatum in voluntate est, ut dicit Augustinus. Sed affectus potest immediate diligere Deum in statu viae. Ergo et intellectus potest immediate videre Deum.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* arg. 8: Praeterea, omne illud immediate videtur per intellectum ad quod intellectus se convertit sine hoc quod convertatur ad aliud. Sed intellectus viatoris potest converti ad Deum sine hoc quod convertatur ad aliquid aliud. Ergo intellectus viatoris potest immediate videre Deum.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* arg. 9: Praeterea, illud per quod iudicamus de aliquibus, oportet esse nobis magis notum quam illa. Sed secundum Augustinum in lib. *De vera relig.*, secundum veritatem increatam de omnibus iudicamus, ipsam de omnibus consulentes etiam in statu viae. Ergo ipsam veritatem videmus. Sed veritas increata est divina essentia. Ergo in via Deum per essentiam videre possumus.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* arg. 10: Praeterea, propter quod unumquodque, illud magis. Sed omnia quae cognoscimus, cognoscimus per lumen divinum, quod est ipsa divina essentia; quia, ut dicitur in lib. *De spiritu et anima*, mens nostra in actum cognitionis exire non potest, nisi divino lumine perfundatur. Ergo ipsum Deum per essentiam videmus magis quam aliquid aliud.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* arg. 11: Praeterea, secundum Augustinum, mens nostra a Deo, nulla interposita creatura, formatur. Sed in omni mediata visione aliud interponitur. Ergo et in hac vita mens nostra immediate videt Deum.

The twelfth argument is particularly important: any science provides knowledge of the nature of its object. God is an object of the divine sciences, theology and metaphysics. Therefore, these sciences should provide some knowledge of His nature. On the other hand, if there is no science of God and He is not an object of philosophical knowledge, it would be impossible to have any knowledge of Him other than as an opinion. Notably, in the Third Cause Maimonides qualifies the knowledge of God through traditional authority as an opinion.

Aquinas had already examined the common elements between faith and opinion and between faith and science. Now he elaborates on this and adds that if there is philosophical knowledge of God, it should provide knowledge of the divine essence and therefore it is a kind of apprehension similar to that *in patria*.¹⁰² The last argument focuses on the immaterial nature of the intellect, which does not have in itself any obstacle to the contemplation of God.¹⁰³

Five *sed contra* follow, based on other authorities of Scripture, which stress the impossibility for a creature to overcome the abyss that separates it from God, who transcends the whole of creation.¹⁰⁴

The *Respondeo* summarizes some of the elements already used while writing about the role of faith for the attainment of the last end, happiness, which for the rational creature consists of the

¹⁰² *Ibid.* arg. 12: Praeterea, per quamlibet scientiam speculativam cognoscitur de subjecto quid est. Sed Deus in aliqua scientia speculativa est subjectum, vel saltem in parte alicujus scientiae, sicut in theologia et in metaphysica, quae etiam de Deo est, ut patet in principio *Metaph.* Ergo per aliquam scientiam speculativam scitur de Deo quid est; et hoc est videre ipsum per essentiam. Ergo cum omnes scientias speculativas possimus habere in via, Deum in statu viae per essentiam videre possumus.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* ad 13: Praeterea, nihil impeditur nisi a suo contrario. Sed corruptio corporis non contrariatur dispositioni intellectus, cum non sint in eodem. Ergo dispositio intellectus non impeditur per corporis corruptionem. Sed anima in corpore incorruptibili existens videbit Deum per essentiam. Ergo et corpori corruptibili juncta potest Deum per essentiam videre.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* Sed contra est quod dicitur *Exod.* 33, 30: non videbit me homo et vivet; glossa: quamdiu hic totaliter vivitur, videri per quasdam imagines Deus potest, sed per ipsam naturae suae speciem non potest. Praeterea, *Joan.* 1, 18, dicitur: Deum nemo vidit unquam; glossa: nemo purus homo vivens in hoc corpore videt Deum ut est. Praeterea, 2 *Corinth.* 5, 6: quamdiu sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino: per fidem enim ambulamus, et non per speciem; glossa: homini vitam mortalem adhuc agentis non potest contingere ut dimoto atque

contemplation of the divine essence. This contemplation fulfills all the potentialities of the human intellect, but Aquinas adds that a certain disposition has to be added to the ones already available *in statu viae*, which he calls *lumen gloriae*. However, in principle no human being is able to receive it while *in statu viae*.¹⁰⁵ The reason for this is that in this life all the data come through the senses and are obtained from the physical world, and the divine essence cannot be apprehended by any image or concept, which is the only way the human intellect works with its natural objects in this life.¹⁰⁶ However God can work miracles that transcend the natural limits of his creatures, who by themselves do not have the disposition for the divine actions performed in them, as was the case of the three children kept safe inside the burning furnace, despite the fact that their bodies were corruptible.¹⁰⁷ This would not have been possible according

omni discusso nubilo phantasiarum corporalium serenissima incommutabilis veritatis luce potiat. Praeterea, esse viatorem et comprehensorem est solius Christi. Sed quicumque videt Deum per essentiam, est comprehensor. Ergo nullus alius a Christo adhuc viator existens, potest Deum per essentiam videre. Praeterea, posita causa, ponitur effectus. Sed causa quare anima beata sit, est divina visio, ut ex dictis patet. Si ergo aliquis in statu viae Deum per essentiam videat, in statu viae erit beatus; quod est absurdum.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Respondeo dicendum, quod cum beatitudo sit ultimus finis rationalis creaturae, status viae in qualibet rationali creatura dicitur esse ille in quo a beatitudine deficit. Beatitudo autem cuiuslibet rationalis creaturae consistit in visione Dei per essentiam, ut ex dictis patet. Operatio autem delectabilissima, in qua beatitudo consistit, oportet quod sit potentiae dispositae et perfectae ad dignissimum objectum, ut patet per Philosophum in 10 *Ethic.*; et ideo ad hoc quod creatura rationalis sit beata per visionem Dei in essentia sua, oportet quod in hanc visionem sit potens per aliquam dispositionem sibi inhaerentem, quam dicimus esse lumen gloriae. Sic autem nulla pura creatura in statu viae existens videre potest Deum per essentiam; homo enim per dispositiones omnes quas in statu viae habet, non potest in aliquid amplius, nisi ut intelligat quiddam intelligit per species a sensu abstractas: quia phantasmata sunt intellectui nostro ut sensibilia sensui, ut patet per Philosophum in 3 *De anima*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Intellectus etiam angeli in statu viae per omnes dispositiones naturales, vel etiam gratuitas, non potest in aliquid amplius nisi ut intelligat omne quod intelligit per formas creatas, ad quas naturalis facultas intellectus eius determinatur, ut ex dictis patet. Deus autem in essentia sua videri non potest nec per aliquam formam a sensu abstractam, nec per aliquam formam creatam, ut ex dictis patet. Unde patet quod nullus intellectus purae creaturae in statu viae existens potest in visionem Dei per essentiam per aliquam dispositionem sibi inhaerentem.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Daniel*, 8.

to the given disposition of the subjects of the miracle, if not for the power of God alone.¹⁰⁸ Aquinas' conclusion is as follows:

And for this reason it must be said that no creature whatsoever can see God in His essence while *in statu viae*, but God can cause it to see when it is still *in statu viae*. From the [above] said it is clear that no human being can know neither the essence of God nor an angel *in statu viae*, because it exceeds all forms perceived through the senses, through which our intellect apprehends *in statu viae*, and also our mind, by whose similarity we apprehend something of the intellectual substances.¹⁰⁹

Summarizing, no creature can ever know the essence of God while *in statu viae*, unless God grants it the grace and makes it capable of such experience ahead of the appointed time, namely *in statu patriae*.

The answers to the arguments contribute to explain the contemplation of the prophets and other individuals who experienced a very high kind of knowledge in this life.¹¹⁰ According to Aquinas, what the prophets saw were forms or images that led them to a certain apprehension of the knowledge of God. In these visions, angels play a central role as messengers of God, and the faculty of

¹⁰⁸ *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7, Respondeo: ... Non enim dicimus, proprie loquendo, quod caecus possit fieri videns, sed quod Deus potest eum facere videntem.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* Et ideo dicendum est, quod nulla pura creatura in statu viae existens potest Deum per essentiam videre; sed Deus potest facere quod videat adhuc in statu viae manens. Ex dictis etiam patet quod nullus homo in statu viae essentiam Dei, nec etiam angeli, potest cognoscere; quia excedit omnes formas sensibiles, per quas intellectus noster in statu viae cognoscit, et ipsam mentem nostram, ex cuius similitudine aliquid de substantiis intellectualibus cognoscimus.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod secundum Dionysium, per hoc quod in Scriptura dicitur, quod aliquis sanctus vidit Deum, ut Isaias, vel quilibet alius; non est intelligendum quod essentiam Dei, quae est omnibus viatoribus occulta, viderit; sed quod ostensae sunt eis aliqua formae, vel corporales, vel imaginariae, per quas manucebantur in Dei cognitionem; et hoc fiebat ministerio angelorum, quorum illuminatione confortabatur intellectus prophetae ad perveniendum in aliqualem divinorum cognitionem ex apparentibus formis. Et quia angelus non intendebat ducere in sui cognitionem principaliter, sed in cognitionem Dei; ideo in huiusmodi visis non dicebatur angelus apparere, sed Deus; ex cuius persona apparebat angelus, et ex cuius virtute efficaciam habebat ad illuminandum mentem; et hoc vocatur theophania, idest Dei apparitio, in Scriptura. quandoque tamen et angelus dicebatur ille qui apparebat propter ministerium quod exhibebat: unde Gregorius dicit: angelus qui Moysi apparuisse describitur, modo angelus, modo Dominus memoratur; angelus, quia exterius loquendo deservit; Dominus, quia interius praesidens loquenti efficaciam tribuit. Et haec est etiam sententia Augustini, 2 *De Trinit.*

imagination is also at work.¹¹¹ In his context Aquinas mentions Maimonides' distinction of the degrees of prophecy:

As **Rabbi Moses** says, distinguishing degrees of prophecy, the degree of prophecy is higher when something appears to the prophet in a vision awake than when it appears to him while sleeping; and anyway if there is a revelation, the degree is higher when someone talking appears to him in a visible figure than when only his voice is heard without seeing anything. Also the degree is higher when the one who talks appears in an angel's figure than in a man's figure. And Jacob's apparition had this eminence because it happened not while sleeping but while awake, and he did not only hear the voice of the one speaking with him but also saw a figure, though of a man.¹¹²

In agreement with Maimonides, Aquinas remarks that however lofty these visions may be they work mainly through faculties lower than the intellect, specially the imagination. These visions grant a higher knowledge of God than that provided by natural reason alone, but still the quality of this knowledge is far from the divine essence, as long as it is based on images and figures.¹¹³

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* Ad secundum dicendum, quod visio illa Jacob fuit imaginaria, vel corporalis. Dicitur tamen vidisse facie ad faciem, quia illa figura in qua ei apparuit Deus, facie ad faciem est ab eo visa; unde dicit glossa *ibid.*: non quod Deus videri possit, sed formam vidit in qua Deus locutus est ei. In hoc tamen quod dicit: facie ad faciem, notatur quaedam eminentia visionis.

¹¹² *Ibid.* Ut enim dicit Rabbi Moyses, gradus prophetiae distinguens, eminentior est gradus prophetiae quando prophetae apparet aliquid in visione vigiliae, quam si appareat in dormiendo; et utrolibet modo si fiat revelatio, eminentior gradus est quando apparet ille qui loquitur in aliqua figura visui, quam quando auditur locutio ejus tantum sine hoc quod aliquid videtur. Eminentior quoque gradus est, si ille qui loquitur, apparet in figura angeli quam in figura hominis. Et hanc eminentiam habuit apparitio Jacob: quia non fuit in dormiendo, sed in vigilando: nec tantum audivit vocem secum loquentis, sed etiam figuram inspexit, hominis tamen.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* Unde dicitur, quod apparuit ei vir etc., quem angelum intellexit; et ad hanc eminentiam designandam dicitur, quod vidit Dominum facie ad faciem, angelum Dominum vocans ratione iam dicta. Non potest dici secundum glossam Gregorii *ibidem*, quod hoc intelligatur de visione spirituali, qua sanctorum mentes etiam in via, vitis purgatae, Deum contemplantur adiutae divino lumine quo perfunduntur: secundum quam quidem visionem quamvis divina natura ut est non videatur, quia illud lumen receptum non est similitudo sufficienter repraesentans divinam essentiam, ut supra dictum est; tamen aliqua perfectior cognitio de Deo habetur, cum illud lumen sit expressior eius similitudo quam lumen naturae, aut creaturae sensibilis, ex quibus homo naturali cognitione ducitur ad Dei cognitionem. Nisi enim illam, scilicet veritatem increatam, utcumque conspiceret, non eam se conspiceret non posse sentiret, ut in eadem glossa dicitur. Et quia per faciem quemlibet cognoscimus, cognitionem Dei faciem vocamus.

Regarding Job, who says he first heard the voice of God, then saw Him with his eyes, this should be understood only as a deepening in the understanding of his faith.¹¹⁴

Aquinas, like Maimonides, considers that the knowledge attained by Moses was among the highest a human being can have in this life. He brings in different interpretations that could fit the description given in Scripture about the particular relation that Moses had with God, which could have been a corporeal or imaginative vision, like these of other prophets, or it could have been an intellectual vision.¹¹⁵ In any case, Moses can be placed among the greatest in the knowledge of God that a creature can attain in this life, because the description of his personal experience is superior to that of the prophets who had revelations through apparitions of angels and other visions.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* Ad tertium dicendum, quod verbum Job potest intelligi de visione imaginaria et intellectuali. Si enim intelligatur de imaginaria, designatur profectus Job in gradu prophetiae; cum primo non fuerit ei facta revelatio nisi per auditum loquentis, postmodum vero per visionem loquentis. Si autem intelligatur de visione intellectuali, tunc ostenditur profectus eius de cognitione fidei in intellectum divinorum, qualis hic per contemplationem praedictam habetur a sanctis; quae quidem visio dicitur; quia sicut videndo aliqua cognoscimus, ab ipsis rebus accipiendo; ita sancti in contemplatione accipiunt lumen ab ipso Deo, per quod divina altius ceteris contemplantur; sed audita cognoscimus assentiendo eis qui ab ipsis rebus species acceperunt, dum nobis referunt se vidisse; et similiter per fidem adhaeremus dictis apostolorum et prophetarum, qui fuerunt divino lumine illustrati. Et sic non oportet ponere quod Deum per essentiam viderit.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* Ad quartum dicendum, quod duplex eminentia visionis Moysi adscribitur. Una *Exod.* 33, 2: ubi dicitur, quod loquebatur Dominus Moysi facie ad faciem, sicut loqui solet homo ad amicum suum. Ex quibus tamen verbis haberi non potest quod Deum per essentiam viderit; quod patet ex hoc quod petit dicens: ostende mihi gloriam tuam; quod ei tunc concessum non est; unde dictum est ei: faciem meam videre non poteris; et ideo dicit glossa ibidem: secundum opinionem populi loquitur scriptura, quae putabat Moysen ore ad os loqui cum Deo, cum per subjectam creaturam, idest per angelum et nubem, ei loqueretur et appareret. Haec autem locutio potest intelligi fuisse imaginaria vel corporalis; unde dicit Augustinus, 2 *De Trin.*: locutio illa quae fiebat vocibus, sic modificabatur tamquam esset amici loquentis ad amicum. Potest etiam intelligi esse intellectualis, secundum quod intelligibilia divinorum inspiciebat per modum quo dicitur in *Psal.* 48, 9: audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Et utroque modo ostenditur privilegiata eius revelatio, in quantum familiarius ceteris ei sua secreta revelavit, quasi amico, iuxta illud quod dicitur *Joan.* 15, 15: vos dixi amicos, quia omnia quaecumque audivi a Patre meo, nota feci vobis: et ideo dicitur *Deut.* ult., 10: non surrexit ultra propheta in Israel quem nosset Dominus facie ad faciem. Alia eminentia visionis Moysi ostenditur *Num.* 12, 8, ubi Dominus de eo dixit ad Aaron et Mariam: ore ad os loquor ei, et palam; non per aenigmata et figuras Deum videt, vel gloriam Domini,

However, he considers that Moses' example is still not the knowledge of God experienced in the afterlife, since his experience was only of temporary duration and therefore did not grant him eternal happiness. Besides, contrary to Maimonides, he asserts that such contemplation was not due to the disposition of his nature, but to the sole extraordinary intervention of God. While that high contemplation lasted, Moses had to be deprived of the use of his natural faculties and operations, being as it were deprived of the use his body in a miraculous way, which is a kind of temporary death:

Likewise when the intellect of the one in the way [*viatoris*] is miraculously elevated to see God in His essence, there cannot be simultaneously the act of vision proper to the way [*in via*], by which the soul naturally apprehends the beings perceived through the senses. Therefore it is necessary that in that state the soul of the seer be completely detached from the act of the senses. ... And therefore this is not contrary to what is said in *Exod.* 33: 'For man shall not see Me and live.'¹¹⁷

secundum Septuaginta; ubi ostenditur impleta fuisse eius petitio, qua petiverat in *Exod.* 33, 18: ostende mihi faciem tuam; ita quod ante mortem Deum per essentiam vidit, ut Augustinus dicit, 12 *Super Gen. ad litteram*, et in libro *De videndo Deum*; et ideo signanter dicitur: ore ad os loquar ei; quod in *Exod.* dictum non fuerat: quia visio Dei per essentiam non fit mediante aliquo superiori spiritu; sed ipse Deus immediate se ostendit; et hoc est loqui ore ad os: non enim os corporis, sed os mentis intelligendum est, ut Augustinus dicit. Sed visio contemplationis viae fit mediante illuminatione angelorum, ut patet per Dionysium; et ideo non potest dici secundum illam loqui ore ad os, sed loqui quasi per internuntium.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* Haec tamen visio qua ante mortem Deum per essentiam vidit, non fecit eum beatum simpliciter; unde nec semper illa visio in eo permansit, sed ad tempus; quamvis illud tempus in scriptura non determinetur: non enim erat ex dispositione in intellectu existente, sed ex sola divina virtute quasi miraculose, ut dictum est. Quando autem natura creata miraculose elevatur ad aliquid supra naturam, non potest simul esse in contrario actu; sicut corpus Petri cum miraculose actum dotis agilitatis habuit super undas ambulando, non simul erat in eo actus gravitatis, qui est ferri deorsum. Et similiter quando intellectus viatoris elevatur miraculose ad videndum Deum per essentiam, non potest simul esse in actu visionis viae, qua anima naturaliter sensibilia percipit; et ideo oportet in illo statu animam videntis omnino ab actu sensuum abstrahi; et ideo Augustinus dicit, 12 *Super Gen. ad litteram*, quia Deum per essentiam nemo videre potest, nisi ab hac vita quodammodo moriatur, sive omnino exiens de corpore, sive aversus et alienatus a sensibus carnalibus; et simile dicit in libro *De videndo Deum*; et sic non est contrarium ei quod dicitur *Exod.* 33: non videbit me homo et vivet. Unde Gregorius, ibidem, dicit in glossa: a quibusdam in carne viventibus, sed inaestimabili virtute crescentibus, potest aeterni Dei claritas videri; non tamen videbit eum homo et vivet: quia qui sapientiam, quae Deus est, videt, huic mundo funditus moritur.

I recalled in Chapter 3 Maimonides' references to *Exod. 33*, which advocates the impossibility of the contemplation of God in this life. Aquinas agrees in principle with this interpretation, but also answers the apparent contradiction between this text and the limit-experiences of prophets and saints to the contrary. In the answer in regard to the experience reported by St. Paul, which Aquinas equates to that of Moses, he notes that these experiences cannot be considered examples of knowledge of the essence of God *in statu viae*, because they produce in the individual a situation that is between the *status viae* and the *status patriae*.¹¹⁸

In the answer to the following argument Aquinas focuses on the nature of the intellectual apprehension, which operates by producing similarities of the things apprehended by the senses. These similarities or intelligible reproductions of the real thing are the intermediaries between the thing outside the mind and the individual, and God is in the mind of the one *in via* only by similarity, not by essence. It is necessary — he adds — to distinguish between the object known and the medium of knowledge.¹¹⁹ This distinction is of primary importance for Aquinas' doctrine of the knowledge of God. The nature of the human intellect is such that it grasps the essence of the thing known without actually introducing into the mind the reality meant, and therefore it is possible to acknowledge a certain contemplation of God in this life which works in a similar way. The intellectual visions of God can only be the knowledge of certain kinds of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* Ad quintum dicendum, quod in illo raptu Paulus hoc modo vidit Deum per essentiam, sicut et de Moyse dictum est, ut per Augustinum in lib. *De videndo Deum*, et 12 *Super Gen. ad litteram*: ut idem privilegium doctor gentium et magister judaeorum consequerentur. Quamvis quidam dicant, quod hujusmodi visio fuit media inter visionem viae et visionem patriae, volentes quod non viderit Deum per essentiam, sed eminentissima contemplatione viae; cuius tamen contrarium videntur sonare verba sanctorum. Secundum hoc tamen potest dici fuisse media inter utramque cognitionem, quia in hoc quod vidit Deum per essentiam, fuit supra cognitionem viae; in hoc vero quod ex illa visione non fuit simpliciter beatus, fuit infra cognitionem patriae.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* Visio intellectualis est de his quae sunt in anima per sui essentiam, non quocumque modo, sed de his quae sunt in ea ut formae intelligibiles in intellectu. Sic autem non est Deus in anima viatoris per essentiam suam, sed per similitudinem. Quod autem dicitur ab Augustino quod visio intellectualis est earum rerum quarum similitudines non sunt aliud quam ipsae, est referendum ad objectum visionis, non ad medium quo videtur.

images, and not the divine essence itself. In any case — he clarifies — these images do not provide any knowledge of what God is, but only of what God is not.¹²⁰

This is also a key point in the doctrine of Maimonides on the knowledge of God. The imaginary visions and other revelations work through the imagination and sometimes through the external senses as well. Since these senses and faculty are forced to obtain the data from corporeal figures, either through the intellectual similarities or through the impression of the image by God in the faculty, none of these experiences can be considered a direct knowledge of the divine essence.¹²¹ Aquinas distinguishes however between two levels of prophetic visions: the imaginary ones and the intellectual ones. The latter are detached from the senses and the imagination, and therefore leave the possibility open for the knowledge of the essence of things. If any prophetic knowledge can provide some knowledge of God, it has to be of an intellectual nature.

The answer to the seventh argument stresses that the only way for the knowledge of God in this life is through the effects of God as cause of the world, but that this way provides real knowledge of God.¹²² Moreover, he clarifies that the similarities of the things

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* Constat enim quod medium quo intelligitur lapis, est species eius in anima, quae non est ipsa lapidis essentia; sed per similitudinem lapidis pervenitur ad cognoscendam ipsam essentiam lapidis; quia objectum intellectus est quid, idest rei essentia, seu quidditas. Sed hoc non contingit in visione imaginaria vel corporali; quia objectum imaginationis vel sensus non est ipsa essentia rei, sed accidentia quae sunt extra, sicut color, et figura, et hujusmodi. Unde etiam in visione intellectuali viatoris non oportet quod ipsa divina essentia sit medium quo videtur; sed quod per similitudinem aliquam ipsius perveniatur ad aliqualem divinae essentiae cognitionem; non qua sciatur quid est Deus, sed qua sciatur quid non est.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* Vel dicendum quod Augustinus, 12 *Super Genes. ad litteram*, unde verba illa sumuntur in glossa 2 *Corinth.* 12, inducit hoc ad ostendendum differentiam intellectualis visionis ad alias visiones. Hoc enim intellectualis prae aliis habet quod potest cognoscere ea quae sunt intellectus per sui essentiam, non autem sensus vel imaginatio. Non autem sequitur propter hoc quod intellectus nihil intelligat nisi per essentiam suam, et quod non intelligat per similitudines aliquas.

¹²² *Ibid.* Ad septimum dicendum, quod in omnibus potentiis ad invicem ordinatis hoc est necessarium ut ubi terminatur actus prioris potentiae, incipiat actus secundae; unde cum voluntas praesupponat intellectum, voluntas fertur in illud in quod intellectus terminatur: intellectus autem quamvis Deum in statu vitae non nisi per effectus cognoscat, tamen eius operatio in ipsum Deum terminatur secundum quantumcumque cognitionem quam de ipso accipit; et ideo affectus non indiget ad hoc quod referatur in Deum quod redeat in illa media; sed potest statim in ipsum Deum ferri, in quem intellectus devenit.

known in the world as effects of God apprehended by the intellect are not an obstacle to such knowledge as if the intellect had reached a dead end and been reduced to the contemplation of the things of the world. As long as they direct the intellect to God they serve their purpose, and the intellect naturally obtains real knowledge of their Creator. They would be an obstacle if the intellect were to remain in the knowledge of their essences, considering them as the final object of contemplation, but such consideration would be a different operation of the intellect than that of addressing them as effects of God.¹²³

According to Aquinas' answer to the ninth argument, God is the measure of the truth for being the eternal Truth itself. Our intellect, created by God, has been endowed with the capacity to judge all things according to the first principles which are evident to us. However, this does not mean that the limited intellect grasps the essence of God, but that its knowledge works according to the truth through the likeness of the eternal Truth which are the first principles of knowledge.¹²⁴

God is also the light of the intellect, but this means that He enables the rational creatures to know other things, and not necessarily that the creature has a knowledge of the light itself through which he knows.¹²⁵ The fact that God creates the intellect

¹²³ *Ibid.* Ad octavum dicendum, quod etiam quando aliquid videtur per similitudinem alterius rei, potest contingere quod videns rem per medium, cogitet de re immediate sine hoc quod eius cognitio convertatur ad aliquam aliam rem; quia in illud medium non convertitur ut est res quaedam, sed ut imago illius rei quae per ipsam cognoscitur. Idem autem est motus intellectus in imaginem in quantum est imago, et in imaginatum; quamvis alius motus sit intellectus in imaginem in quantum est res quaedam, et in id cuius est imago; et ideo, quando per similitudinem creaturae quam intellectus habet penes se, non convertitur in creaturam ut est res quaedam, sed solum ut est similitudo rei, tunc immediate de Deo cogitat, quamvis non immediate Deum videat.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* Ad nonum dicendum, quod, sicut dicit glossa super illud *Psalm.* 11: diminutae sunt veritates etc., ab una veritate increata resultant multae veritates in animabus nostris, sicut ab una facie similitudines multae in speculo fracto, sive in multis speculis; et haec veritas in intellectu nostro resultans primo et principaliter consistit in primis principiis per se notis; et ideo quando per ea de omnibus aliis iudicamus, nostrum iudicium est secundum primam veritatem, cuius est dictorum principiorum veritas similitudo.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Ad decimum dicendum, quod dupliciter cognoscitur aliquid ab altero. Uno modo sicut ex cuius cognitione devenitur in cognitionem alterius; et sic illud quo cognoscitur, est magis notum, ut principia conclusionibus. Alio modo sicut perficiens cognoscentem ad cognoscendum; sive sit forma, sicut species lapidis in oculo perficit oculum ad videndum; sive principium

directly, without using another creature as an instrument, does not imply that the intellect may not require the means of a created form to be able to contemplate the essence of God. In fact, grace can be considered such a means, which enables the intellect for a perfect knowledge of God.¹²⁶

Regarding the possibility of a science of God, Aquinas adduces the authorities of Ibn Bājjā and Averroes, who give opposing answers.¹²⁷ In his answer, Thomas states that no human science can give a perfect knowledge of the divine essence in this life. Any science produces a likeness of the objects examined in the intellect, and in the case of the knowledge of spiritual beings and specially of God, these likenesses give more information about what the object is not than about what the object is.¹²⁸ However, Aquinas does not say that it is not possible to have any scientific knowledge of God but that the knowledge provided by the divine science is not perfect. The last argument concludes that as

effectivum huius formae, sicut dicitur quod oculus videt per solem; et hoc modo id quo aliquid cognoscitur, non oportet quod sit magis notum, immo possibile est quod non cognoscatur; cognoscitur enim per quamdam inflexionem intellectus ab objecto cognoscibili in id quod erat cognitionis principium. Sic autem in Deo omnia cognoscimus; et ideo ratio non sequitur.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* Ad undecimum dicendum, quod verbum Augustini intelligendum est quantum ad hoc quod nulla creatura interponitur inter mentem nostram et Deum, qua mediante mens nostra a Deo procedat in esse, vel qua mediante formetur per gratiam vel per gloriam, sicut efficiente medio. Nihil tamen prohibet quin aliqua forma creata mediante mens nostra a Deo formetur, sicut gratiae vel caritatis habitus; et sic per speciem creatam formatur mens viatoris ad videndum Deum.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* Ad duodecimum dicendum, quod Avempace posuit quod intelligere essentias separatarum substantiarum poterat provenire homini per scientias speculativas, quas in hac vita addiscimus. Sed hanc positionem improbat Commentator in 3 *De anima* ex hoc quod adhuc non sunt inventa aliqua principia quibus ad hoc perveniri possit; quod non videtur esse probabile, si ad hoc per principia scientiarum speculativarum perveniri posset; et praecipue cum omnis humana cognitio ad illam ordinetur; non enim esset probabile quod species humana deficeret a perfectione naturali totaliter.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* Et ideo dicendum, quod praedicta positio impossibilis est; cuius ratio est, quia scientiae speculativae procedunt ex principiis per se notis, quae a sensu accipiuntur, ut dicitur in 2 Posteriorum; et ideo per illa non possumus devenire in essentias illarum rerum quae omnes formas sensibiles excedunt; unde per nullam scientiam speculativam quam nunc acquirimus, scimus quid est Deus, vel quid est angelus, nisi sub quibusdam similitudinibus, magis cognoscentes de eis quid non sunt quam quid sunt; et propter hoc dicit Philosophus in principio Metaph. quod scientia de Deo non est humana possessio, quia scilicet eam ad plenum habere non possumus.

long as the knowledge of the intellect is channeled through the bodily senses, as happens *in statu viae*, it definitely cannot directly contemplate the divine essence.¹²⁹

Summarizing, Aquinas' background interest in his references to Maimonides on the role of faith and prophecy is to clarify the tension between the possibility of a natural knowledge of God in this life and that of a perfect knowledge of the essence of God in the afterlife. Both poles of the question are masterfully brought together and answered briefly in the *Quaestio de attributis*.

Aquinas finds support in the *Guide* to define the limits of the knowledge of God *in via* and for his examinations of the role of faith and prophecy as extraordinary experiences that overcome these limits. *Guide* I, 34 provides the Five Causes that explain the difficulty in apprehending sublime or difficult matters, and Aquinas finds in them an answer to the question for the need for faith in some things that are also attainable by human reason. Faith would make the knowledge of God available to all regardless of their personal, temporary or permanent, limitations.

The texts examined do not provide any real dialogue between the two philosophers on the nature of faith. In fact, an inquiry about it is foreign to Maimonides' stated purpose of enumerating the reasons for the difficulty of grasping philosophical issues, and Aquinas examines the inherent intellectual limitation that Maimonides defines in order to answer the question of the possibility of the apprehension of God's essence, both in this life and in the other. However, the completed analysis of the references allow for the following remarks.

It has been asserted that Aquinas subscribes to the doctrine of the divine attributes despite his natural inclination to agree with Maimonides' extreme interpretation of negative theology, because of his belief in the Incarnation.¹³⁰ Evidently, faith has a

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* Ad tertiumdecimum dicendum, quod corpus non potest esse corruptibile nisi quando anima non plene corpori dominatur. Si enim plene ei dominaretur, suam incorruptionem ei conferret; et ideo in statu corruptionis oportet quod anima cognoscat secundum exigentiam corporis, scilicet accipiendo a sensibus. Tali autem modo cognitionis Deus per essentiam videri non potest, ut ex dictis patet, et secundum hoc status corruptionis repugnat visioni Dei per essentiam.

¹³⁰ Cf. I. Leibowitz, Intro. to A. Wohlman, *Maimonide et Thomas d'Aquin, un dialogue impossible*.

leading role in the reflection of Aquinas as it has for Maimonides. However, in Aquinas' view faith does not falsify the conclusions. Accordingly, the background of the distinction between *in via* and *in patria* is the belief in the direct contemplation of the essence of God in the afterlife, but the explanations are strictly rational. If the knowledge of God by a created intellect is possible *in patria* as faith implies, that possibility should be acknowledged or at least not denied by the natural operations of the intellect *in via*. If the examination of the intellect and its operations in this life does not provide any hint of openness to that possibility, it will be difficult to maintain the assertion of a direct knowledge of God in heaven. Faith fills for Aquinas the vacuum of that knowledge in this life. For Maimonides, it does so until the person reaches the state of perfect knowledge, without saying when that will take place. He acknowledges the two stages but does not attempt to explain the articulation between faith and reason, whereas in Aquinas' view, reason is the natural foundation for any human knowledge, even that based on faith.

Chapter 5 reviews Aquinas' last reference to Maimonides related to the issue of the knowledge of God, found in *Guide II*, 17. This text illustrates Maimonides' original contribution to the historical discussion on the proofs for the demonstration of the existence of God, that of isolating from it the postulate of the creation of the world in time.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The *Quaestio de attributis* contains Aquinas' position on the possibility of the knowledge and naming of the divine essence in this life through the apprehension of the divine attributes, as reflected in the created perfections of the physical world, and his critique of Maimonides on this issue. It also contains an excursus on the related problem of the knowledge of God in the world to come, a common interest for both authors expressed in their shared source, *Zech.* 14, 9. Aquinas' parallel references to Maimonides in this context reveal a recurrent attempt to define the boundaries of the human intellect and its extent in the different stages of development, a central issue in the *Guide*. Aquinas does not agree with Maimonides in all the answers to these questions, but both share the common interest and the former makes significant use of the latter's teachings.

The issue of a demonstration of the existence of God, although related to the thematic frame of this research, goes beyond its scope since it does not belong to the concern that inspired the composition of the *Quaestio de attributis*. However, its examination in the light of the findings of the previous chapters is relevant because it completes the picture of the positions of these two authors on the possibility and extent of the apprehension of God.

I will argue here two points. First, Maimonides' explicit contributions to Aquinas' position on the knowledge of the existence of God are the isolation of the problem of the creation of the world in time from the historical discussion on the issue, and his emphasis on the role of faith for strengthening that knowledge. Second, his omission of Maimonides' name from his two versions of the Five Ways hints at the fact that Aquinas did not consider Maimonides' Speculations for the demonstration of the existence of God as precedents of his Ways. This reluctance, despite the formal parallelism between the Speculations and the Ways, can be explained by the authors' dissimilar methods in investigating the knowledge of God as set out by Aquinas in the *Quaestio de attributis*. I intend to show that Aquinas' critique, in the *Quaestio*, of

Maimonides' inverted notion of causality with its consequences for the latter's onto-gnoseological system lies also at the basis of their differences of approach to a demonstration of the existence of God.

Accordingly, the chapter is divided into two sections: the first focuses on Aquinas' references to Maimonides on the role of the belief in the creation of the world in time for a demonstration of the existence of God. The second examines the similarities and differences in each author's methods for such demonstration and the extent of Maimonides' presence in Aquinas' doctrine on the issue.

1. *The Philosophical Questions that Have no Answer*

In keeping with one of the central convictions of the *Guide*, Maimonides stresses again and again the fact of the intellect's limits and the need to preserve them, while not trespassing its boundaries so as not to endanger the adherence to the truths of faith. We have already seen, in view of Aquinas' explicit references to him, that this aspect of his doctrine is essential for the study of his influence in Aquinas' works.

Chapter 4 referred to Maimonides' Five Reasons that make it difficult for some individuals to grasp certain sublime philosophical questions. They are temporary limitations even though they may become permanent for some, and are not necessarily applied to all. We have seen how Aquinas incorporates that passage of the *Guide* into his own explanation of the issue. This section examines a text from the *Guide* also singled out by Aquinas that stresses these limits from another point of view. On this occasion, Maimonides observes that there are also some issues that the human intellect is unable to grasp due to its inherent limitations and the nature of the question. These are philosophical questions that have no answer, and Maimonides includes among them that of the origin of the world. Aquinas adopts this explanation, and sheds new light on this example in the context of his other references to Maimonides related to the problem of the knowledge of God and the stages of development of the intellect. I will first examine Maimonides' text and then Aquinas' two references to it.¹

¹ Cf. Appendix III for the edited Latin text of the *Guide*.

(a) Maimonides' Guide II, 17

Maimonides declares that human reason cannot answer all questions and warns of the danger of trespassing the intellect's natural boundaries. One of these questions is, in his opinion, that of the existence of the world from all eternity. Aristotle had supported this as a most probable truth in keeping with his own metaphysical conception of the universe. He had inferred the eternity of the world from the apparent perpetual circular motion of the spheres.² After him, Muslim theologians considered that Aristotle's suggestion endangered the belief in the existence of God and thought that they could rely only on a demonstration of the creation of the world in time in order to prove the existence of God. Maimonides devotes several chapters to prove that their efforts were useless.³ He likewise examines Aristotle's reasons for advocating the eternity of the universe, and collates them with the opinions of other philosophers who maintained the opposite in keeping with the revelation contained in Holy Scripture.⁴ He notes that, when examining these questions, one must beware of being influenced by some individuals' opinion or belief, or by the acceptance of reasons foreign to a proper demonstration.⁵

Finally, *Guide II, 17* presents Maimonides' position on the issue, calling attention to the fact that we cannot infer an answer to certain philosophical matters from the current state of affairs in the universe.⁶ Maimonides illustrates this observation with the following example:

Assume, according to an example I have made, that a man of a most perfect natural disposition was born and that his mother died after she had suckled him for several months. And the man, alone in an isolated

² Cf. *Guide II*, Intro. (240).

³ *Ibid.* I, 71-76.

⁴ *Ibid.* II, Intro-5; II, 13-16.

⁵ *Ibid.* II, 16, 294: "After I have made it clear that what we maintain is possible, I shall begin to make it prevail likewise, by means of speculative proof, over any other affirmations; I refer to my making prevail the assertion of creation in time over the assertion of eternity. I shall make it clear that just as a certain disgrace attaches to us because of the belief in the creation in time, an even greater disgrace attaches to the belief in eternity." Cf. *Dux*, II, XVII, fol. XLVIIIr.

⁶ *Ibid.* II, 17, 294-295: "In the case of everything produced in time, which is generated after not having existed — even in those cases in which the matter of the thing was already existent and in the course of the production of the thing had merely put off one and put on another form — the nature of that particular

island, took upon himself the entire upbringing of him who was born, until he grew up, became intelligent, and acquired knowledge. Now this child had never seen a woman or a female of one of the species of the other animals. Accordingly he puts a question, saying to the man who is with him: How did we come to exist, and in what way were we generated? Thereupon the man to whom the question was put replied: Every individual among us was generated in the belly of an individual belonging like us to our species, an individual who is female and has such and such a form. Every individual — being small in body within the belly, was moved and fed there, and grew up little by little being alive — until it reached such and such limit in size. Thereupon an opening was opened up for him in the lower part of the body, from which he issued and came forth. Thereupon he does not cease growing until he becomes such as you see that we are. Now the orphaned child must of necessity put the question: Did every individual among us — when he is little, contained within a belly, but alive and moving and growing — did he eat, drink, breathe through the mouth and nose, produce excrements? He is answered: No. Thereupon he indubitably will hasten to set this down as a lie and will produce a demonstration that all these true statements are impossible, drawing inferences from perfect beings that have achieved stability.⁷

Maimonides concludes that the belief in the generation of the world in a certain manner and its coming to be in a certain state from another state does not contradict the data of the senses or philosophical reasoning, because the information that we have about that issue is not enough to draw philosophical inferences and reach a conclusive position. Therefore, Aristotle can be contradicted on this point because his explanations are a mere opinion, although Maimonides regards his position as reasonable given the difficulty of the matter and the fact that there is no decisive proof of either his answer or the opposite.⁸

thing after it has been produced in time, has attained its final state, and achieved stability, is different from its nature when it is being generated and is beginning to pass from potency to act. It is also different from the nature the thing had before it had moved so as to pass from potency to act. ... No inference can be drawn in any respect from the nature of a thing after it has been generated, has attained its final state, and has achieved stability in its most perfect state, to the state of that thing while it moved toward being generated. Nor can an inference be drawn from the state of the thing while it moves toward being generated to its state before it begins to move.”

⁷ *Ibid.* 295.

⁸ *Ibid.* 296: “Consider this example and reflect upon it, you who are engaged in speculation, and you shall find that this is exactly our position with regard to Aristotle. For we, the community of the followers of Moses our Master and

(b) Guide II, 17 in the Works of Aquinas

The Latin translation of this chapter presents no difficulties, and is fairly faithful to the original Maimonidean text:

Assume an example that I propose: A man of a most perfect natural disposition was born and his mother died after she had suckled him for several months. Some took upon themselves the entire upbringing of him who was born in an isolated island where nobody went, until he grew up, became intelligent, and acquired knowledge. Now this child had never seen a woman or a female of any other species. Accordingly he puts a question, saying to one of his assistants: How did we come to be, and in what way were we created? Thereupon the assistant replied: Every individual man was generated in the belly of another individual belonging to our species, who is called female and has such and such a form, and the individual, while it is in the belly, is small in body, moves and is fed there, and grows up little by little, and is alive, until it reaches such and such defined quantity. Thereupon an opening was opened up for him in the lower part of the body, from which he issued and came forth. Thereupon he grows until he becomes such as you see. Now the orphan put the question immediately: Did this individual of our species, when he was contained within the mother's belly, live and move and grow, did he eat, drink breathe through the mouth and nose, and produce excrements? He was answered: No. Thereupon he indubitably will hasten to contradict this answer and produce a demonstration that all these true statements are impossible, drawing his inference from the perfect being.⁹

Aquinas' references to this chapter of the *Guide* are located in two works: *In II Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5 and *In Symbolum Apostolorum, scilicet credo in Deum expositio* a. 1. The fact that the first was composed at the beginning of his career and the second in 1273, that is one year before his death, points to a consistency in his use and interpretation of Maimonides' example. Surprisingly, he does not mention this passage in *De aeternitate mundi*, composed in 1271, despite the evident connection with the topic.

Abraham our Father, may peace be on them, believe that the world was generated in such and such manner. ... Aristotle, on the other hand, begins to contradict us and to bring forward against us proofs based on the nature of what exists, a nature that has attained stability, is perfect, and has achieved actuality. As for us, we declare against him that this nature, after it has achieved stability and perfection, does not resemble in anything the state it was in while in the state of being generated, and that it was brought into existence from absolute nonexistence."

⁹ *Dux*, II, XVIII, fol. XLIXr. Cf. Appendix III for the full Latin text.

The first reference follows Maimonides closely in context and language. The second is also used for the same purpose as the original and it gives a shorter account of the story.

In II Sent. d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, Resp.

This reference is located in the answer to the question “Whether the world is eternal.” Aquinas maintains the same position as Maimonides on this issue and shares his opinion that Aristotle never considered his own answer to the question a demonstration, *stricto sensu*, of the eternity of the world. He retains the context of Maimonides’ explanations in the *Guide* and offers a precise summary of Aristotle’s method of explaining his view and of Maimonides’ argument:

I say that there are no demonstrations for either side, but only probable or sophistic reasons for each one. And this is what the Philosopher means when he says that there are some problems concerning which we cannot reason, such as whether the world is eternal. Therefore he never tried to demonstrate it, and this is deduced from his method: whenever he deals with this issue, he always adds some conviction from the opinion of many or from reason, that in no way suits a demonstrator. The reason why it cannot be demonstrated is as follows: that the nature of things changes depending on their being in their perfect state or in the beginning of their being produced, when they come forth from their cause, as for instance one nature is that of a man already born and another when he is still in the mother’s womb. Hence anyone trying to prove from the conditions of a born and grown up man his conditions when he is still an imperfect being in the mother’s womb will be misled. As **Rabbi Moses** tells of a certain child who, his mother having died when he was a few months old and being raised in a certain lonely island, when he reached the years of discretion asked someone if men were generated and how. After he explained the process of human birth, the child objected to him that this was impossible, asserting that if man does not breathe and eat, and if he does not expel the excrements, he cannot live for one single day; likewise he cannot live in the mother’s womb for nine months. Accordingly also the ones who want to demonstrate from the generation of things in an already accomplished world the necessity or the impossibility of the world’s beginning err, because whatever comes to be now is originated from movement, and therefore the mover is prior in time. It must be prior in nature and there must be contraries, but all these things are not necessary for the issuing of all beings from God.¹⁰

¹⁰ *In II Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5: Dico ergo, quod ad neutram partem sunt demonstrationes, sed probabiles vel sophisticæ rationes ad utrumque. Et hoc significant

Following Maimonides, Aquinas attributes to Aristotle a straight rejection of the possibility of demonstrating the eternity of the world. Then he points to Maimonides' distinction between the nature of a thing in its making and that of the same thing after it has reached its perfect state, and summarizes his example of the child in an island in order to illustrate the difference between the already accomplished world and its beginnings. He does not depart from Maimonides' original intention when writing that passage and does not add anything new to its interpretation.

In Symbolum Apostolorum, a. 1

The next reference is found after the question about the beginning of the world in Aquinas' *Commentary on the Creed of the Apostles*. The explanation begins with an apology for the need of faith and gives four reasons for it, namely, that through faith the soul unites with God; with faith begins for the believer eternal life, which is to know God; faith governs the present life; and with faith it is possible to overcome temptations. Then, he addresses several issues in connection with the Creed's first article, which deals with the uniqueness of God and His condition as the Creator of heaven and earth. Among the number of errors

verba philosophi dicentis quod sunt quaedam problemata de quibus rationem non habemus, ut utrum mundus sit aeternus; unde hoc ipse demonstrare nunquam intendit: quod patet ex suo modo procedendi; quia ubicumque hanc quaestionem pertractat, semper adjungit aliquam persuasionem vel ex opinione plurium, vel approbatione rationum, quod nullo modo ad demonstratorem pertinet. Causa autem quare demonstrari non potest, est ista, quia natura rei variatur secundum quod est in esse perfecto, et secundum quod est in primo suo fieri, secundum quod exit a causa; sicut alia natura est hominis jam nati, et ejus secundum quod est adhuc in materno utero. Unde si quis ex conditionibus hominis nati et perfecti vellet argumentari de conditionibus ejus secundum quod est imperfectus in utero matris existens, deciperetur; sicut narrat Rabbi Moyses, de quodam puero, qui mortua matre, cum esset paucorum mensium, et nutritus fuisset in quadam insula solitaria, perveniens ad annos discretionis, quaesivit a quodam, an homines essent facti, et quomodo; cui cum exponerent ordinem nativitatis humanae, objecit puer hoc esse impossibile, asserens, quia homo nisi respiret et comedat, et superflua expellat, nec per unum diem vivere potest; unde nec in utero matris per novem menses vivere potest. Similiter errant qui ex modo fiendi res in mundo jam perfecto volunt necessitatem vel impossibilitatem inceptions mundi ostendere: quia quod nunc incipit esse, incipit per motum; unde oportet quod movens praecedat duratione: oportet etiam quod praecedat natura, et quod sint contrarietates, et haec omnia non sunt necessaria in progressu universi esse a Deo.

related to this article, he mentions the belief that the world is eternal, in the following terms:

The second is the error of the ones who say that the world is eternal. Of this position Peter said in II *Petr.* III, 4: 'Since the fathers died, everything continues as since the beginning of creation.' And these were led to this position because they did not know how to consider the beginning of the world. Hence, as **Rabbi Moses** says, the same happens to them as happens to a child who, if immediately after birth were put on an island and never saw a pregnant woman nor a baby being born, and was told when he had grown up how man was conceived, carried in a womb, and born, he would not believe any of the things he had been told, because it would seem impossible to him that a man could be in the mother's womb. Likewise these, considering the present state of the world, do not believe that it began.¹¹

On this occasion Aquinas' reference to the story is much shorter. Maimonides intended the story of *Guide* II, 17 to support the fact that there are certain philosophical questions that are far beyond the reach of a created intellect, the issue of the beginning of the world being one of them. There are things — he suggests — that we will never be able to answer since we cannot see further back than our own beginnings and we have never seen another world being created so as to explain how it takes place. Aquinas stresses the fact that the creation of the world in time is strictly a matter of faith but that it is not reasonable on the part of the non-believers to conclude that the world is eternal from its present state. His explicit reading of Maimonides' example goes no further than the above.

However something else can be added in light of Aquinas' use of the Five Causes examined in Chapter 4. These causes indicated to him the intellect's limitation in this life and the fact that we cannot know what is beyond the end of time on earth. It was nevertheless shown that this is no reason to reject the possibility

¹¹ *In Symbolum apostolorum*, a. 1: Secundus est error ponentium mundum ab aeterno: secundum quem modum loquitur Petrus dicens (II *Petr.* 3, 4): 'ex quo patres dormierunt, omnia sic perseverant ab initio creaturae. Et isti ducti sunt ad hanc positionem, quia nescierunt considerare principium mundi. Unde, sicut Rabbi Moyses dicit, istis contingit sicut puero, qui si statim cum nascitur, poneretur in insula, et nunquam videret mulierem praegnantem, nec puerum nasci, et diceretur isti puero, quando magnus esset, qualiter homo concipitur, portatur in utero, et nascitur; nulli crederet sibi dicenti, quia impossibile sibi videretur quod homo posset esse in utero matris. Sic isti considerantes statum mundi praesentem, non credunt quod inceperit.

of the direct contemplation of God by the created intellects, which is supported by faith. Now he finds in *Guide* II, 17 another reference to the gradual development of human nature, this time indicating the limitations entailed in apprehending the world's very beginnings.

This text is consistent with Aquinas' defense of the possibility of the direct knowledge of God in the afterlife, in accord with his interpretation of *Zechariah* 14, 9 in the *Quaestio de attributis* and in its parallel texts. The intellect in its current state must count on the data of faith for both its beginnings and its final end.

Moreover, Aquinas agrees with Maimonides in that the issue of the beginnings of the world must be extricated from the traditional demonstrations of the existence of God, and this agreement paves the way for a joint approach to the proofs from a new perspective. The next section will attempt to delimit the extent of such agreement on the matter of the method for demonstrating the existence of God.

2. *The Knowledge of the Existence of God*

Several studies have examined thoroughly the similarities and differences between Maimonides' Four Philosophical Speculations for the existence of God contained in *Guide* II, 1 and Aquinas' Five Ways.¹² The previous chapters of this study have brought to light key differences of method in the two authors' approach to the problem of the knowledge of God, specially their understanding of the principle of causality and the role of the notions of equivocality and analogy, with Aquinas' preference for the Dionysian triple way of causality, removal or negation, and eminence. Since these notions lie also at the roots of Aquinas' Five Ways for the knowledge of the existence of God, it is opportune to reexamine their methods in order to define the extent of the influence of the *Guide* on Aquinas' thought on the matter.

I devote this section's first subsection to the texts that introduce Maimonides' Four Speculations and describe his method. These texts reveal his differences with Aquinas' approach. The second subsection focuses on Aquinas' explanations of the method

¹² Cf. A. Wohlman, *Thomas d'Aquin et Maïmonide. Un dialogue exemplaire*, 51-79.

at the basis of his Five Ways in early works and writings contemporary with the *Quaestio de attributis*. Finally, the third proposes an answer to the question of Maimonides' place in the Five Ways in light of Aquinas' explicit references to him on the issue of the knowledge of the existence of God and of all the above.¹³

(a) *Maimonides' Method for Demonstrating the Existence of God*

Maimonides' proofs are set in the context of his critique of the methods of the Kalam. He devotes 40 chapters to the issue, including the Kalamic doctrines and their critique of Aristotle, Aristotle's doctrine, Maimonides' own interpretation of it, and his personal position.¹⁴

Maimonides severely criticizes the proofs of the Muslim dialectical theologians, who considered the demonstration of the creation of the world after nonexistence as a *conditio sine qua non* to counter the pagan philosophers' denial of the existence of God. In their view, once this truth was established as a necessary premise, the existence of the Creator was granted. He rejects the Kalamic demonstrations as inconclusive and for including propositions that are contrary to the laws of nature, and declares his intention to make a proper use of the Science of Logic in order to work out a true proof for the existence of God. The departure point for his critique of these arguments is the assertion that, due to the intellect's limitation, there is no answer to the question about the origins of the world:

Everyone who engages in speculation, who is perceptive, and who has acquired true knowledge of reality and does not deceive himself, knows that with regard to this question — namely the eternity of the world or its temporal creation — no cogent demonstration can be reached and that it is a point before which the intellect stops.¹⁵

In fact — he claims — if this issue is not subject to demonstration and the demonstration of the existence of the Creator relies on it, the whole argument is jeopardized:

¹³ For the Latin text of the chapters of the *Guide* devoted to Maimonides' propositions and Philosophical Speculations, cf. Appendix III.

¹⁴ *Guide*, I, 68-69 and 71-76; II, Intro-31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* I, 71, 180.

How can we take the doctrine of the temporal creation of the world as a premise upon which we establish the existence of the deity? For in that case the existence of the deity would be doubtful. One would have to say that if the world were created in time, there would be a deity; and if it were eternal, there would be no deity in existence.¹⁶

Maimonides proposes a different method, with peculiar characteristics:

The correct way, which is the method of demonstration about which there can be no doubt, is to establish the existence and oneness of the deity and the negation of corporeality through the methods of the philosophers, which methods are founded upon the eternity of the world. This is not because I believe in the eternity of the world or because I concede this point to the philosophers; but because it is through this method that the demonstration becomes valid and perfect certainty is obtained. ... All this without making a judgement upon the world's being eternal or created in time.¹⁷

That is, neither creation in time nor the eternity of the world can be proved, and therefore they do not constitute a valid premise in order to conclude that God exists. Maimonides will adopt the theory of the eternity of the universe as a hypothesis that in fact he does not accept on the grounds of his faith in the creation of the world, but that will enable him to prove the existence, unity, and incorporeity of God based on Aristotle's own doctrine, all this to prove that the belief in the eternity of the world does not endanger that knowledge.

In fact, he opens the chapters dedicated to his interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the existence of a First Mover with a list of 25 propositions dealing with the experience of motion, change, act and potency, and related notions. He asserts that all these propositions:

Have been given demonstrations as to which no doubt is possible. With regard to some of them, this has been done in the Book of *Physics* and its commentaries; with regard to others, in the Book of *Metaphysics* and its commentary.¹⁸

Then he adds a last one, to which he gives a separate status:

I shall add to the premises mentioned before, one further premise that affirms as necessary the eternity of the world. Aristotle deemed it

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 180-181.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* II, Intro. 239.

to be correct and the most fitting to be believed. We shall grant him this premise by way of a hypothesis in order that the clarification of that which we intended to make clear should be achieved. This premise, which among them is the twenty-sixth, consists in Aristotle's statement that time and movement are eternal, perpetual, existing in actu.¹⁹

In fact, Aristotle had acknowledged the convenience of the existence of a First Mover as the universal cause of motion, and of a First Principle to answer the question about the foundation of the universe. The first one, as a Mover, should be inside the physical world and itself in constant movement. The second, as the universal Principle, should be eternal and outside that founded whole. According to him, the mistake of those who preceded him in the attempt to identify the First Principle of all was to consider the first causes as principles in an absolute way, not in a relative one. Thus, he writes: "Of those who speak about 'principle' and 'cause' no one has mentioned any principle ... but all evidently have some inkling of them, though only vaguely."²⁰ He concludes that it is most inadequate to consider any of the four causes that can be experienced in the physical world or even the four of them together as the foundation of all, because they explain neither the immaterial things nor themselves. In his opinion, true philosophy should deal primarily with the First Principle, which is the foundation of even the first causes in the physical world and it is not reduced to them.

The universe is, for the Philosopher, above all a founded whole. Therefore, the knowledge of the physical world constitutes the path for a true knowledge of that foundation of all or First Principle. But this, again, depends on a radical condition that constitutes a main axiom in Aristotle's philosophical system: that there exists a unique principle granting unity to all beings. The existence of God would explain that the physical reality that we know through the senses is a Cosmos, i.e., a founded and ordered totality.²¹ Aristotle follows this path for the knowledge of the foundation of all in his natural writings. In *Physics*, he

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Metaphysica* I, 988a, 21-24.

²¹ The Aristotelian conception of the universe as an organic Cosmos is well explicated by Maimonides in *Guide* I, 72, 113-119.

focuses on the experience of change in the world and its correlative notions: plurality, motion, time, and the causes of change. He finds in the universality of change in the physical world a starting point for the journey towards the First Principle.

But, first of all, where should we place that foundation in relation to the temporal existence of the founded whole? With this question, Aristotle points to a main *aporia* of the philosophical discourse on the First Principle, because the foundation can be placed either at the temporal beginnings of the universe — and not necessarily active any more — or as the actual foundation of physical reality. To answer this difficulty, Aristotle stresses in his proof for the existence of the First Mover the simultaneity of moved, motion, and mover. In *Physics* VII, he asserts that there can be no actual motion if we are to consider the causal chain of movement as a chain in time, i.e., as an actual fact — a particular movement — caused by a succession of past motions that would not be actual anymore. If we experience movement now and no movers that are at rest at a certain point can cause motion at that point, it means that there has to be an actual Mover, simultaneous to this actual motion of actual physical bodies. Nevertheless, he describes the motion of the First Mover as essential to it *ex hypothesi*.²² It is just a hypothetical fact that the First Mover is essentially in motion, and yet it is a crucial condition to his global conception of the structure of physical reality. If the chain of movement were a chain in time, we would be placing the First Mover in the past, and therefore not existent any longer or at least not necessarily so. A hypothetical First Mover eternally in motion is somehow that inkling of the First Principle that we can grasp by means of the knowledge of the physical world. It needs to have the main characteristics of a First Principle, namely, eternity because it is outside time, and essentiality, i.e., to be essentially moving. The answer to the question of the place of the First Mover in relation to the universe is: the First Mover has to be placed now, in full actuality regarding the universe itself. The simultaneity of moved, motion, and mover manifests this actuality predicated of the First Mover inside the physical world.

²² *Physica* I, 242a, 11.

Aristotle is aware enough that he is playing with two different ontological concepts: the First Mover as the universal cause of motion has to be itself in motion, and therefore belongs to the physical world. The First Principle, instead, is a metaphysical notion that responds to the question of the foundation of the universe, and therefore it must be itself outside that founded whole that is the physical universe. Both the First Mover and the First Principle are one in their own spheres, but there is a hierarchy in which the First Mover is far below the First Principle. There is an analogical relation between the two, as far as the First Principle is in fact the only First Mover but it is outside motion. Therefore, even the idea of a First Mover inside the physical world that Aristotle offers is far removed from a correct notion of the First Principle. The well-known dispute between the two Aristotelian commentators, Avicenna and Averroes, brings to light fully the problem of this ambiguity. Aristotle himself exhibits perplexity before this double use of the notion of First Mover. A little after explaining the advantage of that Mover being essentially in motion, he adds that “*ex hypothesi* the mover while causing motion is also itself in motion, and the motion of the moved and the motion of the mover must proceed simultaneously”.²³ Why should he reluctantly qualify by the term *ex hypothesi* a fact that he has already described as necessary among the physical causes of motion, if not because this time he is considering the validity of the term First Mover as applicable to the First Principle? In fact, the laws of the physical world have to be reconsidered if we turn to think in metaphysical terms. The First Principle cannot be in motion but it must be simultaneous to the moved, i.e., essentially actual and present to the founded whole. In short, we do not know whether the First Mover of any physical body is itself essentially in motion or not. We do not even know whether it is eternal or not. But we know that the foundation of all has to be essentially founding and essentially eternal. Therefore, it is not extraneous to the Aristotelian conception of the physical world to suggest, *ex hypothesi*, that the First Mover is essentially in motion and eternal. Physics leads us to conclude on the actuality of the First Principle, whereas Metaphysics suggests — without any logical necessity but congruently

²³ *Ibid.* 23-24.

— the hypothetical existence in the physical world of a perfect Mover in everlasting motion.²⁴

In this context, Maimonides' proposition 26 reads: "Time and motion are eternal, perpetual, existing in actu."²⁵ But he correctly rejects the interpretation according to which Aristotle would have considered this proposition as an axiom. After having asserted Aristotle's reluctance in establishing it as something more than a possibility, he adds his personal opinion:

To me it seems that the premise in question is possible — that is, neither necessary, as affirmed by the commentators of the writings of Aristotle, nor impossible, as is claimed by the Mutakallimun.²⁶

In the next chapter, Maimonides develops four arguments in favor of the existence of God based on these propositions, all of them using Aristotle as a point of reference and all of them leading to that ultimate cause or First Mover of the universe, on the basis of the hypothesis of the eternity of the universe:

All these are demonstrative methods of proving the existence of one deity, who is neither a body nor a force in a body, while believing at the same time in the eternity of the world.²⁷

Each demonstration deals with a universal experience in the physical world: motion, generation and corruption, necessary and contingent beings, and the pair, act and potency. His logical argument is as follows: given the hypothesis of the eternity of the universe and of its eternal movement, there must be a Mover with the characteristics of eternity and who is essentially moving. Therefore, the assumption of the eternity of the universe does not contradict the belief in the existence of God.

Maimonides' contribution to the Aristotelian theory of the First Principle is precisely the crossing of the invisible barrier between the physical proof of the First Mover and the metaphysical proof of the First Principle. For the application of these arguments to a demonstration of the existence of God, he relies on Aristotle's commentators.²⁸

²⁴ Cf. my "Maimonides' Proofs for the existence of God and their Aristotelian Background in the Guide of the Perplexed."

²⁵ *Guide*, II, Intro. 240.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 241.

²⁷ *Guide* II, 1, 249. Cf. *Dux*, II, II, fol. XLlr.

²⁸ For the history of the proofs among Jewish scholars, cf. H.A. Wolfson, "Notes on Proofs of the existence of God in Jewish Philosophy."

However, this method which is the setting for Maimonides' Speculations prompts some questions. For Aristotle, the eternity of time and motion is no more than a mere corollary of his own cosmological view. Why should Maimonides, then, need to transform it into a main axiom of a logical and indubitable proof for the existence of God? Maimonides asserts that he does not intend to convince anyone of the veracity of this premise and that he himself does not accept it, on the grounds of his own faith in the creation of the world in time. Still, he regards it as a necessary premise for what he calls his method of demonstrating the existence, unity, and incorporeity of God. How can he demonstrate as a proof "about which there can be no doubt" something which has as a necessary premise a fact that he himself acknowledges is uncertain?

First, by transforming Aristotle's corollary into the postulate that supports the whole proof, Maimonides is avoiding the *aporia* of the First Principle being confused with the First Mover, since the eternity of movement demands that its origin be outside the physical world and eternal itself. To him, this is the only acceptable description for the Creator of the universe.

Second, by establishing a postulate, that is a proposition whose opposite is equally possible, at the foundations of the argument, Maimonides transforms what was meant to be "a true and indubitable proof" into a scientific theory in the modern sense of the term: something that can be accepted as true only regarding certain parameters or system of propositions. If there was creation of the world in time, then no doubt there is a Creator. If the world is eternally moving, then it has a Mover that is essentially moving, incorporeal, one and eternal itself, namely, the divinity. This logical background enables him to achieve what is probably the most essential goal to him at least esoterically. He affirms that he grants Aristotle this axiom by way of a hypothesis "in order that the clarification of that which we intended to make clear should be achieved". What does he intend to make clear? Since he has denied the possibility of any positive knowledge of the divine essence, he looks for a correct expression of a demonstration of the existence of God that will be compatible with this assumption. In fact, he asserts that his proofs aim at establishing "the existence and oneness of the deity and the negation of corporeality". We have already seen in Chapter 2 that he understands the term

“oneness” and the negation of corporeality in God as negative terms. For a demonstration of the existence of God he also needs an argumentation that will reach the single positive conclusion that he admits: that God exists, without the adherence of any other affirmative knowledge of God that would “attach to His essence”. The way he does it follows the same pattern as his solution to the problem of the divine attributes and his peculiar notion of causality, which Aquinas analyzes in the *Quaestio de attributis*.

A third consequence of this strategy: Maimonides’ argument demonstrates that the Kalam’s departure point is wrong. In fact, rather than demonstrating the existence of God, this and the above seem to be the true clarifications of that which he intended to make clear.

These findings elucidate the reasons behind Maimonides’ peculiar redaction of the arguments for the existence of God, as follows.

In order to preserve the divine transcendence and deny any relation between God and creatures, Maimonides translates the ontological dimension of the language about God into logical categories. Consequently, negation becomes the end of the intellectual quest for God without relying on an ontological affirmation as demanded by the nature of negation. Likewise, the divine actions in the world become effectiveness, which is the existential version of being as the truth of a proposition. The appropriate expression of this approach would be that God exists because we perceive His effects in the world, and not the other way around. Now, with the same logic, Maimonides produces an argument for God based on a hypothesis, and as a consequence the argument is transformed into a theory, since the intellect reaches the same conclusion — the existence of God — in the two opposite cases. By doing this, by focusing on the truth of the proposition “God exists” and evading any reference to the reality of God’s existence, Maimonides achieves his goal of attaining the awareness of God’s existence without any other positive notion that would attach to the notion of God, but at the expense of confining the existence of God to the domain of an intellect cut off from any reference to reality.

These explanations introduce Maimonides’ Four Philosophical Speculations, which in the Latin version are also called “ways”. Both the name and the notions at the basis of each

argument — the experience of movement in the world, the distinction between contingent and necessary beings, and the role of act and potency — may have served as inspiration for Aquinas' own development, but the introduction of the Aristotelian corollary of the eternity of movement into the method as a key assumption probably caused Aquinas to reject them in principle as a suitable scheme for his own Five Ways.

If the above was not enough reason for his decision, there is something else that may have contributed to Aquinas' omission of the name of Maimonides while expounding his own Ways, namely, that his approach allows Maimonides to reject any participation of creatures in the divine perfection, since it is reduced to the logical domain:

If this is so, there is in Him no participation whatsoever.²⁹

Summarizing, in a bid to preserve the divine transcendence Maimonides puts a question mark on the possibility of grasping the existence of God from the real perfections found in creatures. The peculiar Maimonidean method for the knowledge of God jeopardizes in fact the articulation between the ontological and the gnoseological levels, and this explains well why Aquinas does not see in these arguments a seemly basis for his own five Ways.

(b) Aquinas' Method for Demonstrating the Existence of God

We have seen that Aquinas, like Maimonides, admits the limitations of the knowledge of God. In a text already cited, he writes:

Ens and being are said in a twofold manner, as Aristotle explains in Book V of the *Metaphysics*. Sometimes, it means the thing's essence or the act of being, whereas on other occasions it means the truth of the proposition, which can refer even to the things that are not, as when we say that there is blindness, because it is true that a man is blind. When the Damascene says that God's being is manifest to us, being should be understood in the second sense and not in the first one. In the first sense, God's being is identical with His substance. Since His substance is unknown to us, His being is likewise unknown. In the second sense, instead, we know that God exists, because we produce this proposition in our intellect from His effects.³⁰

²⁹ *Dux*, II, II, fol. XLv. Cf. *Guide*, II, 1, 249. Pines' translation reads: "Accordingly, nothing at all can be associated with the necessary of existence."

³⁰ *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 7, Resp.

Aquinas would agree in principle with Maimonides' conviction that the existence of God is a proposition that we produce in our intellect from His effects. However, he disagrees with him in asserting that the aforementioned effects provide abundant knowledge about God's being, apart from His existence. This is due to his understanding of the divine actions in terms of ontological causality, which is permeated by the idea of the creatures' participation in the cause's perfection. Without denying the role of being as the truth of a proposition, he gives primacy to its meaning as onto-transcendental being. In this sense, Maimonides had asserted that God can be called good only because He does good things or because His actions are similar to those of the good. Aquinas answers him in the *Quaestio de attributis* that, according to the principle of causality, the verification of the name "good" is in the fact that God *is* good, and this is what explains that He does good things, to the point that if God had not created or were to create anything, it would still be correct to apply to Him this notion. At the root of this correction is the nature of the principle of causality, which enables a certain apprehension of the cause from the effects.³¹ Contrary to Aquinas, Maimonides acknowledges only certain knowledge of the divine actions in the world as we apprehend them, without confirming whether they truly reflect God's being.

The *Quaestio* answers Maimonides' somewhat flawed epistemology and ontology, in which the boundaries between the laws of knowledge and those of reality are vague, by stressing the importance of being faithful to the hierarchy of these two levels:

God is named, manifested and praised according to the diverse perfections that He instills in creatures. However it is not because He instills them in creatures that the *rationes* of these perfections are truly applied to Him but rather the opposite, as we have said. Although the condition of the cause is apprehended through that of the effects it is not verified from theirs, but the other way around.³²

³¹ *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3: Non enim ex hoc quod bona facit, vel quia ad modum bonorum se habet, bonus est; sed quia bonus est, ideo bona facit, et alia participando ejus bonitatem ad modum ejus se habent. Unde si nullam creaturam fecisset nec facturus esset, ipse in se talis esset ut posset vere considerari secundum omnes istas conceptiones, quas habet nunc intellectus noster ipsum considerando.

³² *Ibid.* ad 1.

In absolute terms, first goes reality, then the laws of knowledge with their inherent limitations and the intellect's peculiar nature, diverse from that of the reality apprehended. This is true even in the case of the knowledge of God as cause of the world despite the fact that we grasp the cause from the knowledge of its effects. Aquinas focuses on God's nature as it can be grasped from the consideration of the created world by natural reason alone, whereas — as we have seen — Maimonides is interested rather in refuting the proofs of the Mutakallimun and proposing a method for stripping the notion of divine existence of any other positive knowledge about God's essence.

I will now review some of the texts that Aquinas devotes to explaining divine causality, in the period antecedent and contemporary with the *Quaestio de attributis*. They serve as an expanded introduction to his two versions of the Five Ways in *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa contra Gentiles*. His arguments' foundation is God as being and as the universal cause of being, and the method that he proposes in order to develop notions by analogy is the threefold Dionysian way of removal, causality, and eminence. This method achieves its highest goal in the Fourth Way, which demonstrates the existence of a supreme being, cause of the universe of beings.

Aquinas begins by defining the nature of the divine causality in the world. One of the first distinctions of Book 1 of the *Sentences* deals with the question: "Whether God is the being of all things."³³ In his answer, Aquinas explains in which sense can God be called the being of His creatures by distinguishing between an essential and a causal way of producing effects. God would be the being of His creatures not in an essential, but in a causal way. The divine being is the cause of the created world, and this is the only way it can be considered the "being of the world". Aquinas then explains the difference between three ways of being a causal agent: as an equivocal agent, a univocal one, or an analogical one. In the case of the equivocal agent, the effect has neither the name nor the *ratio* of the agent, like the sun and the heat. In the case of the univocal agent, both have the name and the *ratio* in common, like a human being proceeds from another, or heat causes heat. None of these cases is appropriate to God as the cause of the

³³ *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2.

world, since no creatures can be termed “god”, nor there is anything in the world that has the *ratio* of the divine nature. Therefore it is necessary to acknowledge a third kind of causality, that of an analogical agent, by which God’s wisdom makes us wise despite the tremendous deficiency of created wisdom in respect to the divine.³⁴ The difference between the uncreated and the created perfections is like the one between an essential and an accidental perfection. In Aquinas’ view, this conclusion is also coherent with the nature of the relations between God and creatures, since there is no parallel to the role of God in the created world. The inclusion of the causality of God in any other kind of causality belonging strictly to the relations between creatures would have showed a misleading notion of God himself.

The issue is reviewed towards the end of Book 1, where Aquinas examines the attribute of Science and explains again the threefold Dionysian way.³⁵

According to Dionysius we reach God from creatures through three ways: by removal, by causality, by eminence, each one of them leading us to the Science of God.³⁶

Aquinas indicates that these three ways are, at least from a theoretical point of view, alternative. They are substantially different, heterogeneous, and not three steps or phases of the same cognitive process. The first way, *per remotionem*, demands that since the First Cause and Principle of all is nonmaterial, any notion about God be stripped of connotations belonging to the material world.³⁷ The first way proceeds by removing every imperfection and potentiality from the names attributed to God.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Solutio: Sicut Deus sua sapientia facit nos sapientes, ita tamen quod sapientia nostra semper deficit a ratione sapientiae suae, sicut accidens a ratione entis, secundum quod est in substantia. Unde est tertius modus causae agentis analogice. Unde patet quod divinum esse producit esse creaturae in similitudine sui imperfecta: et ideo esse divinum dicitur esse omnium rerum, a quo omne esse creatum effective et exemplariter manat.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.* d. 35, q. 1.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.* Solutio: Secundum Dionysium tribus viis ex creaturis in Deum devenimus: scilicet per remotionem, per causalitatem, per eminentiam, quarum quaelibet nos in Dei scientiam inducit.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Cum a Deo omnis potentia et materialitas removeatur, eo quod ipse est actus primus et purus, oportet essentiam eius esse denudatam a materia, et esse formam tantum. Sicut autem particulationis principium est materia, ita formae debetur intelligibilitas: unde forma principium cognitionis est; unde oportet

If — Aquinas continues — God does not belong to the material world He must be spiritual, i.e., a form. Now a form can be either subsistent per se or a perfection inherent in a subject. But God is absolutely simple, not composed. Therefore He is a subsistent form, devoid of any determination. If we consider the nature and role of matter and form in the created world, it is manifest that the difference between them lies in matter being the principle of individuation and the form being the principle of intelligibility.³⁸ What distinguishes one creature from another is matter, whereas what enables them to be known, to be grasped by an intellect is what they are, their form. The form is conveyed in the definition or essence of a thing, and makes it possible for the cognizant subject to give it a name. If the form is perfect enough to be subsistent per se, it will be of an intellectual nature, i.e., an intellect. If the form is not subsistent but inherent in a subject (*quasi perfectio alicuius subsistentis*), it will be an operation, not a principle of operations. Since God is not a body, and He is subsistent per se because His being does not depend on anything external to Himself, then He is necessarily of an intellectual nature.

The second way is through the experience of causality and the discernment of an intention in every operation of an agent, expressed in the effects.³⁹ This way is also founded upon the experience of nature, whose laws in the world show that everything that happens in it is due to a purpose. This is only possible if the cause of the world is looking for an end in everything. Now, if the universal agent of the world were one of the things belonging to it, that would not explain the universality of things.

quod omnis forma per se existens separata a materia, sit intellectualis naturae: et si quidem sit per se subsistens, erit et intelligens: si autem non sit per se subsistens, sed quasi perfectio alicuius subsistentis, non erit intellectus sed principium intelligendi: quemadmodum omnis forma non in se subsistens non operatur sed est operationis principium, ut caliditas in igne. Cum igitur ipse Deus sit immunis ab omni materia, et sit per se subsistens, quia esse suum ab alio non dependet, oportet quod ipse sit intelligens et sciens.

³⁸ Aquinas expresses this in two different ways: "Formae debetur intelligibilitas", and "forma principium cognitionis est".

³⁹ *Ibid.* Omne agens habet aliquam intentionem et desiderium finis. Omne autem desiderium finis praecedit aliqua cognitio praestituens finem, et dirigens in finem ea quae sunt ad finem. Sed in quibusdam ista cognitio non est conjuncta tendenti in finem; unde oportet quod dirigatur per aliquod prius agens, sicut sagitta tendit in determinatum locum per determinationem sagittantis:

Besides, most of the things perceived in nature fulfill their operations out of necessity. Therefore, an external agent has predetermined their actions according to a purpose. The existence of an intention in the agent is another way to know that the agent is intelligent and wise, and that he acts out of free will.

The third way — Aquinas explains — is founded upon the intellectual capacity for producing eminent notions.⁴⁰ The experience of each perfection in the world is linked to the perception of their presence in diverse individuals according to different degrees. This gradation makes up a scale of perfections, in which each level is related to the others according to a more and a less. But a more and a less cannot be established unless there is a point of reference, a maximum of perfection, which is at the top of the scale. Moreover, it has to be external to it, in the sense that this point of reference does not have a peer among the multiplicity of beings. This scale, in the case of the intelligent beings in the world, will lead us to the knowledge of a First Principle who is intelligent above every created intellect. Obviously, anything removed from the divine being when producing the divine names is done following the way of eminence, and not as pointing to an imperfection or absence in Him. We attribute to Him a name taken from creatures, for we cannot do otherwise. The imperfection that we remove from the name by way of eminence is precisely the finite way in which the created perfection is realized in the world.

The *Respondeo* of article 2 elaborates on the knowledge attained through the experience of causality in the world and adds the experience of order in the universe that indicates the existence of an Intelligence.⁴¹ If every cause is known by its

et ita est in omnibus quae agunt per necessitatem naturae; quia horum operatio est determinata per intellectum aliquem instituentem naturam; unde, Philosophus dicit, quod opus naturae est opus intelligentiae. In aliquibus autem ista cognitio est conjuncta ipsi agenti, ut patet in animalibus; unde oportet quod primum non agat per necessitatem naturae, quia sic non esset primum, sed dirigeretur ab aliquo priori intelligente. Oportet igitur quod agat per intellectum et voluntatem; et ita, quod sit intelligens et sciens.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* Quod enim invenitur in pluribus magis ac magis secundum quod plures alicui appropinquant, oportet ut in illo maxime inveniatur; sicut calor in igne, ad quem quanto corpora mixta magis accedunt, calidiora sunt. Invenitur autem quod quanto aliqua magis accedunt ad primum, nobilium cognitionem participant, sicut homines plus quam bruta et angeli magis hominibus; unde oportet quod in Deo nobilissima cognitio inveniatur.

⁴¹ Cf. *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2.

effects, then there is something in common between the cause and the effect. If the essential cause of things also perfectly knows Himself, this cause should necessarily know in His own essence the nature and essence of every thing created.⁴² This will be the reasoning behind the Fifth Way.

Interestingly enough, he attributes here this argument to Maimonides, as follows. The principle of causality shows that any agent always acts with a purpose, as we experience final causes in the world. In the case of God as cause, everything has been created having as its end God himself. Therefore, it is coherent with the nature of the actions of an intelligent agent to know his own effects, for they have been made with a purpose in the agent's mind. Then he adds:

This is what **Rabbi Moses** interprets that David meant when he said in *Ps.* 93 (94), 9: 'He that formed the eye, shall he not see?' As if he said: is it possible that when God made the eye He did not take into account the eye's act, which is to see, and its object, which is the visible things?⁴³

Maimonides quotes this Psalm in *Guide* III, 19, one of the chapters devoted to the divine providence in the world.⁴⁴ He explains there that the experience of order in the world points to the divine knowledge of particulars, since everything shows a purpose in nature. It is easy to see in this explanation and its biblical source an early formulation of what will become Aquinas' Fifth Way. This is therefore the single Way in which he expressly agrees with Maimonides, though in a primitive version.

⁴² *Ibid.* Respondeo dicendum, quod ex secunda via quae supra, art. praeced., facta est, potest ostendi quod Deus non solum se, sed etiam alia cognoscit. Cum enim ea quae agunt ex necessitate naturae, naturaliter tendant in finem aliquem, oportet quod ab aliquo cognoscente ordinentur in finem illum. Hoc autem est impossibile, nisi ille cognoscens cognoscat rem illam et operationem ejus, et ad quod ordinatur; sicut faber non posset facere securim nisi cognosceret actum incisionis et ea quae incidenda sunt, ut materiam convenientem inveniatur, et formam imprimat; et ita oportet quod Deus cognoscat ea quae ad ipsum ordinantur: quia sicut esse ab ipso habent, ita et ordinem naturalem in finem.

⁴³ *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2: Unde Rabbi Moyses hanc rationem dicit intendisse David cum dixit *Psal.* 93, 9: 'Qui finxit oculum non considerat?' Quasi diceret: cum Deus oculum faceret, numquid ipse non consideravit actum oculi, qui est videre, et objectum ejus, quod est visibile particulare?

⁴⁴ *Guide* III, 19, 478.

The comparison between the nature of the intellect and that of vision allows Aquinas to elaborate on the nature of God as pure act, this being reflected in the nature of the created intellect.⁴⁵ According to this description, God knows His own essence, and knows things other than Himself. The nature of the created intellect consists of a form which, in the case of human beings, sometimes is in potency of knowledge, and sometimes is in act. While in potency of knowing other things, the human intellect is still endowed with a certain act: the act of being. This act has to be of an intellectual nature, and the knowledge it comprises is precisely the apprehension of itself. The “second intellect” would be the intellectual operation of becoming in act the form of the external thing which is apprehended. The intellect is therefore an appropriate example of the divine nature, because it does not introduce multiplicity in God, nor sullies the notion with bodily attributes.⁴⁶

In *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, Aquinas focuses again on the condition of God as cause of being and the difference between this universal causality and the causality experienced in the created world:

All created causes have in common one effect that is being, besides having each one its own particular effects, according to which they are distinguished. In fact, heat makes the warmth be, and the builder makes the house be. Thus, they all agree in causing being, but differ in that fire causes fire, and the builder causes the house. It must be therefore that there is a cause superior to all of them through which virtue they all cause being and whose proper effect is being. This cause is God.⁴⁷

Since being is the proper effect of God, it is possible to assert that being is the essence or nature of God.

⁴⁵ *In I Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2: Sciendum tamen est, quod intellectum dupliciter dicitur, sicut visum etiam. Est enim primum visum quod est ipsa species rei visibilis in potentia existens, quae est etiam perfectio videntis, et principium visionis, et medium lumen respectu visibilis: et est visum secundum, quod est ipsa res extra oculum. Similiter intellectum primum est ipsa rei similitudo, quae est in intellectu; et est intellectum secundum quod est ipsa res, quae per similitudinem illam intelligitur. Cf. the same example quoted in *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 3, Resp.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* the argument ends: Si ergo consideretur intellectum primum, nihil aliud intelligit Deus nisi se; quia non recipit species rerum, per quas cognoscat; sed per essentiam suam cognoscit, quae est similitudo omnium rerum. Sed si accipiatur intellectum secundum, sic non tantum se intelligit, sed etiam alia. Et secundum primum modum dicit Philosophus, quod Deus intelligit tantum se. Et per hoc patet de facili responsio ad objecta.

⁴⁷ *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, Resp.

He also defines the divine simplicity as another characteristic of the divine being reached by natural reason, which in fact preserves God's transcendence and goes hand in hand with His status as the universal cause of being.⁴⁸ The reasoning used in this text is very similar to that used by Maimonides for his First and Fourth Speculations. In the *Respondeo* of this question, Aquinas stresses that God should be considered Simple in every way and that he has reached this conclusion for three reasons.

The first reason is the fact that all beings originate in one single Being, whom we call God. This First Being is not like any of the beings perceived in the world in that the latter are sometimes found in act, sometimes in potency. Although in the change from potency to act, potency is prior in time to act, considered in itself, act is always prior. It is prior in nature because potency is the absence of act, and should be also prior in time because, in absolute terms, the act of being of every creature presupposes a being in act that is the origin of that act of being. An act cannot originate in potency, but becomes actual through a prior act. The act of creation is an absolute coming to be in which even potency comes to be, and this is due to the limitation of the created act. Therefore — Aquinas concludes — the Being that has caused all beings to become and that itself does not originate from another one must be the first in act, with no mixture of potency. If it were in some way in potency, another being prior to it would be needed through which the former would become actual. Since no being that is the first among all beings can have a mixture of potency, Aquinas concludes that the First Being is Pure Act. This uncreated act is simple, since in all composed beings either one of the parts is in potency in relation to the other or all the parts are potentially the whole.⁴⁹

The second reason for God to be Simple is that every composition is caused by the union of two or more elements in one

⁴⁸ Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid. Resp.*: In compositis enim vel unum eorum ex quibus est compositio est in potentia ad alterum, ut materia ad formam, subiectum ad accidens, genus ad differentiam; vel saltem omnes partes sunt in potentia ad totum. Nam partes ad materiam reducuntur, totum vero ad formam, ut patet in II *Physic.* Et sic nullum compositum potest esse actus primus. Ens autem primum, quod Deus est, oportet esse actum purum, ut ostensum est. Impossibile est ergo Deum compositum esse; unde oportet quod sit omnino simplex.

being. However, that unity does not explain itself, but requires a third element that causes the composition and on which that composite being depends. The third element which is the agent of composition in the world cannot be composite itself.

The third reason is that the first being on whom everything else depends has to be most perfect, since “the principles of being” cannot be imperfect. The most perfect is something that owns all goodness, and the presence of the utmost perfection excludes composition, since it excludes potency.

Therefore, the consideration of the Simplicity of God leads the intellect to acknowledge that the Creator is Pure Act, First Cause, and the summit of perfection.⁵⁰ It is the closest point to a “definition” of God, only lacking the rational apprehension of what these terms mean when attributed to the divine being. The term’s *ratio* remains the key element that legitimizes the discourse about God.

These are the elements of Aquinas’ method for the knowledge of the existence of God. They all rely on the fundamental principle of the natural articulation between reality, knowledge, and language, and on the first principles: causality and noncontradiction, which rule any intellectual apprehension. He will summarize all these aspects of the problem of the knowledge of God in the *Summa Theologiae* in the following terms:

I answer saying that there are two kinds of demonstration. One is through the cause and is called *propter quid*, which is prior simply. Other is through the effect and is called demonstration *quia*, being prior to us, because the effect of something is more manifest to us than its cause and we obtain through the effect the knowledge of the cause. Beginning from any effect it is possible to demonstrate the cause of its being, on condition that the effect be more evident to us, because since effects depend on a cause, given an effect it is necessary that its cause be preexistent. Therefore God’s existence, not being evident in itself for us, is demonstrable by His effects that are evident to us.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Most of the authorities that Aquinas cites in these conclusions are Greek philosophers: Aristotle, Pythagoras, and Leucippus.

⁵¹ *S. Theol.* I, q. 2, a. 2, Resp.: Respondeo dicendum quod duplex est demonstratio. Una quae est per causam, et dicitur propter quid, et haec est per priora simpliciter. Alia est per effectum, et dicitur demonstratio quia, et haec est per ea quae sunt priora quoad nos, cum enim effectus aliquis nobis est manifestior quam sua causa, per effectum procedimus ad cognitionem causae. Ex quolibet autem effectu potest demonstrari propriam causam eius esse (si tamen eius effectus sint magis noti quoad nos), quia, cum effectus dependeant a causa,posito effectu necesse est causam praexistere. Unde Deum esse, secundum quod non est per se notum quoad nos, demonstrabile est per effectus nobis notos.

Reality precedes knowledge in absolute terms and gives the cause an ontological priority, but the laws of knowledge impose a reversed order and lead to the existence of the cause from the effects. A demonstration gives us the existence of the cause *simpliciter*, but the articulation of reality and knowledge enables the apprehension of more about the cause than just its existence. The second objection had argued that, since the middle term of a demonstration is the thing's essence and we cannot know the divine essence but only what God is not, it is not possible to demonstrate the divine being. Consequently Aquinas responds:

It must be said that when the cause is demonstrated from its effect, it is necessary to use the effect in the place of the definition of the cause in order to prove the cause's existence. This is so especially regarding God, because in order to prove that something exists it is necessary to take as a middle term what the name means, not what is it, since the question "what is it" presupposes the question "whether it exists". The names given to God are taken from the effects. Hence that, after demonstrating God's existence from the effects, we can take as a middle term what the name "God" means.⁵²

Contrary to Maimonides, who had designed his *Speculations* as demonstrations of God's existence with no other positive notion attached to that of God, Aquinas conceives his arguments as Ways in the proper sense of the word, connecting the effects with their cause through five different routes that reach the reality of God from what can be grasped of it in its effects. The next and last subsection adduces the three last references to Maimonides relevant to this chapter, which confirm the assumption already examined in preceding ones. As in the case of the apprehension of God's nature in the afterlife, Maimonides' contribution to Aquinas' consideration of the apprehension of God's existence in this life is, according to Aquinas' own references, in stressing the role of faith for such apprehension.

⁵² *Ibid.* a. 2: Dicendum quod cum demonstratur causa per effectum, necesse est uti effectu loco definitionis causae, ad probandum causam esse, et hoc maxime contingit in Deo. Quia ad probandum aliquid esse, necesse est accipere pro medio quid significet nomen non autem quod quid est, quia quaestio quid est, sequitur ad quaestionem an est. Nomina autem Dei imponuntur ab effectibus, ut postea ostendetur, unde, demonstrando Deum esse per effectum, accipere possumus pro medio quid significet hoc nomen Deus.

(c) Maimonides' Place in Aquinas' Five Ways

As has been noted, Aquinas does not mention Maimonides' name when explaining his Five Ways for the apprehension of the existence of God. However Aquinas' use of Maimonides' *Guide II*, 17 examined in this chapter's first subsection outlines the role of faith in the consideration of the universe's beginnings, since for both of them the creation of the world in time cannot be demonstrated and therefore should be accepted as a matter of faith. Following are Aquinas' remaining references to Maimonides on the issue, which complete this aspect of Maimonides' presence in Aquinas' work. The central point of these references is Maimonides' assertion that the belief in the creation of the world in time strengthens the individual's capacity for the apprehension of the existence of God in this life.

In II Sent., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3

This article asks whether the creation of the angels is prior to the creation of the physical world. The second argument in favor of this thesis states that, since God did not want to create the world eternal so as to avoid making it too similar to Himself, the same should apply to the spiritual creatures, who should be clearly differentiated from the material ones. It would therefore not be fitting for angels to have in common with the material creatures the same beginning in time, since they would be too similar to the latter and would have their spiritual dignity lowered.⁵³ Aquinas answers that this is not a good comparison because the difference between God and the created beings lies in the relation of causality that exists between them and not just in His utmost perfection, as if God were simply the most perfect among all beings. The transcendence of God is preserved on the grounds that He is the cause of the world, and this places Him in a totally different position than any other being. In this context, Aquinas recalls Maimonides in the following terms:

God precedes the creature not only in dignity but also through causality, which can be seen from the beginning of the world because,

⁵³ *In II Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, arg. 2: Praeterea, creatura corporalis non aequiparatur spirituali sed ideo dicitur Deum noluisse mundum ab aeterno facere, ne mundus sibi aequiparari videretur. Ergo videtur quod nec creaturam corporalem simul cum spirituali facere debuerit.

as **Rabbi Moses** says, the assumption of the creation of the world in time is the easiest way to demonstrate the existence of God and the fact that everything proceeds from Him. And for this reason it was established in the Law to celebrate on the seventh day, when the world was finished, so that they would remain in the knowledge of God through the creation of the world.⁵⁴

Maimonides, then, had suggested that the way of acknowledging the existence of God and His being the cause of everything is to believe that the world is created, for that would entail the acknowledgment of the existence of the Creator. He further wrote, in *Guide*, III, 43, that the observance of the Sabbath day teaches this belief.

In his response to the question, Aquinas stresses the role of the divine freedom in the creation of the world and its creatures, and explains that there are many things that cannot be demonstrated because there is no logical inference that would necessarily reach such conclusions. One of these things, the origin of the world, is explained only as a result of the divine Will, and the details related to that origin are not available to reason alone. The Holy Scripture provides them and assent to it is an act of faith.⁵⁵ This explanation obviously recalls Maimonides' story of the child left on the lonely island that Aquinas had just cited in the previous distinction.

In II Sent., d. 15, q. 3, a. 3

Aquinas again mentions Maimonides and his explanation that some laws like keeping the Sabbath were established so as to

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* a. 2: Deus praecedit creaturam non solum dignitate, sed etiam causalitate, quam ostendit mundi inchoatio: quia, ut Rabbi Moyses dicit, facillima via ad ostendendum Deum esse, et ab ipso esse omnia, est ex suppositione novitatis mundi: et ideo statutum est in lege ut septimo die festum ducerent, in quo mundus consummatus est, ut per novitatem mundi semper in cognitione Dei permanerent. Sed spiritualis creatura excedit corporalem dignitate, non causalitate; quae ne credi causa ejus posset, congrue simul utraque facta est. Cf. *Guide*, III, 43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Resp.: Creatio rerum dependet ex voluntate creatoris, qui tunc et non prius res creare voluit; quae quia nobis nota non est, initium creationis rerum ratione investigare non possumus, sed fide tenemus, prout nobis traditum est per eos quibus divinam voluntatem revelatam credimus. Sciendum est ergo, quod circa inceptionem rerum, sancti convenientes in eo quod fidei est, scilicet quod nihil est ab aeterno praeter Deum, varia, ad minus quantum ad verborum superficiem, dixisse inveniuntur in his quae de necessitate fidei non sunt, in quibus licuit eis diversimode opinari, sicut et nobis.

strengthen the faith of the people in the truth of creation, with the purpose of easing the way for the knowledge of the existence of God the Creator.⁵⁶

Besides, as **Rabbi Moses** says, the keeping of the Sabbath was introduced in the Law so that the creation of the world would remain firmly established in the faith of the people, from which the easiest demonstration of the existence of God and of His omnipotence and so on can be drawn.

The two previous references reveal that Maimonides is expressly mentioned in Aquinas' teachings when the latter explains the role of the belief in the creation of the world, which supports and facilitates the acknowledgment of the existence of the Creator of the world. However, Aquinas does not make any explicit reference to Maimonides' proofs of the existence of God. The next and last text expounds and summarizes the elements that Aquinas does take into account when developing his own Ways as seen in the previous subsection. Eloquently, he only refers to Maimonides as an indirect source for one of the answers to the problem, with which Aquinas, by the way, does not agree.

De Veritate, q. 10, a. 12

Aquinas examines in this text the nature of the knowledge of the existence of God and mentions three possible answers to the question: Some, as Maimonides tells us, said that God's existence is neither evident nor demonstrable. In this case, the only way for man to know God would be through faith, the reason for this conclusion being — always according to Maimonides — the weakness of their arguments about the existence of God. Others, like Avicenna, asserted that God's being is not evident, but can be demonstrated by reason. The third opinion is heralded by St. Anselm, who said that the existence of God was evident in itself, as long as no one could possibly consider a nonexistent God.⁵⁷ What follows is, basically, the same introduction to the explanation of his Five Ways in their two versions.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* d. 15, q. 3, a. 3: Praeterea, ut dicit Rabbi Moyses observatio sabbati in lege fuit instituta, ut in fide populi firmiter permaneret novitas mundi, ex qua facillima probatio sumitur ad ostendendum Deum esse, et omnipotentiam ejus, et alia hujusmodi.

⁵⁷ Cf. *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 12, Resp: Dicendum, quod circa hanc quaestionem invenitur triplex opinio. Quidam enim, ut Rabbi Moyses narrat, dixerunt quod

Aquinas rejects outright the first position, stressing that philosophers have demonstrated the existence of God with “irrefutable demonstrations”, even if some have given worthless ones. He accepts the other two positions, but only after some clarifications on the nature of evidence and of the demonstrability of God. Then he explains that something can be evident in itself or evident for man. In the case of God, He is evident in Himself due to the necessity of His being. However, He is not evident to us for two reasons, the first being the weakness of man’s intellectual capacity in this life and the second is, that being, which is identical with the *ratio* of God, is not included in any *ratio* of a created being. Therefore we are constrained to demonstrate His existence from His effects.⁵⁸ In order to know something as evident in itself, the thing predicated should be contained in the *ratio* of the subject. One example of these self-evident notions is that the whole is greater than the part, as long as the notions of whole and part are known. Therefore, to know God as evident one would need to apprehend the *ratio* of God. For this reason there are also other things that are evident only to the learned, for they comprehend some notions that are unknown to the common people.⁵⁹ Aquinas adds that the unlearned cannot surpass their imagination, and this is a reason for their incapability to apprehend the *rationes* of the incorporeal things and to understand the divine ones. Maimonides had affirmed the same thing when explaining the Five Causes that

Deum esse non est per se notum, nec etiam per demonstrationem scitum, sed est tantum a fide susceptum; et ad hoc dicendum induxit eos debilitas rationum quas multi inducunt ad probandum Deum esse. Alii vero dixerunt, ut Avicenna, quod Deum esse non est per se notum, est tamen per demonstrationem scitum. Alii vero, ut Anselmus, opinantur quod Deum esse sit per se notum, in tantum quod nullus possit cogitare interius Deum non esse; quamvis hoc possit exterius proferre, et verba quibus profert interius cogitare.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* prima quidem opinio manifeste falsa apparet. Invenitur enim hoc quod est Deum esse, demonstrationibus irrefragabilibus etiam a philosophis probatum; quamvis etiam a nonnullis ad hoc ostendendum aliquae rationes frivolae inducantur. Duarum vero opinionum sequentium utraque secundum aliquid vera est. Est enim dupliciter aliquid per se notum; scilicet secundum se, et quoad nos. Deum igitur esse, secundum se est per se notum, non autem quoad nos. Et ideo nobis necessarium est, ad hoc cognoscendum, demonstrationes habere ex effectibus sumptas.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Ad hoc enim quod aliquid sit per se notum secundum se, nihil aliud requiritur nisi ut praedicatum sit de ratione subiecti; tunc enim subiectum cogitari non potest sine hoc quod praedicatum ei inesse appareat. Ad hoc autem

prevent the instruction of the multitude, but Aquinas attributes the argument to Boethius.⁶⁰

Regarding the *ratio* of being, he asserts that it cannot be apprehended through the effects of God because the creatures' *rationes* are identical with their essences but different from their acts of being. In God, however, being is identical with the *ratio* of the divine essence. Since we do not know the essence of God, His being is likewise not known and requires demonstration. However, Aquinas clarifies that this demonstration is relevant only to man's status *in via*:

Because in the homeland (*in patria*), where we will contemplate His essence, God's being will be much more evident to us than it is now evident for us that an affirmation and a negation cannot be true at the same time.⁶¹

Aquinas' answer is clear: the knowledge of the existence of God is evident in itself but not to us in the present life, where human beings necessitate to know through the senses and reasoning. However, it is possible to grasp naturally His existence and something of his nature as cause, from His effects, and this assumption is the basis of his Five Ways for the knowledge of God.

Interestingly, his reference to Maimonides in this last text falls short of attributing to him either a fideistic position or a

quod sit per se notum nobis, oportet quod nobis sit cognita ratio subiecti in qua includitur praedicatum. Et inde est quod quaedam per se nota sunt omnibus; quando scilicet propositiones huiusmodi habent talia subiecta quorum ratio omnibus nota est, ut, omne totum maius est sua parte; quilibet enim scit quid est totum et quid est pars. Qaedam vero sunt per se nota sapientibus tantum, qui rationes terminorum cognoscunt, vulgo eas ignorante.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* Et secundum hoc Boethius in lib. *De hebdomadibus* dicit, quod duplex est modus communium conceptionum. Una est communis omnibus, ut, si ab aequalibus aequalia demas, etc. Alia quae est doctiorum tantum, ut puta incorporalia in loco non esse, quae non vulgus, sed docti comprobant. Quia scilicet vulgi consideratio imaginationem transcendere non potest, ut ad rationem rei incorporalis pertingat.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* in fine: Hoc autem quod est esse, in nullius creaturae ratione includitur; cuiuslibet enim creaturae esse est aliud ab eius quidditate: unde non potest dici de aliqua creatura quod eam esse sit per se notum etiam secundum se. Sed in Deo esse ipsius includitur in suae quidditatis ratione, quia in eo est idem quod est et esse, ut Boethius dicit, et idem an est et quid est, ut dicit Avicenna; et ideo secundum se est per se notum. Sed quia quidditas Dei non est nobis nota, ideo quoad nos Deum esse non est nobis notum, sed indiget demonstratione. Sed in patria, ubi essentiam eius videbimus, multo erit nobis amplius per se notum Deum esse, quam nunc sit per se notum quod affirmatio et negatio non sunt simul vera.

rationalistic one. In fact, an inquiry about Aquinas' evaluation of Maimonides' real opinion leaves the question unanswered. The text examined enumerates three positions on the possibility of the knowledge of God, in which Maimonides is only mentioned as a source for someone else who maintains that God is acknowledged only by faith. However, Aquinas suggests something that might be a veiled criticism of him: failing to explain the role of natural reason for the knowledge of God also weakens the legitimacy of faith. Moreover, Maimonides encounters so many difficulties in justifying the use of the same names of perfections for God and His creatures that he concludes that only the existence of God can be known. To this, Aquinas objects that it seems equally difficult to know the existence of something through its effects without having any knowledge of its nature.

Not having the same understanding of causality, Aquinas' Ways for the existence of God are distant from Maimonides' own. However, they are not so far from each other in principle or, as Aquinas puts it in the *Quaestio de attributis*, "if we base the rationale of their statements on the speakers' positions". With his method for the demonstration of the existence of God, Maimonides intends to stress the lack of capacity of human reason for a direct knowledge of God at this stage (*in via*), and to show that God cannot be the object of a *logical demonstration*. Aquinas, instead, directs his version of the proofs at stressing that the knowledge of God is possible and natural to man. He agrees with Maimonides in that it is impossible to have a rigorous demonstration of God. In fact the *Quaestio de attributis* proposes the notion of *ratio*, which enables a higher kind of knowledge that is closer to a "monstration" — i.e., a display — than to a "demonstration". Maybe it is in order to avoid confusion regarding the role of the proofs of God that are not intended to be a strict demonstration that he introduces a slight change in the terminology and calls them *ways* for a natural knowledge of God. Whereas Maimonides directs his proofs at showing that the knowledge of God cannot be subject to the laws of Logic, Aquinas directs his Ways at demonstrating the possibility of a knowledge of God subject to the laws of Metaphysics.

To sum up, Maimonides' contributions to Aquinas' doctrine of the knowledge of the existence of God are, according to the latter's explicit references, on one hand the removal of the postulate of the

creation of the world in time from the traditional proofs, and on the other hand his stressing the importance of faith as the easiest way to acknowledge the existence of the Creator. Aquinas acknowledges that Maimonides accepts the possibility of grasping the existence of God, but expresses reservations regarding his success in explaining the process of apprehension. Finally, the reason for the omission of Maimonides' name in the Five Ways lies in his method, directed rather to rejecting the Kalamitic doctrines and ensuring a strict demonstration of the existence of God that excludes any positive attribute pointing to the divine essence.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this study it was noted that Maimonides grants decisive importance to the role of faith for his readers' comprehension of the issues treated in the *Guide*. He asserts that he wrote the *Guide* to remove the confusion of the learned Jew regarding the Holy Scripture, which seems to contradict with its language what one can rationally know about God. His leading concern is to define an appropriate language about God, and to explain how it is possible for a created intellect to conceive a notion of God while preserving the divine Unity, Simplicity, and Transcendence. It was also observed that his explanations are intentionally given in an enigmatic way that leaves his personal position open to different interpretations, thus empowering his interpreters with a fundamental task regarding the future of his philosophy.

I have focused on Aquinas' interpretation of the passages of the *Guide* that he considered particularly important, i.e., passages quoted frequently and in contexts of particular doctrinal importance. Special attention was paid to the chronology of these Maimonidean quotations in Aquinas' writings, with the aim of detecting a possible evolution in Aquinas' interpretation of the *Guide*. Systematic examination of the texts highlighted in this fashion has led in an unexpected direction, whose conclusions complement the existing literature. This research yielded the following conclusions:

Among all the issues in which Aquinas quotes Maimonides, the problem of the knowledge of God occupies the central place. In this framework, the problem of the divine attributes is the milieu of Aquinas' dialogue with Maimonides. The collation of the parallel references showed that this issue facilitates the understanding of Aquinas' use of the *Guide* and also that of its place in Aquinas' thought. Their examination, taking into account their chronology, discloses that Aquinas had an early interest in Maimonides' answer to the problem of the possibility and extent of the knowledge of God, and that this interest was renewed due to historical and doctrinal factors after 1265.

In particular, Aquinas' *Quaestio de attributis*, composed between 1265 and 1266, has proved to be a most useful text in helping us

achieve a comprehensive understanding of his reading of the *Guide*. This has been demonstrated through an examination of the historical circumstances of its composition and its doctrinal contents, which provide valuable connections with other locations in Aquinas' works.

The first part of the *Quaestio de attributis* relates to the problem of the divine attributes and Aquinas' answer to it, with his evaluation of Maimonides' position. According to Aquinas, the key for explaining the human capacity for the knowledge of God is the ability of the intellect to develop *rationes*, namely, the intellectual contents of different notions of perfections apprehended without the limitations inherent to a concept. His assumption is that, if the rational creature is capable of producing the *rationes* of created perfections, it is also capable of grasping the nature of their universal Cause. The notion of *ratio* explains the "articulation" or "hinge" between reality and knowledge, which enables the passage to be made from the ontological level (reality) to the gnoseological (knowledge) and back (knowledge *of that reality*). At the linguistic level, Aquinas explains the "hinge" between reality and knowledge with the distinction between the two meanings of the word "being": being as real (ontological being), and being as truth (veritative or gnoseological being). According to Aquinas, only a satisfactory explanation of this articulation of reality, knowledge, and language can solve the question of the knowledge of God.

In Aquinas' view, Maimonides sets for this knowledge such tight conditions that, in fact, some of his statements could imply the impossibility of any rational knowledge of God or at least make it problematic. In this context, Aquinas objects to two aspects of Maimonides' position that lead to this conclusion: his interpretation of the nature of causality and the doctrine of equivocality. These two aspects remain Aquinas' constant objection to Maimonides from the beginning of his academic life until his last works.

The second part of the *Quaestio de attributis* cites the biblical verse of *Zechariah*, 14, 9, which Maimonides quotes in *Guide*, I, 61. Aquinas had used this chapter of the *Guide* earlier, in order to point to the word "Being" as the most proper name of God. At the time of the composition of the *Quaestio*, he observes that Maimonides also writes in this chapter about a time when creatures

will be able to know and name God with one single name. Both philosophers note that Scripture suggests a stage in which it will be *natural* for man to know the proper name of God and His essence. Aquinas looks for a comprehensive definition of what is natural to man in terms of knowledge, a definition that also includes that suggested possibility of a direct contemplation of God.

This common biblical source brings their discourse into the problem of the knowledge of God in the afterlife and also into that of the extent of human knowledge in absolute terms, an issue in which Aquinas' explanation draws inspiration from *Guide I*, 34, where Maimonides outlines five causes that prevent the instruction of the multitude. Aquinas emphasizes through a recurring quotation of this text the importance of faith for the knowledge of God, as long as the intellect is compelled to know by means of the five senses.

Maimonides defines "faith" as the human act of the will that asserts God's existence and perfection. According to him, this act is that of the common people, who are not able to free themselves from the imagination in their representation of God. He states that faith teaches the existence, unity, and incorporeality of God to the multitude. The perfect individuals, however, achieve true intellectual knowledge of the divinity, devoid of imagination. As he puts it, the act of faith is an assertion of the will that overrides the process of apprehension of a defective intellectual faculty. Faith would be a flawed, though necessary, substitute for an apprehension of God because of the inability of many to achieve true intellectual knowledge. This means that the attainment of a perfect apprehension of God implies overcoming the stage of "believer", who is the one who relies on traditional authority. Maimonides considers this stage necessary or obligatory for all temporarily, because of the length and hardship of the intellectual training that enables individuals to formulate correctly the concepts taught by divine science.

For Aquinas, instead, faith would be a supernatural intellectual light, instrumental for man to apprehend and make his own what he can still not know about God with his natural strength alone. He acknowledges two existential states of the intellect within the boundaries of human nature: the intellect operating in this life (*in statu viae*) and after it has left the body (*in statu*

patria). As long as human beings are in this life they need to believe things about God that they are not able to yet grasp directly, but that they will grasp directly *in patria*.

For Maimonides, the knowledge of God is also a process that lasts the whole life, but his references to *Zechariah* 14, 9 seem to apply to a future earthly state, the Days of the Messiah, when the apprehension of God will be superior to that possible today.

However, if related only to the knowledge of God in this life, the causes enumerated in *Guide* I, 34 do not provide a complete answer for Aquinas, because the divine essence is still beyond the most perfect created intellect, only knowing God's nature as universal cause but not what He is in Himself, unrelated to the Creation. His definition of two states is therefore completed with yet another passage from the *Guide* II, 17. Maimonides argues there that some questions, like the eternity or temporality of the world, cannot be answered because human beings do not have an experience of circumstances other than the current ones. Aquinas concludes that it is not possible to explain now the "how" of the direct contemplation of God in the afterlife because the human intellect is still in a developing stage.

Finally, despite the similarities between Maimonides' Philosophical Speculations on the apprehension of the existence of God and Aquinas' Five Ways, Aquinas' omission of the name of Maimonides in the relevant texts, together with the above conclusions regarding his understanding of Maimonides' opinion about the possibility of the knowledge of God, lead to the conclusion that Aquinas did not consider Maimonides a precedent for his own view on the subject.

APPENDIX I

*CHRONOLOGY OF THE THOMISTIC WORKS EXAMINED*¹

Commentum in quattuor libris Sententiarum (except *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3): 1252-1256.

Commentum in IV Sententiarum, (final redaction): 1256-1259.

Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate: 1256-1259.

Super Boetium de Trinitate: 1257-1259.

Summa contra Gentiles: 1259-1264.

Quaestiones disputatae de Potentia: 1265-1266.

Quaestio de attributis (*In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3): 1265-1266.

Roman Commentary on the Sentences: 1265-1268.

Summa Theologiae, Prima Pars: 1266-1268.

Responsio de 108 articulis: 1268.

Reportatio super Epistolam ad Ephesios: c. 1270.

Commentarium super Epistolam ad Romanos: c. 1273.

Compendium theologiae: 1269-1273.

¹ I follow the chronology proposed by E. Alarcón, *Evolución léxica y cronología del Corpus Tomista*. Doctoral Dissertation, Universidad de Navarra (Pamplona, 1998).

APPENDIX II

QUAESTIO DE ATTRIBUTIS

(In I Sent., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3)

Utrum pluralitas rationum, quibus attributa differunt, sit tantum in intellectu, vel etiam in Deo. Circa tertium sic proceditur:

Arg. 1 Videtur quod pluralitas rationum secundum quas attributa differunt, nullo modo sit in Deo, sed tantum in intellectu ratiocinantis. Dicit enim Dionysius: omnem sanctorum theologorum hymnum inuenies ad bonos thearchiae processus, manifestative, et laudative Dei nominationes dividentem. Et est sensus, quod nomina quae in laudem divinam sancti assumunt, secundum diversos divinitatis processus, quibus ipse Deus manifestatur, dividuntur. Ergo ista pluralitas non est ex parte Dei, sed ex parte diversorum effectuum, ex quibus intellectus noster Deum diversimode cognoscit et nominat.¹

Arg. 2 Praeterea, Dionysius dicit: si aliquis videns Deum, intellexerit quod vidit, non ipsum vidit sed aliquid eorum quae sunt ejus. Si ergo praedicta nomina differunt secundum diversas rationes quas de eis intelleximus, istis rationibus nihil respondet quod in Deo sit, sed in his quae Dei sunt, scilicet creaturis.²

Arg. 3 Praeterea, Commentator dicit, loquens de hujusmodi nominibus, quod multiplicitas, quam ista nomina praetendunt,

¹ Whether the diversity of *rationes*, by which attributes differ, is only in the intellect or also in God. Article 3 is as follows:

Arg. 1: It seems that the plurality of *rationes* according to which attributes differ is absolutely not in God, but only in the intellect of the one who apprehends. Thus says Dionysius: "You will find that all the utterances of the holy theologians articulate the names of God in a revealing and praising way related to the Divine Majesty's blessed outpourings." It means that the names that the saints use in praising God are distinguished according to the diverse outpourings of God that issue from His divinity. Consequently, this diversity is not on the part of God, but on the part of the diverse effects by which our intellect diversely apprehends and names God.

² Arg. 2: Besides, Dionysius says: if anyone while seeing God were to understand what he sees, he would not see Him but some of the things that are His. Consequently, if the said names differ according to the diverse *rationes* that we understand regarding them, there is nothing in God that corresponds to these *rationes*, but only in the things that are God's, namely, creatures.

est in Deo secundum intellectum, et nullo modo secundum rem. Ergo videtur quod pluralitas harum rationum sit secundum intellectum nostrum tantum.³

Arg. 4 Praeterea, quidquid est in Deo, Deus est. Si ergo istae rationes secundum quas attributa differunt, sunt in Deo, ipsae sunt Deus. Sed Deus est unus et simplex. Ergo istae rationes, secundum quod in Deo sunt, non sunt plures.⁴

Arg. 5 Praeterea, illud quod in se est unum omnibus modis, non est radix alicujus multitudinis in eo existentis. Sed essentia divina est una omnibus modis, quia est summe una. Ergo non potest esse radix alicujus multitudinis in ea existentis. Pluralitas ergo dictarum rationum non radicatur in essentia divina sed in intellectu tantum.⁵

Arg. 6 Praeterea, Damascenus dicit, quod in Deo omnia sunt unum praeter ingenerationem et generationem et processionem. Si ergo sapientia et bonitas et hujusmodi attributa sunt in Deo, secundum quod in ipso sunt, non habent aliquam pluralitatem. Ergo pluralitas rationum quam nomina significant, non est in Deo, sed in intellectu nostro tantum.⁶

SC 1 Sed contra, Dionysius dicit, quod Deus dicitur perfectus sicut omnia in seipso comprehendens; et hoc est etiam quod Philosophus et Commentator dicit, quod Deus dicitur perfectus, quia omnes perfectiones quae sunt in omnibus generibus rerum

³ Arg. 3: Besides, the Commentator says about names of this kind that the multiplicity that these names suggest exists in God according to the intellect and absolutely not according to reality. Therefore it seems that these *rationes*' plurality exists only according to our intellect.

⁴ Arg. 4: Besides, whatever exists in God, is God. Consequently, if these *rationes* according to which attributes differ exist in God, they are God. Now God is one and simple. Therefore these *rationes*, in so far as they are in God, are not manifold.

⁵ Arg. 5: Besides, that which is one in itself in every possible way cannot be the root of any multiplicity existing within itself. But the divine essence is one in every possible way because it is supremely one. Therefore it cannot be root of any multiplicity existing within itself. Consequently, the plurality of the aforementioned *rationes* is not rooted in the divine essence but only in our intellect.

⁶ Arg. 6: Besides, the Damascene says that everything is one in God except the nonbegottenness, the begottenness, and the procession. Therefore, if attributes of wisdom, goodness, and the like exist in God, they do not introduce any plurality in so far as they are in Him. Consequently, the multiplicity of *rationes* that the names signify is not in God but only in our intellect.

in ipso sunt. Haec autem perfectio, qua Deus perfectus est, est secundum rem, et non secundum intellectum tantum. Ergo ista attributa quae perfectionem demonstrant, non sunt tantum in intellectu, sed in re, quae Deus est.⁷

SC 2 Praeterea, Dionysius dicit, quod creaturae dicuntur Deo similes, in quantum imitantur Deum, qui perfecte imitabilis non est a creatura. Ista autem imitatio est secundum participationem attributorum. Ergo creaturae sunt Deo similes, secundum sapientiam, bonitatem et huiusmodi. Sed hoc non posset esse, nisi praedicta essent in Deo secundum proprias rationes. Ergo ratio sapientiae et bonitatis proprie in Deo est; et ita huiusmodi rationes non sunt tantum ex parte intellectus.⁸

SC 3 Praeterea, sapientia non dicitur aequivoce de Deo et creatura; alias sapientia creata non duceret in cognitionem sapientiae increatae; et similiter est de potentia et bonitate et de aliis huiusmodi. Sed ea quae praedicantur de pluribus secundum rationes omnino diversas, aequivoce praedicantur. Ergo aliquo modo ratio sapientiae, secundum quod de Deo dicitur et de creaturis, est una, non quidem per univocationem, sed per analogiam; et similiter est de aliis. Sed ratio sapientiae, secundum quod de creaturis dicitur non est eadem ratio cum ratione bonitatis et potentiae. Ergo etiam secundum quod ista de Deo dicuntur, non sunt eadem rationes sed diversae.⁹

⁷ Against it: Dionysius says that God is called perfect, as He comprehends everything in Himself. This is also what the Philosopher and the Commentator say, that God is called perfect because all perfections found in all the genera of things exist in Him. Now this perfection, according to which God is perfect, is real and not only in the intellect. Consequently, these attributes that display perfection are not purely in the intellect, but in the real thing which is God.

⁸ Besides, Dionysius says that creatures are said to be similar to God in so far as they imitate God, who is not imitable perfectly by any creature. Now this imitation is according to participation in the attributes. Consequently, creatures are similar to God according to wisdom, goodness, and the like. But this could not be so if the aforementioned [perfections] were not in God according to their own *rationes*. Therefore the *ratio* of wisdom and goodness are properly in God; and so *rationes* of this kind do not exist only on the part of the intellect.

⁹ Besides, wisdom is not said equivocally of God and creatures; otherwise created wisdom would not lead to the knowledge of uncreated wisdom, and the same with power, goodness, and other examples of this kind. But attributes that are predicated of many according to completely diverse *rationes* are predicated equivocally. Thus in some way the *ratio* of wisdom, being said of God and of creatures, is one, though not by univocality but by analogy, and the same with

SC 4 Praeterea, sicut Deus vere est pater, ita etiam vere est sapiens. Sed ex hoc quod vere Deus est pater, non potest dici quod ratio paternitatis sit in intellectu tantum. Ergo nec ex hoc quod Deus vere est sapiens, potest dici quod ratio sapientiae sit in intellectu tantum. Sed ratio paternitatis, quae realiter in Deo est, non est eadem cum ratione divinitatis. Unde nec paternitate est Deus, nec divinitate est pater: et tamen ista pluralitas rationum non tollit simplicitatem divinam, propter hoc quod essentia et paternitas idem sunt in re. Ergo similiter si ponamus sapientiam et essentiam esse idem re omnino, et rationes eorum diversas, non tolletur simplicitas divinae essentiae. Sed divinae essentiae simplicitas est tota causa quare ista attributa in Deo non differunt. Ergo non est inconveniens ponere, quod sapientiae et bonitatis ratio in Deo est, et tamen una non est altera, si res omnino una ponatur.¹⁰

SC 5 Si dicatur quod non est simile de relationibus personalibus et de attributis essentialibus, quia in Deo non sunt nisi duo praedicamenta, scilicet substantia et relatio, unde ratio relationis est alia a ratione substantiae, non tamen ratio sapientiae et aliorum absolutorum est alia a substantia: contra. Relatio in divinis habet duplicem comparisonem: unam ad suum correlativum, secundum quam ad aliquid dicitur; aliam ad essentiam, secundum quam est idem re cum ea. Sed secundum id quod aliquid est idem alteri, non facit numerum cum eo. Ergo quod relationes ad aliud praedicamentum pertineant quam ad praedicamentum

the others. Now the *ratio* of wisdom, when it is said of creatures, differs from the *rationes* of goodness and power. Consequently, even when these are said of God they are not the same *rationes* but diverse.

¹⁰ Besides, in the same way that God is truly Father He is also truly wise. But because God is truly Father, one cannot say that the *ratio* of fatherhood is only in the intellect; and so, because God is truly wise, one cannot say either that the *ratio* of wisdom is only in the intellect. But the *ratio* of fatherhood, which exists really in God, is not the same as the *ratio* of divinity. That is why He is neither God by his fatherhood nor Father by His divinity, and yet this plurality of *rationes* does not eliminate the divine simplicity, because essence and fatherhood are the same in reality. Likewise, if we assert that wisdom and essence are absolutely the same thing in reality and their *rationes* diverse, the simplicity of the divine essence is not eliminated. On the contrary, the simplicity of the divine essence is the whole reason for these attributes not being diverse in God. Consequently, it is not awkward to assert that the *ratio* of wisdom and [that of] goodness are in God, yet one is not the other, although the reality is assumed to be absolutely one.

substantiae, est per comparisonem ad suum relativum. Ergo adhuc manet eadem comparatio sapientiae et paternitatis ad essentiam.¹¹

RESPONDEO Dicendum, quod, sicut supra dictum est, art. praeced., in corp., Sapientia et bonitas et omnia hujusmodi sunt omnino unum re in Deo, sed differunt ratione: et haec ratio non est tantum ex parte ipsius ratiocinantis, sed ex proprietate ipsius rei. Ad cuius rei evidentiam, ut diligenter explicetur, quia ex hoc pendet totus intellectus eorum quae in I Libro dicuntur, quatuor oportet videre. Primo quid sit ratio secundum quam dicimus attributa ratione differre. Secundo quomodo dicatur aliqua ratio in aliqua re esse vel non esse. Tertio utrum istae rationes diversae attributorum sint in Deo vel non. Quarto utrum pluralitas istarum rationum sit tantum ex parte intellectus nostri vel aliquo modo ex parte rei.¹²

Quantum ad primum pertinet, sciendum est, quod ratio, prout hic sumitur, nihil aliud est quam id quod apprehendit intellectus de significatione alicujus nominis: et hoc in his quae habent definitionem, est ipsa rei definitio, secundum quod Philosophus dicit [in IV Metaph., 11]: ratio quam significat

¹¹ If it is said that what happens with the personal relations is not the same as what happens with the essential attributes because in God there are only two predicaments, namely substance and relation, and therefore the *ratio* of relation is diverse from the *ratio* of substance, nevertheless the *ratio* of wisdom and of the other absolutes is not other than the substance; against it: relation in the divinity has a twofold reference: in one sense it is [referred] to its correlative, according to which it is said in relation 'to something', and in another sense it is compared 'to the essence', according to which it [the relation] is the same as it [the essence] in reality. Yet according to that which is the same as something else, it is not the same numerically. The fact that relations belong to a predicament other than that of substance is by reference to their correlative. Therefore, the reference of wisdom and fatherhood to the essence remains the same up to this point.

¹² SOLUTION: I answer saying that, as it has been said in the preceding article, wisdom, goodness, and all suchlike are absolutely one and the same thing in God but differ according to their *ratio*, and this *ratio* is not only on the part of the one apprehending but also due to the quality of the thing itself. To make this clear and so that it will be carefully explained, since the whole understanding of what is said in the First Book depends on this, it is necessary to examine four [questions]. First, what this *ratio* is according to which we say that attributes differ. Second, in which sense it is said that the *ratio* is or is not in something. Third, whether the diverse *rationes* of the attributes are in God or not. Fourth, whether the multiplicity of these *rationes* is only on the part of our intellect or is in some way also on the part of the thing [God himself].

nomen est definitio. Sed quaedam dicuntur habere rationem sic dictam, quae non definiuntur, sicut quantitas et qualitas et hujusmodi, quae non definiuntur, quia sunt genera generalissima. Et tamen ratio qualitatis est id quod significatur nomine qualitatis; et hoc est illud ex quo qualitas habet quod sit qualitas. Unde non refert, utrum illa quae dicuntur habere rationem, habeant vel non habeant definitionem. Et sic patet quod ratio sapientiae quae de Deo dicitur, est id quod concipitur de significatione hujus nominis, quamvis ipsa sapientia divina definiri non possit. Nec tamen hoc nomen ratio significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatur per nomen sapientiae vel per aliud nomen rei; sed significat intentionem hujus conceptionis, sicut et hoc nomen definitio, et alia nomina secundae impositionis.¹³

Et ex hoc patet secundum, scilicet qualiter ratio dicatur esse in re. Non enim hoc dicitur, quasi ipsa intentio quam significat nomen rationis, sit in re; aut etiam ipsa conceptio, cui convenit talis intentio, sit in re extra animam, cum sit in anima sicut in subjecto: sed dicitur esse in re, in quantum in re extra animam est aliquid quod respondet conceptioni animae, sicut significatum signo. Unde sciendum, quod ipsa conceptio intellectus tripliciter se habet ad rem quae est extra animam.¹⁴ Aliquando enim hoc quod intellectus concipit, est similitudo rei existentis extra animam, sicut hoc quod concipitur de hoc nomine homo; et talis

¹³ Regarding the first [question] it is necessary to know that *ratio*, as it is understood here, means nothing other than what the intellect apprehends from the meaning of any name. And this, in the things that have a definition, is the thing's definition itself, according to what the Philosopher says: 'The *ratio* that the name signifies is the definition.' But there are some things that are said to have such a *ratio*, yet they have no definition, like quantity, quality, and the like, which cannot be defined because they are most general categories of being [genera], and nevertheless the *ratio* of quality is that which is meant by the name 'quality', this being what makes quality to be quality. Therefore it is not relevant whether the things that are said to have *ratio* can be defined or not. Consequently, it is evident that the *ratio* of wisdom that is said of God is that which is conceived from this name's meaning, even though divine wisdom itself cannot be defined. Nevertheless, the name '*ratio*' does not mean the conception itself, because this is signified by the name 'wisdom' or by any other name of the thing, but it means the conception's intention, like the name 'definition' and other names of second attribution.

¹⁴ And from the above the second [question] becomes evident, namely, in which sense it is said that the *ratio* is in the real thing. It is not said that the very same intention signified by the name '*ratio*' exists in reality, or even that the apprehension itself that such intention matches exists in the real thing outside

conceptio intellectus habet fundamentum in re immediate, in quantum res ipsa, ex sua conformitate ad intellectum, facit quod intellectus sit verus, et quod nomen significans illum intellectum, proprie de re dicatur.¹⁵ Aliquando autem hoc quod significat nomen non est similitudo rei existentis extra animam, sed est aliquid quod consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem quae est extra animam: et hujusmodi sunt intentiones quas intellectus noster adinvenit; sicut significatum hujus nominis genus non est similitudo alicujus rei extra animam existentis; sed ex hoc quod intellectus intelligit animal ut in pluribus speciebus, attribuit ei intentionem generis; et hujusmodi intentionis licet proximum fundamentum non sit in re sed in intellectu, tamen remotum fundamentum est res ipsa. Unde intellectus non est falsus, qui has intentiones adinvenit. Et simile est de omnibus aliis qui consequuntur ex modo intelligendi, sicut est abstractio mathematicorum et hujusmodi.¹⁶ Aliquando vero id quod significatur per nomen, non habet fundamentum in re, neque proximum neque remotum, sicut conceptio chimeræ: quia neque est similitudo alicujus rei extra animam, neque consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem aliquam naturæ: et ideo ista conceptio est falsa.¹⁷ Unde patet secundum, scilicet quod ratio dicitur esse in re,

the mind, since it is in the mind as in its subject. It is said to be in the real thing inasmuch as there is something in the real thing outside the mind that corresponds to the mind's conception, like the meaning to the sign. Therefore it must be known that the above said conception of the intellect can relate to the thing outside the mind in a threefold way.

¹⁵ Sometimes what the intellect apprehends is the likeness of the thing existing outside the mind, as that which is apprehended of the name 'man'. This conception of the intellect has an immediate foundation in reality, inasmuch as the thing itself, by its conformity to the intellect, causes the thing understood to be true and the name meaning it to be properly said of that reality.

¹⁶ Sometimes, that which is signified by the name is not the likeness of the thing existing outside the mind, but something which is a consequence of the way of understanding the thing existing outside the mind. Of this nature are the intentions that our intellect devises, like the meaning of the name '*genus*', which is not the likeness of anything outside the mind but proceeds from the fact that the intellect apprehends 'animal' in many species, and attributes to it the intention of '*genus*'. Granted that the proximate foundation of such intentions is not in the real thing but in the intellect, nevertheless the remote foundation is the thing itself, so that the intellect that devises such intentions is not wrong. And the same happens with all the other things that result from the way of understanding, like the mathematical abstractions and so on.

¹⁷ Sometimes, instead, that which is signified by the name does not have foundation in the real thing, either proximate or remote, like the notion of

inquantum significatum nominis, cui accidit esse rationem, est in re: et hoc contingit proprie, quando conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei.¹⁸

Quantum ad tertium, scilicet utrum rationes attributorum in Deo sint, sciendum est, quod circa hoc videtur esse duplex opinio. Quidam enim dicunt, ut Avicenna [Lib. De intelligent., 1] et Rabbi Moyses [Lib. I, 57-58], quod res illa quae Deus est, est quoddam esse subsistens, nec aliquid aliud nisi esse, in Deo est: unde dicunt, quod est esse sine essentia.¹⁹ Omnia autem alia quae Deo attribuuntur, verificantur de Deo dupliciter, secundum eos: vel per modum negationis, vel per modum causalitatis. Per modum negationis dupliciter: vel ad removendum privationem seu defectum oppositum, ut dicimus Deum sapientem, ut removeatur defectus qui est in carentibus sapientia; vel secundum quod aliquid ex negatione consequitur, sicut est de hoc nomine unus, qui ex hoc ipso quod non est divisus, est unus. Similiter ex hoc ipso quod est immaterialis, est intelligens. Unde, secundum eos, omnia ista nomina potius sunt inventa ad removendum, quam ad ponendum aliquid in Deo.²⁰ Item per modum causalitatis dupliciter: vel inquantum producit ista in creaturis, ut dicatur Deus bonus, quia bonitatem creaturis influit et sic de aliis; vel inquantum ad modum creaturae se habet, ut dicatur Deus volens vel pius, inquantum se habet ad modum volentis vel pii in modo producendi effectum, sicut dicitur iratus, quia ad modum irati

'chimera', since it is neither a likeness of anything outside the mind nor results from the way of understanding anything in nature. This apprehension is false.

¹⁸ From the above, the second [question] becomes evident, namely, that the *ratio* is said to be in the real thing inasmuch as the name's meaning, of which it happens to be the *ratio*, is in the real thing; and this is properly the case when the intellect's conception is the thing's likeness.

¹⁹ About the third, i. e., whether the attributes' *rationes* are in God, it should be noted that there seem to be two opinions on this. Some say, like Avicenna and Rabbi Moses, that God's reality is a kind of subsisting being and that nothing else is in God but being. Therefore they say that He is being without an essence.

²⁰ According to them, any other thing attributed to God can be verified in God in two ways: either by way of negation, or by way of causality. Negation works in two ways: either in order to remove a lack or the opposite defect, as when we say that God is wise in order to remove the defect existing in the ones lacking wisdom, or inasmuch as something is a consequence of negation, as it happens with the name 'one', since something is one precisely because it is not divided. Likewise He is an intelligence precisely because He is nonmaterial. Hence, according to them, all these names are provided more for removing than for attributing something to God.

se habet.²¹ Et secundum hanc opinionem sequitur quod omnia nomina quae dicuntur de Deo et creaturis, dicantur aequivoce, et quod nulla similitudo sit creaturae ad creatorem ex hoc quod creatura est bona vel sapiens vel huiusmodi aliquid; et hoc expresse dicit Rabbi Moyses.²² Secundum hoc, illud quod concipitur de nominibus attributorum, non refertur ad Deum, ut sit similitudo alicujus quod in eo est. Unde sequitur quod rationes istorum nominum non sunt in Deo, quasi fundamentum proximum habeant in ipso, sed remotum; sicut nos dicimus de relationibus quae ex tempore de Deo dicuntur; huiusmodi enim relationes in Deo secundum rem non sunt, sed sequuntur modum intelligendi, sicut dictum est de intentionibus. Et sic, secundum hanc opinionem, rationes horum attributorum sunt tantum in intellectu, et non in re, quae Deus est; et intellectus eas adinvenit ex consideratione creaturarum vel per negationem vel per causalitatem, ut dictum est.²³ Alii vero dicunt, ut Dionysius [*De Div. Nom.* I, c. XIII, paragr. 1, col. 978] et Anselmus [*Monol.* I, c. III, col. 147], quod in Deo praeeminenter existit quidquid perfectionis in creaturis est. Et haec eminentia attenditur quantum ad tria: scilicet quantum ad universalitatem, quia in Deo sunt omnes perfectiones adunatae, quae non congregantur in aliqua una creatura. Item quantum ad plenitudinem, quia est ibi sapientia sine omni defectu, et similiter de aliis attributis: quod non est in

²¹ Likewise the way of causality is twofold: either inasmuch as He produces these things in creatures, that God may be called good because He instills goodness in creatures, and so on; or inasmuch as He behaves like creatures, that God may be called one who wants or is pious, because He behaves in the way that the one who wants or is pious conducts himself when producing an effect, and as He is said to be enraged because He behaves in the way the angry creature does.

²² And according to this opinion it follows that all names predicated of God and creatures are said equivocally, and saying that creatures are good or wise or anything else of the kind expresses no likeness of creatures to their Creator. Rabbi Moses says this explicitly.

²³ According to this [position], whatever is apprehended of the attributes' names does not refer to God as a kind of likeness of something found in God. It follows that these names' *rationes* are not in God as if their proximate foundation was in Him, but only their remote one, as we say of the relations that are predicated of God *ex tempore*. Relations of such a kind do not exist in God *secundum rem*, but follow a way of understanding, as has been said in regard to the intentions. Therefore, according to this opinion, these attributes' *rationes* are only in the intellect and not in the reality that is God, and the intellect conceives them from the contemplation of creatures by negation or by causality, as has been said.

creaturis. Item quantum ad unitatem; quae enim in creaturis diversa sunt, in Deo sunt unum. Et quia in illo uno habet omnia, ideo secundum illud unum causat omnia, cognoscit omnia et omnia sibi per analogiam simulantur.²⁴ Secundum ergo hanc opinionem, conceptiones quas intellectus noster ex nominibus attributorum concipit, sunt vere similitudines rei, quae Deus est, quamvis deficientes et non plenae, sicut est de aliis rebus quae Deo simulantur. Unde huiusmodi rationes non sunt tantum in intellectu, quia habent proximum fundamentum in re quae Deus est. Et ex hoc contingit quod quidquid sequitur ad sapientiam, in quantum huiusmodi, recte et proprie convenit Deo.²⁵ Hae autem opiniones, quamvis in superficie diversae videantur, tamen non sunt contrariae, si quis dictorum rationes ex causis assumit dicendi. Quia primi consideraverunt ipsas res creatas, quibus imponuntur nomina attributorum, sicut quod hoc nomen sapientia imponitur cuidam qualitati, et hoc nomen essentia cuidam rei quae non subsistit: et haec longe a Deo sunt: et ideo dixerunt, quod Deus est esse sine essentia, et quod non est in eo sapientia secundum se. Alii vero consideraverunt modos perfectionis, ex quibus dicta nomina sumuntur: et, quia Deus secundum unum simplex esse omnibus modis perfectus est, qui importantur per huiusmodi nomina, ideo dixerunt, quod ista nomina positive Deo conveniunt. Sic ergo patet quod quaelibet harum opinionum non negat hoc quod alia dicit: quia nec primi dicunt aliquem modum perfectionis Deo deesse, nec secundi qualitatem, aut res non subsistentes in Deo ponunt. Sic ergo patet tertium, scilicet quod

²⁴ Others, like Dionysius and Anselm, say that whatever perfection exists in creatures exists in God preeminently. And this preeminence is noted in regard to three things: In regard to universality because all perfections, which are not assembled in any one creature, are united in God. In regard to plenitude, because wisdom exists in Him with no defect at all, and the same with the other attributes, and this does not happen in creatures. And in regard to unity, because that which is diverse in creatures is one in God. And because He contains everything in this unity, that is why He causes everything, knows everything, and everything resembles Him by analogy according to this unity.

²⁵ Consequently, according to this opinion, the conceptions that our intellect apprehends from the attributes' names are truly likenesses of the reality that is God, although deficient and not complete, as happens with the other things that are similar to God. Hence such *rationes* are not only in the intellect, because they have a proximate foundation in the reality which is God. And the consequence is that whatever is implied by having wisdom, as an example of such, can be rightly and properly said of God.

rationes attributorum sunt vere in Deo, quia ratio nominis magis se tenet ex parte ejus a quo imponitur nomen, quam ex parte ejus cui imponitur.²⁶

Quantum vero ad quartum, scilicet utrum pluralitas istarum rationum sit tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel aliquo modo ex parte rei, sciendum est, quod ista pluralitas rationum contingit ex hoc quod res quae Deus est, superat intellectum nostrum. Intellectus enim noster non potest una conceptione diversos modos perfectionis accipere: tum quia ex creaturis cognitionem accipit, in quibus sunt diversi modi perfectionum secundum diversas formas: tum quia hoc quod in Deo est unum et simplex, plurificatur in intellectu nostro, etiam si immediate a Deo reciperet; sicut multiplicatur processio suae bonitatis in aliis creaturis.²⁷ Unde, cum Deus secundum unam et eandem rem sit omnibus modis perfectus, una conceptione non potest integre perfectionem ejus apprehendere, et per consequens nec nominare; et ideo oportet quod diversas conceptiones de eo habeat, quae sunt diversae rationes, et quod diversa nomina imponat

²⁶ These opinions, although they may seem superficially diverse, are nonetheless not opposed to each other, if we base the rationale of their statements on the speakers' positions. Because the former looked at the created things themselves, named after the attributes' names, just as the name 'wisdom' is assigned to a certain quality, and the name 'essence' to a certain thing that is not subsisting, these things being far from God. And for this reason they said that God is being without essence, and that in Him there is no wisdom proper. The latter looked at the modes of perfection from which these names are taken: and since God is perfect in every way implied by such names according to His one simple Being, for this reason they said that these names befit God positively. And therefore it becomes clear that none of these opinions contradicts what the other says, because the former do not say that God lacks any mode of perfection, nor do the latter attribute a quality or a thing to God which is not subsisting. Thus the third [question] becomes clear, namely, that the attributes' *rationes* are truly in God, because the name's *ratio* is more on the part of that from which the name is taken than on the part of that to which it is given.

²⁷ Regarding the fourth [question], namely, whether the plurality of these *rationes* is only on the part of our intellect or in some way also on the part of the real thing, it must be known that this plurality of *rationes* is due to the fact that the reality that is God exceeds our intellect. In fact, our intellect cannot apprehend several modes of perfections in one conception: whether because it obtains its knowledge from creatures, in which there are diverse modes of perfections according to diverse forms; or whether because that which is one and simple in God becomes multiplied in our intellect even if it were to receive it directly from God, just as the issuing of His goodness is multiplied in other creatures.

significantia rationes illas. Unde nomina illa non sunt synonyma, inquantum significant rationes diversas.²⁸

Si autem intellectus noster Deum per seipsum videret, illi rationi posset imponere nomen unum: quod erit in patria; et ideo dicitur Zach. Ult. 9: in illa die erit Dominus unus, et nomen ejus unum. Illud autem nomen unum non significaret bonitatem tantum, nec sapientiam tantum, aut aliquid hujusmodi, sed significata omnium istorum includeret.²⁹ Sed tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam videret, et nominaret mediante conceptione quam de ea habet, oporteret adhuc quod imponeret plura nomina: quia impossibile est quod conceptio intellectus creati repraesentet totam perfectionem divinae essentiae.³⁰ Unde una re visa diversas conceptions formaret, et diversa nomina imponeret, sicut etiam Chrysostomus dicit, quod angeli laudant Deum, quidam ut majestatem, quidam ut bonitatem, et sic de aliis, in signum quod ipsum non vident visione comprehendente; sed conceptio perfecte repraesentans eum est verbum increatum; et ideo est unum tantum. Sic ergo patet quod pluralitas nominum venit ex hoc quod ipse Deus nostrum intellectum excedit.³¹ Quod autem Deus excedat intellectum nostrum, est ex parte ipsius Dei, propter plenitudinem perfectionis ejus, et ex parte intellectus nostri, qui deficienter se habet ad eam comprehendendam. Unde patet quod pluralitas istarum rationum non tantum

²⁸ Consequently, since God is perfect in every way according to one and the same thing, the intellect can neither comprehend His perfection completely nor, it would follow, name Him by one single conception, necessitating it to have diverse notions of Him, which are diverse *rationes*, and to adopt diverse names that signify these *rationes*. These names, then, are not synonyms, since they signify different *rationes*.

²⁹ If, however, our intellect were to see God in Himself, it would be able to give one single name to this *ratio*, and that will happen *in patria*. That is why it is said in *Zechariah*, last, 9: *In that Day shall the Lord be one and His name one*. That single name would not mean only goodness or only wisdom or something of the sort, but it would include all these meanings.

³⁰ But if, upon seeing God's essence, the intellect were to give a name to the thing seen and to name it by means of the conception that it [the intellect] had of it [God's essence], it would still have to give Him several names, because it is impossible for a conception of the created intellect to reproduce in full the perfection of the divine essence.

³¹ Hence while seeing one thing it would produce diverse conceptions and assign diverse names, in the way Chrysostom says that angels praise God, some as majesty, some as goodness, and so on, to indicate that they do not see Him

est ex parte intellectus nostri, sed etiam ex parte ipsius Dei, inquantum sua perfectio superat unamquamque conceptionem nostri intellectus. Et ideo pluralitati istarum rationum respondet aliquid in re quae Deus est: non quidem pluralitas rei, sed plena perfectio, ex qua contingit ut omnes istae conceptiones ei aptentur.³² Qui ergo dixerunt, quod pluralitas ista est tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel ex parte effectuum, quodammodo verum dixerunt, et quodammodo non.³³ Si enim hoc referatur ad causam multiplicationis, sic verum dicunt, quod est ex parte intellectus nostri, et effectuum quodammodo, ex eo quod intellectus noster non potest concipere divinam perfectionem una conceptione, sed pluribus; cujus una ratio est ex hoc quod est assuefactus ad res creatas.³⁴ Si autem referatur ad modum quo istae rationes attribuuntur Deo, falsum dicunt. Non enim ex hoc quod bona facit, vel quia ad modum bonorum se habet, bonus est; sed quia bonus est, ideo bona facit, et alia participando ejus bonitatem ad modum ejus se habent. Unde si nullam creaturam fecisset nec facturus esset, ipse in se talis esset ut posset vere considerari secundum omnes istas conceptiones, quas habet nunc intellectus noster ipsum considerando.³⁵ Et sic patet quartum, quod pluralitas istorum nominum non tantum est ex parte intellectus nostri formantis

in a comprehensive vision, but the one and only conception that perfectly represents Him is the uncreated Word. Thus it becomes clear that the plurality of names is due to the fact that God Himself exceeds our intellect.

³² That God exceeds our intellect, is on the part of God Himself, due to the plenitude of His perfection, and on the part of our intellect, because it is insufficient to comprehend such perfection. Then, it is clear that the plurality of *rationes* is not only on the part of our intellect but also on the part of God Himself, inasmuch as His perfection surpasses every conception of our intellect. And therefore something in the reality that God is corresponds to the plurality of these *rationes*: not the real plurality but the fullness of perfection that makes all these conceptions befit Him.

³³ Consequently, the ones who said that this plurality is only on the part of our intellect or on the part of the effects, in a way said something true and in a way not.

³⁴ If this refers to the cause of the multiplication they are right, because it is on the part of our intellect and in a way on the part of the effects, since our intellect cannot apprehend the divine perfection in one conception but only in many. One reason for the above stems from the fact that [our intellect] is used to created things.

³⁵ However, if it refers to the way these *rationes* are attributed to God, they are wrong. It is not that God is good because He does good things or because He behaves like the good, but it is because He is good that He does good, and others

diversas conceptiones de Deo, quae dicuntur diversae rationes, ut ex dictis, art. anteced., patet, sed ex parte ipsius Dei, in quantum scilicet est aliquid in Deo correspondens omnibus istis conceptionibus, scilicet plena et omnimoda ipsius perfectio, secundum quam contingit quod quodlibet nominum significantium istas conceptiones, de Deo vere et proprie dicitur; non autem ita quod aliqua diversitas vel multiplicitas ponatur in re, quae Deus est, ratione istorum attributorum.³⁶

His visis facile est respondere ad objecta.³⁷

Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod intentio Dionysii est dicere, quod secundum diversas bonitates quas creaturis influit Deus nominatur, manifestatur et laudatur; non autem ita quod rationes illarum bonitatum ex hoc verificentur de eo quia creaturis eas influit, sed magis e converso, ut dictum est, in corp. Quamvis enim conditio causae cognoscatur ex conditionibus effectus, non tamen conditio causae verificatur propter conditiones effectus, sed e converso.³⁸

Ad secundum dicendum, quod intellectus noster id quod concipit de bonitate vel de sapientia non refert in Deum quasi in eo sit per modum quo ipse concipit, quia hoc esset comprehendere ejus sapientiam vel bonitatem; sed intelligit ipsam bonitatem divinam, cui aliquantulum simile est quod intellectus noster concipit, esse supra id quod de eo concipitur. Unde per hujusmodi

behave like Him by participating in His goodness. Consequently, even if He had never created or were to create any creature, He would still be intrinsically such that it would be possible to contemplate Him truly according to these conceptions that our intellect has now when contemplating Him.

³⁶ Thus the fourth [question] becomes clear, that the plurality of these names is not only on the part of our intellect that produces diverse conceptions of God, which are called *rationes*, as it is clear from what was said above, but on the part of God Himself, inasmuch as there is something in God that corresponds to all these conceptions, namely, His full and comprehensive perfection according to which each of the names meaning these conceptions is truly and properly said of God, though not in a way that any diversity or multiplicity should be attributed to the real thing that is God, on account of these attributes.

³⁷ After seeing these things it is easy to answer the objections.

³⁸ To the first, it must be said that Dionysius' intention is to say that God is named, revealed, and praised according to the diverse perfections that He pours out in creatures. However, it is not because He pours them out in creatures that the *rationes* of these perfections are truly applied to Him, but rather the opposite, as said above. Although the condition of the cause is apprehended through those of the effects, it [the cause] is not verified by them, but the other way around.

conceptiones non videtur ipse Deus secundum quod in se est, sed intelligitur supra intellectum. Et hoc vult dicere Dionysius in illa auctoritate.³⁹

Ad tertium dicendum, quod multiplicitas ista attributorum nullo modo ponitur in Deo quasi ipse secundum rem sit multiplex; sed tamen ipse secundum suam simplicem perfectionem, multitudini istorum attributorum correspondet, ut vere de Deo dicantur. Et hoc intendit Commentator.⁴⁰

Ad quartum dicendum, quod sicut ratio hominis non dicitur esse in homine quasi res quaedam in ipso, sed est sicut in subjecto in intellectu, et est in homine sicut in eo quod praestat fulcimentum veritati ipsius; ita etiam ratio bonitatis divinae est in intellectu sicut in subjecto, in Deo autem sicut in eo quod correspondet per quamdam similitudinem isti rationi, faciens ejus veritatem. Unde patet quod ratio procedit ex malo intellectu ejus quod dicitur.⁴¹

Ad quintum dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur fundari vel radicari in aliquo metaphorice, ex quo firmitatem habet. Rationes autem intellectae habent duplicem firmitatem: scilicet firmitatem sui esse, et hanc habent ab intellectu, sicut alia accidentia a suis subjectis; et firmitatem suae veritatis, et hanc habent ex re cui conformantur. Ex eo enim quod res est vel non est locutio et intellectus veritatem vel falsitatem habet. Rationes ergo attributorum fundantur vel radicanur in intellectu quantum ad firmitatem sui

³⁹ To the second, it must be said that our intellect does not apprehend what it conceives of goodness and wisdom as existing in God in the way it conceives them, because that would be to apprehend fully His wisdom or goodness, but it [the intellect] understands that the divine goodness itself, to which what our intellect apprehends is in some way similar, is above that which is apprehended about Him. Hence, through such conceptions, God Himself is not seen as He is, but is understood to be beyond understanding. And this is what Dionysius wants to say in that quotation.

⁴⁰ To the third, it must be said that these attributes' multiplicity is in no way assigned to God as if He Himself were really multiple, but that He, according to His simple perfection, matches the multiplicity of these attributes, so that they all can be truly said of God. And this is what the Commentator meant.

⁴¹ To the fourth, it must be said that in the same way that the *ratio* of man is not said to be in man as a thing existing in him, but rather in the intellect as in its subject, and in man as in what provides a foundation for its truth, in the same way as the *ratio* of the divine goodness is in the intellect as in its subject, and in God as in what corresponds by certain likeness to this *ratio*, causing it to be true. Consequently, it becomes clear that this objection proceeds from the faulty understanding of what is being said.

esse, quia, ut dictum est, art. anteced., intellectus est earum subjectum; in essentia autem divina quantum ad firmitatem suae veritatis; et hoc in nullo repugnat divinae simplicitati.⁴²

Ad sextum dicendum, quod in Deo omnia sunt unum re, praeter ingenerationem, generationem, et processionem, quae constituunt personas re distinctas: non autem oportet quod quidquid praeter ista de Deo dicitur, sit unum ratione. Et similiter intelligendum est quod dicit Boetius [*I De Trinitate*, c. VI, col. 1254, t. 2], quod sola relatio multiplicat trinitatem, scilicet pluralitate reali. Tunc enim aliquid est unum re et ratione multiplex, quando una res respondet diversis conceptionibus et nominibus, ut de ea verificentur; sicut punctum, quod cum sit una res, respondet secundum veritatem diversis conceptionibus de eo factis, sive prout cogitatur in se, sive prout cogitatur centrum, sive prout cogitatur principium linearum; et hae rationes sive conceptiones sunt in intellectu sicut in subjecto, et in ipso puncto sicut in fundamento veritatis istarum conceptionum. Quamvis istud exemplum non sit usquequaque conveniens, sicut nec alia quae in divinis inducuntur.⁴³

⁴² To the fifth, it must be said that something is said to be founded on and rooted in something else metaphorically when its strength stems from it. The *rationes* apprehended have a double strength: firmness in their being, and this they have from the intellect in the same way as other accidents have it from their subjects, and firmness from their truthfulness, and this they have from the thing to which they conform. Word and thought are true or false depending on whether a thing is or is not. Consequently, the attributes' *rationes* are founded on or rooted in the intellect regarding the firmness of their being, because, as it has been said above, the intellect is their subject, but [they are founded] on the divine essence regarding the firmness of their truth, and this does not at all oppose the divine simplicity.

⁴³ To the sixth, it must be said that in God everything is one in reality except the nonbegottenness, the begottenness, and the procession, which constitute really distinct divine Persons. But this does not mean that any other thing beside them that is said of God must be one notionally. And what Boethius says should be similarly understood, that only "relation" introduces multiplicity in the Trinity, i.e., real plurality. In fact something is one in reality and multiple notionally when one thing corresponds to diverse conceptions and names, which are verified from it. Like the point, which — being one thing — truly corresponds to diverse conceptions of it, depending on whether it is considered in itself, or as the center, or rather as the beginning of a line. These *rationes* or conceptions are in the intellect as in their subject, and in the point itself as in the foundation of the truth of these conceptions. However this example is not in every respect suitable, as other things that are represented about the divine.

APPENDIX III

THE DUX NEUTRORUM

Introduction

A Latin translation of Maimonides' *Guide* was first published by Augustinus Justinianus, Archbishop of Nebio, in the 16th century.¹ Justinianus suggests in the dedicatory epistle, addressed to the Archbishop of Sena Stephanus Poncherio, that the translation was made from the Hebrew language. He writes, "up until now, most of these works are available only in Hebrew." He has just mentioned the fourteen volumes of the *Yad*, i.e., the *Mishneh Torah*, and "many other works" on Medicine, Philosophy, and Holy Scripture. But, he continues "this book that is called *Moré hanevochim*, which means *director dubitantium*, has already been translated some time ago by a translator, who accurately — according to those times — expressed the meanings. ... I undertook this task: that this book be published, and dedicated to your most honorable name." Occasionally, scholars were misled by these generic statements and interpreted that Justinianus himself had accomplished the work of translation. In other cases, its authorship was also attributed to the Spanish doctor Jacob Mantino.² Joseph J. Scaliger and Johannes Buxtorf harshly criticized Justinianus' edition due to the poor quality of the manuscript that he used and to his own misreading of the text, which added more mistakes to the original.³ Buxtorf translated the *Guide* into Latin anew using the Hebrew translation of Ibn Tibbon, and published it in Basel in 1629.⁴ More recently, scholars have tried to reconstruct the history of the Latin text. What follows is a summary of the findings so far.

¹ Rabi Mossei Aegyptii, *Dux seu director dubitantium aut perplexorum* (Paris, 1520). In his dedicatory epistle, Justinianus recalls the two great "Moses" that are celebrated by the Jewish people: the Egyptian Maimonides and Nahmanides of Gerona.

² Cf. Joseph Perles, *Die in einer Münchener Handschrift aufgefundenene erste lateinische Übersetzung des Maimonidischen "Führers"*, 2.

³ Cf. J. Perles, *Die in einer ...*, note 23.

⁴ Probably, Buxtorf's critique of the edition of Justinianus is one of the reasons for the small number of copies of this work that have reached us. W. Kluxen published a list of the libraries that have preserved one: Vatican Library (Rome), Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), Cloister Le Saulchoir, Cambridge University Library,

Joseph Perles studied and partially edited a manuscript from the 14th century that he had found and identified as the same Latin translation of the *Guide* published by Justinianus.⁵ In the introduction to this edition, Perles suggests the possibility that Moses of Salerno, the first author of a Hebrew commentary to the *Guide*, might have been involved in the work of translation, or was at least close to the circle in which the Latin *Guide* was produced. Moses of Salerno belonged to the circle of intellectuals that worked under the auspices of Emperor Frederick II in the south of Italy. He was active in the second half of the 13th century, and acknowledges having collated a Latin translation with the Hebrew one that had been made by Ibn Tibbon, which he used for his commentary.⁶

During the 1950s and 1960s, Wolfgang Kluxen published his studies on the Latin versions of the *Guide*. He produced a catalog of extant manuscripts of the complete *Dux neutrorum*⁷ and another on the partial versions preserved in some European libraries.⁸ He identified three families of manuscripts involved, by which the text was transmitted. These manuscripts are dated between the 13th and 16th centuries, as follows.

and the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York). Cf. "Literargeschichtliches zum lateinischen Moses Maimonides", 24. The copy in the Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem) must be added to this list.

⁵ Cf. *Die in einer ...*, note 2. The edition contains the Preface, the Incipit, and three chapters that correspond to *Guide* I, 74; II, 15 and III, 18. In the manuscript they have a different numeration.

⁶ Moses of Salerno inserted several Italian terms in his own commentary. Cf. e.g., in I, 51: סוסטנציאאי (sustanziei) אינדיביסי (indivisi) רציונלי (razionali). In the same place he writes והנוצרי העתיק זה שאמרו apparently referring to a Latin translation that he is using. I am grateful to Prof. A. Ravitzky for allowing me to examine a transcription of the manuscript of the Bibliotheca Regia Monacensis n. 60. For more information about this disciple of Maimonides, cf. Stanislaus Simon, *Mose ben Salomo von Salerno und seine philosophischen Auseinandersetzungen mit den Lehren des Christentums*, Doctoral Dissertation. Cf. J. Sermoneta, "The Commentaries of R. Moshe ben Shlomo of Salerno and Nicolas of Giovinazzo to the Guide of the Perplexed," and C. Rigo, "Per un' identificazione del 'sapiente cristiano' Nicola da Giovinazzo, collaboratore di Rabbi Mosheh ben Shelomoh da Salerno".

⁷ Cf. "Literargeschichtliches ...", 26-30.

⁸ *Ibid* 36 and 41. See also: Kluxen, "Die Geschichte des Maimonides im lateinischen Abenland als Beispiel einer Christlich-jüdischen Begegnung. Rabbi Moyses, Liber de uno deo benedicto (Herausgegeben von W. Kluxen)", 168-169.

From the 13th century

1st group

- A Rome, Vatican Library, Ottob. Lat. 644
 B Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Latin 15973 (Sorbonne, 173)
 p (excerpt) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds Latin 16096 (Sorbonne, 941)

2nd group

- E Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Université, 601

From the 14th century

1st group

- C Saint Omer, Bibliothèque Publique, 608
 F Cambridge, University Library Ii. I. 19 (1711)
 H Todi, Biblioteca Comunale, 32 (dated 1316-1334)
 I Oxford, Bodleian Library, 437

2nd group

- D Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 7936 b.

3rd group

- G Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, II, 482 (dated c. 1300)

From the 15th century

1st group

- q (excerpt) Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 347 (1440)

2nd group

- K Rome, Bibliotheca Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 1124

3rd group

- L Rome, Bibliotheca Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 4274

From the 16th century:

1st group

- M Cambridge, Trinity College, 0.8.37

These are the manuscripts of the complete text of the *Guide*.⁹ Besides, Kluxen examined two other partial texts that seem to have

⁹ I have already mentioned Perles' edition of manuscript D; Moritz Steinschneider mentions manuscript F in *Hebraische Bibliographie*, XVII, p. 68, note 1; Charles H. Haskins notes the existence of manuscript E in *Studies in the*

a completely different origin: the *Liber de uno deo benedicto* and the *Liber Maimonidis de parabola*.¹⁰ The first was classified by Joseph Koch as a different translation than the *Dux neutrorum*, and contains the text of *Guide* II, Incipit, and chapter 2, i.e., the 26 Aristotelian propositions and the philosophic speculations on the existence of God.¹¹ The second contains *Guide* III, chapters 29-30 and 32-49, on the reasons for the biblical commandments.

The *Liber de uno deo benedicto* has been preserved in four manuscripts:

T Erfurt, Stadtbibliothek, Amplonianus F. 335 (13th century)

V Venice, San Marco, L. VI. LII (54) (14th century)

X Breslau, Stadtbibliothek, Rehdigeranus 459 (14th century)

W Venice, San Marco, L. VI. CLXIV (179) (14th century)

The selection of Latin terms by the author of the *Liber de uno deo* points to a better understanding of the philosophical issues dealt with in the *Guide* than that found in the *Dux neutrorum*.¹² Some medieval authors seem to be unaware that it is part of the *Guide*, known to them as *Dux neutrorum*, and of Maimonides' authorship. The *Liber de uno deo* is useful in its clarifying of difficult passages in the complete Latin translation of the *Dux neutrorum* in these first two chapters of Book II.

The *Liber Maimonidis de parabola* (manuscript S) is the earliest fragment of the Latin *Guide of the Perplexed* known to us, according to the date inserted in the dedicatory note. It consists of a compilation of quotations from the *Guide* on the commandments of the Law and on the presence and explanation of some of the metaphors used in the Bible. This compilation is extant in one single manuscript: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Université 601, ff. 1ra-16, which begins with the words:

In octavo anno gubernationis felicis Honorii tertii. Interrogasti me, potens et humilis Romane, prolonget tibi vitam Deus et augmentet statum, quare mel non adolebatur in sacrificiis et sal valde item portabatur in eisdem ...¹³

History of Medieval Science, 282; P. Mandonnet and G. Théry knew manuscript B: See P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, 2 and G. Théry, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 4, 235, note 2; J. Koch used manuscripts A, B, and C for the edition of: *Giles of Rome, Errores philosophorum*. Cf. Riedl's translation, note 1.

¹⁰ Cf. Kluxen, "Literargeschichtliches ...", 36-46.

¹¹ Cf. Koch, *Giles of Rome ...* Intro., 48.

¹² Some examples of this will be provided in the next section.

¹³ One of the earliest complete copies of *Dux neutrorum* is preserved in the same manuscript, ff. 21r-102vb.

The date is very precise: July 24th, 1223-1224. The dedication is addressed to a certain Romanus, who Kluxen suggests could be identified as Cardinal Romanus, later appointed Legate of the Pope in France. The terms of the dedicatory note, which refers to the eighth year of the pontificate of Honorius III, indicates that the work was composed in Rome or its surroundings, because this manner of dating documents was not common elsewhere at this date. The compiler explains or clarifies Maimonides' assertions in a way that suggests that his readers are not familiar with his work. Besides, the quotations from the Talmud are omitted. All this could suggest the authorship of a Jew, who may have been helped or corrected by a Christian copyist, both of them working for a Christian reader.¹⁴

Joseph Sermoneta published a study on the Hebrew commentary of R. Moses of Salerno to the *Guide*,¹⁵ which focuses on the Latin sources of Salerno's interpretation of certain Hebrew philosophical terms and his contacts with the Latin scholar Nicholas of Giovinazo. Sermoneta supports the hypothesis — already suggested by Perles — that R. Moses would have been active in the court of Emperor Frederick II and worked on the Latin translation of the *Guide*. A recent study by Caterina Rigo has shown this hypothesis improbable, due to some chronological inconsistencies in relation to the period of activity of Nicholas and Moses of Salerno and the time of the diffusion of the *Dux neutrorum*.¹⁶

According to Jacob Guttman, Christian scholars would have already known of this translation at the beginning of the 13th century.¹⁷ Guttman found in the works of William of Auvergne a number of texts that are parallel to other statements found in the *Guide*. The variety of issues is considered by Guttman as a proof for the existence of an early complete Latin translation of this work.¹⁸ According to Guttman, the work of translation of the *Dux neutrorum* would have been carried out in France, at some time during the 1220s and 1230s.

¹⁴ Cf. Kluxen, "Literargeschichtliches ...", 43.

¹⁵ Cf. J. Sermoneta, "He'aroteihem ...", note 6.

¹⁶ Cf. C. Rigo, note 6.

¹⁷ Jacob Guttman, "Guillaume d'Auvergne et la littérature juive", and "Alexandre de Hales et le Judaïsme".

¹⁸ Several examples of the parallel texts that can be found in the works of William of Auvergne and Alexander of Hales and in the *Guide* are provided in footnotes in the two articles.

C. Rigo in a recent study rejects this hypothesis, based on her discovery of an early version of Albert the Great's *De quatuor coequaevis* dated in 1241, in which he does not seem to know of the *Dux neutrorum*, whereas he already acknowledges of it in the version previously known and dated in 1246. Albert also refers to the *Dux* in his Commentary to *I Sententiarum* (c. 1244). Rigo, who is currently working on a new book on the issue, has also identified different levels of composition, with an early partial Latin translation based on the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon, and a later, complete translation based on the version of Al-Harizi.¹⁹

Kluxen has supported Guttmann's conjecture about the place of origin of the Latin *Guide* with some additions and corrections, and has suggested the South of France for the first fragmentary translations. According to him, these fragments would have been produced by some anti-Maimonidean Jews to serve as a proof for the Inquisition to condemn the *Guide*, which was banned by a commission of Inquisitors and publicly burnt in Lyon in 1234. It seems unlikely that by that time it was so well known as to be considered a danger to the Christian faithful. However, in Montpellier two Jewish schools of thought were already engaged in the anti-Maimonidean dispute. R. Solomon and Jonah his disciple could have submitted fragments of the work in Latin to the Inquisitors. One argument in favor of this would be the fact that after that event, no further measures were taken against Maimonides, and he was even held in high esteem by most of the Christian scholars that came to know his work.²⁰

The complete text would have been made later, perhaps in the 1240s, for regular use by Latin scholars.²¹ If William of Auvergne used the *Liber Maimonidis de parabola*, this would explain that he was among the first who quoted the *Guide* in Latin, since both

¹⁹ Cf. C. Rigo, "Zur Rezeption des Moses Maimonides im Werk des Albertus Magnus".

²⁰ Cf. Kluxen, "Literargeschichtliches ...", 34.

²¹ Moneta of Cremona was born in Italy, but most of his activities took place in France, where he was involved in the struggle against the heresy of the Cathars. He might have had contacts with the authorities involved in the 1234 burning of the *Guide*, and so had knowledge of Maimonides. Monetae Cremonensis *Summa Adversus Catharos et Valdenses*. Book V, ch. 2 (483b): "quidam Judaeus dictus Rabbi Moyses". Cf. Kluxen, "Literargeschichtliches ...", 33. The quotation seems to refer to the beginning of *Guide* II, because the chapter in Moneta's *Summa* is

William and Cardinal Romanus were in Paris during the decades of the 1230s and 1240s. Given that Romanus had this text, he could have made it available to William.²² That would also explain that in spite of using the *Guide*, William of Auvergne did not know either of the author or of the title, for Maimonides is not mentioned by name in this text. Besides, both in the *Liber Maimonidis de parabola* and in the works of William of Auvergne the quotations of the Bible are given according to the Vulgate version, which does not occur in the *Dux neutrorum*.

David Kaufmann dismisses both the suggestion that the *Guide* was translated in the south of France and the hypothesis about the south of Italy.²³ He proposes instead Spain as the place of completion of the work, though his only reason for this suggestion is the fact that in the Peninsula there was already a long and fruitful tradition of joint work of translation between Christians and Jews.²⁴ In the catalog of the books that belonged to Don Sancho of Aragon, Archbishop of Toledo between 1266-1275, I found a volume entitled *Libro rabi Moyses cuius principium est dixit Moyses egipcius*. This catalog is dated in 1266. His successor, Don Gonzalo García Gudiel (originally Dean in Toledo, then appointed Bishop of Cuenca and later on Archbishop of Toledo during the period 1280-1299) in 1273 possessed a book entitled *Rabi Moyses*.²⁵ But research on the early copies of *Dux neutrorum* that were written or kept in Spanish libraries is still needed. Kluxen's catalog was based on Riedl's information regarding the previous studies published on the *Dux neutrorum*, and therefore it is not exhaustive. Moises Orfali published a catalog of the manuscripts of Spanish Jewish authors on Logic, which includes

entitled: "De novitate mundi et de rationibus quibus philosophi probant mundum esse aeternum". Moneta might be using the *Liber de uno deo*.

²² Cardinal Romanus was already Legate of the Pope in Paris in 1225 or 1226. William of Auvergne taught at the university of Paris until 1228, being appointed Archbishop of the city in May that year. He held that position until his death in 1249. Cf. Amato Masnovi, *Da Guglielmo d'Auvergne a S. Tommaso d'Aquino*, I, 11, 14, and 32.

²³ Cf. David Kaufmann, "Der 'Führer' Maimûni's in der Weltliteratur," 354.

²⁴ Ch. H. Haskins mentions translations being made already in the 12th century in Barcelona, Tarazona, Segovia, León, Pamplona, and, later on, Toledo. Cf. *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, p. 10.

²⁵ J.M. Millás Vallicrosa, *Las traducciones orientales en los manuscritos de la Biblioteca Catedral de Toledo*, 16-17.

the extant manuscripts of Maimonides' *Millot ha-Higgayon*, and the Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts of the *Guide*, but this catalog was not intended for the inclusion of the Latin manuscripts.²⁶

The Critical Edition

The critical edition of *Dux neutrorum*, II, Incipit, and I, which has a particularly complex manuscript tradition, has been made according to manuscripts ABCEKL, which represent the three families of the text that have been identified. I have also checked the locations where D, G, F, H, (14th century) render a reading of the text closer to the original when the other manuscripts deviate from it.²⁷ I relied on ABCE for *Dux*, I, 33, and II, 18.

I have included reference to annotations in the manuscripts' margins only when these provide useful information regarding other possible texts collated by the copyist. Manuscripts H and K often have such annotations. I have omitted references to grammatical corrections made by a second hand that do not change the meaning of the sentences, as well as explanations of the contents of the text made by the copyist. The latter appear especially in K.

I collated the Latin translation of II, Incipit, and chapter 2 with the two Hebrew versions, Ibn Tibbon's²⁸ and Al-Ḥarizi's,²⁹ and with the Arabic original, in order to analyze the material that the translator used for the production of the text and the nature of the translation.³⁰

The Latin translator used the Hebrew version of Al-Ḥarizi and this is the text that he generally follows. We have several examples of this: For instance, at the beginning of *Dux* II, Incipit, Al-Ḥarizi changes the Arabic plural **مטאלבנא** that was translated by Ibn

²⁶ M. Orfali, *Biblioteca de autores lógicos hispano-judíos de los siglos XII-XIII*.

²⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Kluxen for providing me material that he collected for his edition of the Latin text of *Dux* II, Incipit, and part of chapter 2, included in his Doctoral Dissertation. This material allowed me to select the best manuscripts and to have knowledge of readings of particular interest in the ones that I have not collated systematically, and it is the source of my references to manuscript F in chapter 2.

²⁸ Rabbi Moses ben Maimun (Rambam), *Doctor Perplexorum (Guide of the Perplexed)*. Hebrew version of R. Samuel Ibn Tibbon.

²⁹ Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, *Moreh ha-nebukhim*, Hebrew version of R. Yehudah Al-Ḥarizi ed. by S. Munk.

³⁰ Moses ben Maimon, *Dalālat al-Hā'irīn*, Arabic text ed. by S. Munk.

Tibbon as מבוקשינו, and gives the singular שאלתנו. The Latin keeps the singular of Al-Ḥarizi: “quaestio nostra.”

In the 4th Proposition Al-Ḥarizi deviates from Ibn Tibbon and from the Arabic, which reads:

אן אלתגײר יוגר פי ארבע מקולאת, פי מקולה אלגוהר והדא אלתגײר אלכאין פי אלגוהר
הו אלכון ואלפסאד

And renders a shorter sentence:

הוא השינוי ימצא בארבע מאמרות, במאמר העצם, וזה ההוה וההפסד.

The Latin text reads: “Quatuor sunt mutationes: secundum substantiam, quae dicitur generatio et corruptio.”³¹

Al-Ḥarizi omits the last two words of the 13th Proposition ואלדוריה מנהא, which had been translated by Ibn Tibbon והסבוכית ממנה, and so does the Latin.³²

At the beginning of chapter 2, the Latin clearly follows Al-Ḥarizi when it renders הקדמונית והראשונית as: “est antiquus et primus”, instead of the Arabic אקדם אלחרכאת which had been correctly translated by Ibn Tibbon הקודמת שבתנועות.³³

The Latin translator has a tendency to shorten the sentences by omitting repetitions or examples that support what has been explained, which occur in the original text. In the 3rd Proposition he omits the last words, which appear in the Al-Ḥarizi version and in that of Ibn Tibbon, because the expression “vanum est” has already been used in the same sentence.³⁴ The last phrase of the 4th Proposition is omitted: ועלי הדא אלתגײר פי אלאיו תקאל אלחרכה בכזוץ. A shorter version of the 10th Proposition is also provided.³⁵ In the 15th Proposition, the sentence לא תוגד חרכה אלא פי זמאן is omitted in Latin, although it is rendered by both Hebrew translations.³⁶

Nevertheless, the Latin sometimes corrects deviations that occur in Al-Ḥarizi’s text, getting thus closer than the latter to the Arabic original:

³¹ Cf. incipit, ll. 13-14.

³² Cf. *ibid.* l. 34.

³³ Cf. ch. 2, l. 8.

³⁴ Cf. incipit, l. 12.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.* ll. 28-29. Other places with missing explanatory words or sentences are: 17th Proposition, l. 49; ch. 2, l. 4; ll. 27-28; l. 40.

³⁶ Cf. incipit, l. 40.

- In the 17th Proposition Al-Ḥarizi had introduced a foreign element by writing **יחשבו כי החי יהאדם מתנועע** for the Arabic **تَنَوَّعَ بِالْحَيَوَانِ** אנה יתחדך דון מתחדך. The Latin translates “putant homines quod animal movetur. ...” An even closer translation of the Arabic would have been achieved by rendering the verb impersonally as: “putatur”. The presence of the word “homines” seems a concession to Al-Ḥarizi.
- In the 3rd Proposition Al-Ḥarizi had rendered the plural Arabic noun **עלל** as the singular Hebrew **עלה**. The Latin reads in all the manuscripts “causas”.
- In the 14th Proposition the Arabic gives **ואולאהא באלטבע** and is closely followed by Ibn Tibbon who translates **והראשונה שבהם בטבע**. Al-Ḥarizi simply renders: **והיא המוקדמת**, but the Latin reads “et prior naturaliter”.³⁷
- In the 21st Proposition, where Al-Ḥarizi had changed the philosophical meaning of the sentence by omitting the preposition “in”, the Latin brings it back to the text: “quia sua essentia est **in** essentia partium suarum et **in** earum compositione”.³⁸ The Arabic reads:

לאן וגודה בוגוד גואיה ובתרכיבהא.

And this sentence is translated by Ibn Tibbon thus:

כי מציאותו במציאות שני חלקיו ובהרכבתם.

- Towards the end of the Incipit, the Latin introduces “desiderium” for the Arabic **שהיה** a word that had been missed by Al-Ḥarizi. However, it retains the shorter version of Al-Ḥarizi’s text, which is also missing a previous part of the same sentence.³⁹
- In the *Consideratio IIIa per viam philosophie*, Al-Ḥarizi had inverted the order of two sentences,⁴⁰ thus rendering the continuation of the argument unintelligible. The Latin again follows the Arabic and Ibn Tibbon bringing the original order back to the text.⁴¹

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.* I. 35.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.* I. 65.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.* II. 99-100: The word was translated by Ibn Tibbon as **תאוה**. The Arabic reads:

לאן אלסב פי חרכתה. בעד אלסכוו וינתהי אלי אמור דאעיה לתלך אלחרכה ודי אמא

⁴⁰ Cf. ch. 2, ll. 87-88.

⁴¹ Other places with corrections to Al-Ḥarizi by the Latin version are: Incipit., I. 96, where the Arabic **ענדה** which had been omitted by the Hebrew translator is brought back as “secundum ipsum”. In ch. 2, ll. 11-12, the Latin reads “moti a calore naturali”, which is more literal to the Arabic **אלחר אלגריזי**

In all the places that I have checked where the Latin translator deviates from Al-Ḥarizi, this deviation can be explained only if the translator collated the Hebrew text with the Arabic original. In all these places, the Latin text also agrees with the Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon, but I did not find any proof to support the hypothesis that the translator would have collated this other Hebrew version with Al-Ḥarizi's instead of the Arabic. Rather, the fact that the author of the Latin text knows where that of Al-Ḥarizi should be corrected indicates that he did have the original Arabic at hand. Had he only known the two Hebrew translations, he would have had no idea which one of them was closer to the original in these places.⁴²

The *Dux neutrorum* does not seem to have been produced by a philosopher. Although the translator shows interest in producing an accurate version, this interest is from time to time replaced by a more practical motive: whenever Al-Ḥarizi's version is shorter than the original, it is followed by the Latin, despite the philosophical contradictions that may ensue.

A good example of this can be found towards the end of the Incipit, where Al-Ḥarizi had translated:

אלא לבאר ההקדמות הרחוקות והקרובות שאנו צריכים לפי ענינו

For the Arabic:

ותביין אבעד אלמקדמאת כל זכר אלמקדמאת אלקריבה אלמחחאג אליהא בחסב גרצנא

Ibn Tibbon had correctly translated:

ולבאר הרחוקות שבהקדמות, אבל לזכור ההקדמות הקרובות, הצריך אליהם לפי ענינו

The Latin text here follows Al-Ḥarizi: "sed ostendere propositiones propinquas **et remotas**, scilicet quibus indigemus ..."⁴³

than Al-Ḥarizi's **היסודי החום**. Ibn Tibbon had given a better translation: **החום הטבעי**. In ch. 2, l. 61 the Latin translator quotes the Fifth and the Seventh propositions following the Arabic and Ibn Tibbon, whereas Al-Ḥarizi had only mentioned the Seventh. In ch. 2, ll. 119-120, the Latin reads "species necessitatis" where Al-Ḥarizi had written **חיוב** but omitted the word **מיו**; again in l. 121, the Latin reads "non habet secundum" where the Arabic read **לא יצח פיה בולגה**. Al-Ḥarizi had omitted it.

⁴² Perles had already suggested that the text seemed to be based on Al-Ḥarizi and checked with the Arabic. Cf. Perles, *Die in einer.*, 8. See also: W.Z. Harvey, "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible", note 10.

⁴³ Cf. incipit, ll. 85-86. See also ch. 2, ll. 87-88.

Besides, the translator does not seem to be familiar with the philosophical terminology. He systematically renders an awkward translation of the Arabic *באעתבאר זאתה*, which is given by both Hebrew versions as *בבחינת עצמו* thus: “cum intelligimus eius substantiam”⁴⁴; “in probatione nostra suae substantiae.”⁴⁵ In chapter 2, ll. 102-104, each manuscript gives a different reading, all of them imprecise. Here my edition follows manuscript L, which is the one closest to Maimonides’ original text. Manuscript F substitutes the whole sentence (ll. 99-104) with the better reading of this passage in *De uno deo benedicto*. Manuscripts KLGp insert a sentence in l. 99 clarifying the philosophical meaning of the paragraph, which is obscure in the lines that follow.

The author of *De uno deo* was in fact much more familiar with the philosophical contents of the Incipit and chapter 2 of the *Guide*, and renders an extremely faithful translation of the Maimonidean arguments.⁴⁶ It is difficult to determine whether the source that he used was Ibn Tibbon’s version or the Arabic original, but it is certainly not Al-Ḥarizi’s because, unlike the case of *Dux neutrorum*, this translator’s peculiarities are absent from this text. However, there is an element that might indicate the proximity of *De uno deo* to the Arabic text. At the beginning of the Incipit, the word “massabini” stands for either the Hebrew *משאיים* or the Arabic *אלמשאין*. The presence of the “b” could be explained if the text that was being translated was written in Arabic alphabet, where “b” and the long “i” can be easily confused.⁴⁷

The *Dux neutrorum* introduces another feature that should be mentioned. The author systematically translates the word *האלוה* or *האל* by “Creator.” In the present edition, the term “Deus” is only used seven times. In at least four cases, this term is used in the context of the question over the possibility of the existence of more than one God. Maimonides elaborates on what would happen if there were two gods, and concludes with the impossibility of such a hypothesis. The Latin translator seems to prefer not to

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.* ll. 58-59 (19th Proposition).

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.* l. 60 (20th Proposition). Other places with the same or similar readings are: ch. 2, l. 101; l. 109; l. 114; ll. 116-117; l. 137: “in substantia eius”; l. 140: “ens in sua substantia”; l. 150; l. 152.

⁴⁶ He correctly translates the above mentioned places as “in seipso” or “ipsum esse”, and uses technical terms like “predicamentum” and “peripatetici”.

⁴⁷ I am grateful to Prof. Z. Harvey for directing my attention to this.

use the term “Deus” whenever he is entailed to name the true God, but uses instead “Creator”⁴⁸, which does not appear in the original text. This can only be explained if the translator was a Jew, because a Christian translator would not have been reluctant to write the name of God. The author of *De uno deo* uses the word “Deus” in all the cases.

Key of Abbreviations

add. additum
al. man. alia manus
cancell. cancellatum, cancellavit
cf. confer
cod. codex; *codd.* codices
col. columna
conf. confusum
corr. correxit, correctio
f. folium; *ff.* folia
inv. invertit (ordo verborum)
inser. inseruit
om. omissio, omittit
rep. repetivit, repetitio
suppl. Supplevit

Key of Manuscripts

- A Vat. Ottob. Lat. 644 (13th century)
- B Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Lat. 15973 (Sorbonne 173) (13th century)
- C Saint Omer, Bibliothèque Publique, 608 (14th century)
- E Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Université 601 (13th century)
- F Cambridge 1711 (14th century)
- H Todi, Biblioteca Comunale 32 (14th century)
- L Vat. Lat. 4274 (15th century)
- K Vat. Lat. 1124 (15th century)
- G Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, II, 482 (14th century)
- D München, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 7936 b (14th century)

⁴⁸ Cf. Ch. 2, ll. 146, 142, 147, and 156.

DIXIT RABBI MOYSES (DUX NEUTRORUM)

Liber I, 33

1. Scias quod quinque sunt causae quae prohibent vel impediunt
2. incipere addiscere sapientiam spiritualem, et innuere vel significare
3. quae expedit innui super illa et detegere quae sunt in ipsa, genti.
4. Prima causa est profunditas et subtilitas, et clausura rationum, sicut
5. dixit Salomon, ‘alta profunditas, quis inveniet?’ Et dixit, ‘sapientia
6. unde inventa est?’ et idcirco non oportet incipere a sapientia
7. profunda et occulta. Et scias quod de similitudinibus notis gentis
8. nostrae una est quod assimilaverunt sapientiam aquae, quam
9. similitudinem exposuerunt multipliciter sapientes. Uno modo sic,
10. qui scit natate ille potest extrahere gemmas de profundo maris, et
11. qui nescit natate submergitur, et idcirco non expedit ut quis mittat
12. se in periculum et natet, nisi exercitaverit animam suam
13. addiscendo.
14. Secunda causa est, brevitatis intellectus humani in initio suo;
15. quoniam homo non acquirit ultimam perfectionem in initio, sed
16. perfectio est in eo in potentia, et est in initio suo diminuta. Sicut
17. dictum est, ‘pullus onagri homo natus est’. Et non sequitur de
18. necessitate ut omne quod est in potentia in aliquo, exeat de
19. potentia ad actum, sed possibile est ut remaneat in imperfectione
20. sua vel propter impedimenta extrinseca, vel propter defectum
21. disciplinae et exercitii, per quae procedat de potentia ad actum. Et
22. propter hoc dictum est: non multi sapientes, quoniam ea quae
23. impediunt acquirere perfectionem sunt multa, et quae inducunt
24. dubitationes, innumerabiles. Et ex quo sic est: quando poterit homo
25. esse paratus praeparatione completa et vacavit ei addiscere et

| 1 quae: vel *add.* E | prohibent vel impediunt: *inv.* AKL | 3 illa: ista C | detegere: de generante? C | 4 subtilitas: sublimitas C | 5 alta: longe quod fuit B | inveniet: eam *add.* A | 6 unde: nominum K | a: o B | 7 quod: una *add.* B | notis: vocis E | 8 quod: et A | aquae: a quae E | 9 sapientes: *om.* L | 10 gemmas de profundo: ex profundo gemmas L | 12 suam: in *add.* AE | 14 initio: inicio C | 15 homo non acquirit: non acquirit homo AC | initio: inicio C | 16 in (2): *om.* KL | est (2): etiam C | initio: inicio C | 17 est (1): *om.* BEKL | natus: factus KL | 18 omne: cause E | exeat: ex ea E | 19 ad: in C | remaneat: remaneant E | imperfectione: perfectione C | 20 extrinseca: intrinseca C | 21 exercitii: exercet E | 22 est: quod *add.* KL | 23 impediunt: expediunt KL | 24 quando: qui K; quomodo L | poterit homo: *inv.* K | 25 esse: est B | praeparatione: et *add.* L |

26. exercere animam suam, donec quod est in eo in potentia exeat de
 27. potentia ad actum?
 28. Causa tertia est multitudo stramentorum et antecedentium:
 29. quoniam habet homo in natura sua desiderium et amorem
 30. quaerendi finitates vel fines, et vellet pervenire ad finem cuiuslibet
 31. rei. Quandoque vero anxietur et abhorret stramenta, scias autem
 32. quod si posses acquirere finitates absque stramentis quae praemitti
 33. debent, non essent illa stramenta, sed adiectiones laboriosae.
 34. Quilibet autem homo etiam stultus et fatuus cum perciperes eum
 35. ad intelligendum sicut expergefaciunt dormientem, et diceres ei
 36. 'nonne desiderat anima tua intelligere modum sphaerarum
 37. coelorum quot sunt et quae figura ipsorum et quid est in eis, et
 38. quid sunt angeli, et quomodo creatus fuit mundus in suo universo,
 39. vel quis fuit finis intentionis creationis ipsorum, secundum ordinem
 40. partium ipsarum, et quid est anima, et quomodo fuit creata in
 41. corpore, et si anima hominis separabitur a corpore, et si separetur,
 42. cuiusmodi erit illa separatio, et ad quid revertetur, et similia istis
 43. super veritate sua? procul dubio invenies animam ipsius cupientem
 44. scire ista cupiditate naturali, sed volet ut quiescat amor iste et
 45. perveniat ad desiderium suum in uno verbo vel in duobus.
 46. Quod si imposueris ei ut omittat negotia sua in spatium unius
 47. hebdomade ut sciat ista, non faciet. Videbitur autem ei quod
 48. habundat cogitationibus vanis et falsis, et placebunt animae suae, et
 49. abhorret cum dicitur ei quod quaedam sunt in sapientia quae
 50. indigent multis antecedentibus, et longo tempore ad
 51. investigandum et intelligendum. Tu vero scis quod quaedam
 52. istorum sunt aliis connexa, quoniam in entibus non est nisi Creator
 53. et creatura, et ipsa creata sunt quae communicant in ente praeter

| 28 stramentorum: instrumentorum A | 29 quoniam: quando A | 30 vel: et C
 | finem: fines L | cuiuslibet: cuiusdam A | 31 quandoque: quando etiam C |
 vero: *om.* L | 33 essent: erunt C | illa: ista B; *om.* C | adiectiones: abiectiones B;
 addiectiones L | 34 perciperes: percipies E; expergefaciens A | 35 dormientem:
 dormientes E | diceres: dicens BC; dicens E; dicens KL | 36 sphaerarum: sper-
 arum A | 39 vel: et AKL | intentionis: intentio B | creationis: creatoris L | crea-
 tionis ipsorum: *inv.* C | 40 partium: parcium B | ipsarum: suarum BE | quid:
 quidquid KL | quomodo: anima *add.* B | 41 si: utrum B | separetur: separatur
 C; a corpore *add.* A | 42 cuiusmodi: eius E | illa: ista C | 44 sed: si A | quiescat:
 quiescet K | 45 perveniat: perveniet A | 46 negotia: negocia E | spatium:
 spacium E | 47 hebdomade: ebdomade ACEL | sciat: sciet A | ei: eis C | 48
 habundat: habundet C | falsis: similibus E | 49 cum: si L | 50 tempore: *om.* KL
 | 52 istorum: eorum E | sunt: *om.* A | 53 creatura: creata AE | creata sunt: *inv.*
 A | communicant: comunicerat C; committant E |

54. ipsum. Nec est via ad inveniendum ipsum, nisi per creata sua, et
 55. ipsa probant ipsum esse, et ea quae necesse est credi de Deo
 56. attribuendo ei vel removendo ab eo.
 57. Et debemus de necessitate intendere in creata secundum quod
 58. sunt, donec accipiamus de qualibet ratione antecedentia vera et
 59. fidelia quae proderunt nobis in investigationestrarum
 60. spiritualium rationum. Omnia vero antecedentia accepta de
 61. scientia geometriae et de potentiis figurarum arithmetice ad
 62. inducendum demonstrationem ex eis super his quae debent
 63. removeri Deo, et demonstrant hoc multiplici ratione super
 64. firmamento coeli et scientia naturali, non videtur quod dubites
 65. quin sint necessaria ad acquirendum comparationem mundi
 66. respectu regiminis Dei, sicut est per viam veritatis, non secundum
 67. ymaginationes. Sunt etiam multa speculativa de quibus licet non
 68. accipiantur antecedentia ad cognoscendum mundum istum, tamen
 69. acuunt et exercent intellectum ad intelligendum demonstrationem
 70. et scientiam veritatis in illis quae demonstrant super substantia
 71. Creatoris, et tollunt laborem qui invenitur in pluribus
 72. cogitationibus speculatorum in mixtione modorum per accidens
 73. cum eis quae per se. Tollunt etiam quod renovatur per laborem
 74. illum de corruptione scientiarum et opinionum, et adiungitur
 75. etiam istis ut res intelligantur secundum quod sunt, licet non sint
 76. radices in scientia spirituali. Similiter etiam non deficiunt in eis alia
 77. iuvamenta, in rebus quae ducunt hominem ad illam sapientiam.
 78. Quicumque vero voluerit acquirere perfectionem humanam, nullo
 79. modo potest hoc facere nisi prius exercent animam suam in
 80. doctrina dialectice, postea in disciplinalibus secundum ordinem

| 54 nec: sed E | nec est via ad inveniendum ipsum: *om.* C | 55 et: ea C | Deo: eo ABE | 56 ei: *om.* KL | 57 necessitate: cessitate B | intendere: attendere C | in creata: increata L | creata: causata B | secundum: vel L | 58 ratione: intentione KL | antecedentia: accidentia C | 59 nobis: *om.* KL | in: *om.* BCEKL | nostrarum: naturalium C | 60 vero: *om.* C | antecedentia: accidentia C | 61 geometriae: geometrice E | potentiis figurarum: scientiis potentiarum L; scientia potentiarum K | arithmetice: arismetice AEKL | 62 his: hiis AKL | 62-63 his ... super: *om.* BCE | 63 removeri: a *add.* KL | 65 acquirendum: *om.* A | 67 etiam: autem C | licet: *om.* L | 68 cognoscendum: cognoscendi E | mundum: multum A | istum: *om.* E | 69 intellectum: et *ad.* E | intelligendum: intelligere E | 70 demonstrant: demonstrantur L | substantia: substantiam A | 71 qui: que E | 72 modorum: morum E | 73 per se tollunt: tollunt per se L | etiam: et L | 76 deficiunt: definant K | 77 iuvamenta: iuramenta: C | in: *om.* C | illam: aliam K | 78 voluerit acquirere: *inv.* E | nullo: ullo L | 80 dialectice: dyialectice K | disciplinalibus: disciplinabilibus AE | secundum: per K |

81. suum, deinde in naturalibus, postea in spiritualibus.
82. Nos autem invenimus plures homines quorum intellectus attingit
83. partem istarum scientiarum, et ibi stat, et licet fatigata est anima
84. ipsorum, mors separat inter ipsos et desiderium ipsorum eisdem
85. etiam studentibus adhuc in parte stramentorum, et si non fuisset
86. nobis consultum per viam receptionis, et non duceremur ad
87. rationem per similitudines, et si non sequeremur disciplinam
88. perfectam in rebus veris, et non crederemus in hiis quae necesse est
89. credi nisi per probationes, quod non sequitur nisi post stramenta
90. longa, perveniret ex hoc, quod morerentur omnes homines
91. antequam scirent an mundus habeat Creatorem vel non, nedum ut
92. attribueres ei aliquid vel removeres ab ipso defectum, nec evaderet
93. aliquis periculum istud, 'nisi unus de civitate, duo de generatione.'
94. Singulares vero, 'quos dominus vocat residuos' non acquirunt
95. perfectionem quae est finis nisi post stramenta et antecedentia.
96. Salomon autem exposuit quod necessitas compellit addiscere
97. stramenta, et quod non potest perveniri ad sapientiam veram nisi
98. post laborem disciplinae in discendo. 'Si retusum fuerit ferrum et
99. fuerit politum multo labore exacuatur, et post industriam sequitur
100. sapientia'. Et dixit, 'audi consilium et addisce disciplinam, ut sis
101. sapiens in novissimis tuis'. Est alia necessitas quae compellit
102. addiscere antecedentia, quoniam multae dubitationes nascuntur
103. in corde hominis in discendo, et similiter intelliget contraria cito,
104. scilicet destructionem alicuius verbi quae est similis destructioni
105. fabricae. Sed non provenit firmitas verborum, et solutio
106. dubitationum, nisi cum multis antecedentibus sumptis de
107. stramentis ipsis. Speculator vero sine stramento similis est
108. currenti ut perveniat ad locum aliquem, et incidit in currendo in

| 81 deinde: *om.* E | 82 nos: non C | attingit: attingunt E | 83 istarum: ipsarum A | 84 separat: seperat L | ipsorum: eorum K | 85 etiam: et EKL | adhuc: *om.* KL | 87 rationem: rationes KL | 88 veris: *om.* K | crederemus: crederemur C; credemus E; crederimus L | 89 credi: credere B; concedi L | probationes: et *add.* E | post: per C | 90 ex: ad C | 91 scirent: scit verus C | an: si ABL; nisi K; secundum E | 92 attribueres: attribuens E | defectum: defertum L | nec: ut L; ne CK | 93 istud: illud E | civitate: et *add.* AE | 95 post: per L | 97 sapientiam veram: *inv.* C | 98 discendo: dicendo EK | et: non AC; non *add.* KL | 98-99 et fuerit politum: *om.* BE | politum: pollitum L | 100 addisce: id est suscipe *inser.* A; antecedentia *add.* B | sis: sit E | 103 discendo: dicendo E | intelliget: intelligit A | 104 destructioni: alicuius *add.* KL | 105 fabricae: fabrice BE | 106 dubitationum: dubiorum E | 108 currenti: ocurrenti L | in (2): *om.* KL |

109. foveam profundam, et nescit quomodo exeat inde, donec
 110. moritur. Et si stetisset in loco suo melius fuisset ei. Salomon
 111. multa dicit numerando diversitates pigrorum, et totum hoc est
 112. similitudo ad illum qui non laborat ut acquirat scientiam.
 113. Dixit autem in desiderio cupientis acquirere intelligentiam, et
 114. non laborantis, ut addiscat stramenta quae perducerent ipsum
 115. usque ad fines illos, sed tantummodo desiderat, ‘desideria
 116. occidunt pigrum, quia manus suae noluerunt operari; tota die
 117. desiderans desiderat. Iustus autem dat et non prohibet’.
 118. Causa ergo quare desideria pigrum occidunt est, secundum
 119. Salomonem, quia non laborat et quaerit aliquid cum quo
 120. extinguat desiderium illud, sed desiderat solummodo et
 121. suspendit spem suam in eo quod naturaliter non potest
 122. appraehendere. Et si recederet ab illo desiderio et dimitteret
 123. ipsum, tunc evasisset. Et intellige finem huius similitudinis
 124. qualiter explanat quod primo dixit, in dicendo, ‘iustus dat et non
 125. prohibet’. Iustus enim non est contrarius pigro, nisi sicut
 126. praediximus quia ipse dixit quod iustus est qui dat unicuique
 127. quod suum est, idest totum tempus suum dat ut acquirat
 128. sapientiam, et nichil prohibet de tempore suo ab addiscendo, ac
 129. si diceret, ‘iustus dat tempus suum sapientiae et non prohibet’, et
 130. hoc est simile illi quod dixit, ‘non des mulieri fortitudine tuam’.
 131. Multi vero sapientium qui famosi fuerunt in scientiis,
 132. laboraverunt hoc vitio, scilicet investigando finitates, et loquendo
 133. in ipsis sine speculatione stramentorum suorum. Et sunt quidam
 134. illorum quos stultitia ducit vel inquisitio rerum grandium ad
 135. repudiandum stramenta ipsa, quia potentia ipsorum breviatur
 136. investigatione stramentorum, vel cessat ab inquisitione
 137. stramentorum et laborat probare quia dampnosa sunt, vel quia

| 110 moritur: moriatur L | 111 numerando: dinumerando L | numerando
 diversitates: diversitates minando A | 112 acquirat: quirat B | 113 acquirere:
 acquiescere C | 114 ut: si LK | perducerent: producerent L | 115 usque: *om.* K
 | 116 noluerunt: nolunt A | 118 ergo: vero L | pigrum occidunt: *inv.* C | 119
 aliquid: aliud L | 120 extinguat: extinguitur L | 121 spem: speciem E | 123 intel-
 lige: intelligere L | 124 in dicendo: *om.* KL | 126 quia ipse dixit: *om.* LK | dixit:
 dicit BC | 127 tempus suum: *inv.* KL | dat: *om.* C | 128 ab: *om.* L | addiscendo:
 abdiscendo K | 129 sapientiae: *om.* E | 130 dixit: Salomon *add.* L | 132 vitio: vicio
 CE | finitates: infirmitates: KL | loquendo: loquendi B | 133 sine: in *add.* B | suo-
 rum: *om.* KL | 134 stultitia: stulticia ACE | 135 repudiandum: reputandum E |
 quia: et L | 137 quia (1): quod E; quae L |

138. non est utilitas in ipsis, et veritas nota est intelligenti.
 139. Causa quarta est aptitudo naturalis. Probatum enim est quoniam
 140. complexio corporis est stramentum morum animae et in nullo
 141. homine possunt esse mores animae intelligibiles et perfecti nisi in
 142. illo qui eligit mores bonos, et exercet illos, et habet sensum
 143. quietum et pacatum. Sunt autem multi in quibus est complexio
 144. naturalis cum qua nullomodo convenit perfectio intellectus, sicut
 145. est aliquis cuius cordis natura est calidissima, et est fortis robore,
 146. quam duo comitatur iracundia, licet ille exercet animam suam in
 147. fine exercitii et disciplinae. Et sicut ille cuius ovorum natura est
 148. calida et humida et ipse est fortis robore. Dico quoniam iste vix
 149. potest consequi sanctitatem, licet exerceret animam suam in fine
 150. exercitii et disciplinae.
 151. Similiter etiam invenies aliquos qui sunt fortes et leves, et habent
 152. motus inordinatos et laboriosos, per quod probatur malicia
 153. compositionis et complexionis eorum, et in talibus numquam
 154. invenitur intellectus perfectus, et laborare cum eis ut addiscant
 155. istam disciplinam est stulticia doctoris, quoniam ista sapientia
 156. sicut tu scis non est sicut aritmetica vel phisica, et non est quilibet
 157. homo aptus et paratus ut illam percipiat propter rationes
 158. supradictas. Et idcirco non potest hoc esse nisi praemittatur
 159. stramentum aptitudinis morum, donec homo sit in fine
 160. rectitudinis, et perfectionis, sicut dictum est, ‘abominatio domini
 161. stolidus, et cum recto secretum eius’. Et ideo non expedit, ut
 162. doceamus illam adolescentes, nec ipsi possunt eam recipere,
 163. propter inconstantiam naturae suae, et quia cogitationes suae
 164. ardent in igne adolescentiae, donec extinguatur flamma motiva
 165. ipsorum, et attingant gradum sapientiae et intellectus, et frangant

| 139 Causa quarta: *inv.* BL | aptitudo: altitudo ABKL | enim est: *inv.* CK | quoniam: quod C | 140 animae: *om.* KL | 142 mores bonos: *inv.* C | 143 pacatum: paccatum B | est: *om.* C | 144 nullomodo: ullo modo C | 145 est (3): *om.* B | 146 quam: quae CEL | duo: *om.* KL | comitatur: committatur K | iracundia: iracundi B | ille: *om.* B | exercet: exerceret B; exercent CL; exercerit K | 147 ille: iste C | ovorum: honorum KL | est: et seminis multiplicativa *add.* B | 148 iste: ipse E | iste vix: *inv.* K | 149 exerceret: exerceat L | 152 motus: *om.* E; modos KL | 155 istam: illam E | est: et C | 156 sicut (2): *om.* K | aritmetica: arismeticalis C; arismetica AE | vel: *om.* C | phisica: fisica B | 157 illam: illa A | percipiat: recipiat EL | 158 idcirco: ideo L | hoc: *om.* C | nisi: ut C | praemittatur: praemittitur E | 160 est: Proverb. III *add.* E | abominatio: abhominatio AKL; habominatio B | 161 recto: *om.* K | eius: est K | et (2): etiam B | 163 cogitationes: cogitationis B | 164 motiva: *om.* K | 165 ipsorum: eorum E | gradum: gradus E | et (2): *om.* KL | et (3): in K | frangant: frangat KL |

166. corda sua, et complexio conquiescat, et tunc regent et ducent
 167. animas suas ad gradum istum qui est appraehensio Creatoris, hoc
 168. est ad gradum sapientiae spiritualis, quae vocatur opus de
 169. Mercana. Et propter hoc dictum est, ‘prope est dominus contritis
 170. corde’, et iterum. Altus et sanctus quiescam super humilem et
 171. quietum, et propter hoc dictum est in Talmud, ‘non dabuntur
 172. initia rationum, nisi domino scolae qui vocatur dominus iudicii’,
 173. et quod cor eius sit triste intra ipsum, et premat cor suum, et
 174. humiliet se cum humilitate addita et adiuncta sapientiae, et
 175. propter hoc dixerunt, ‘non dabunt occulta legis nisi consiliario et
 176. sapienti magistrorum, et intelligenti incantationem’.
 177. Ista vero indigent natura parata et apta ad recipiendum
 178. sapientiam. Nonne scis quod est aliquis inter homines qui est
 179. debilis in consiliis, et tamen est multum intelligens, et est alius
 180. cuius consilia recta sunt in agendis, et talis vocatur consiliarius, et
 181. tamen nullius est intellectus? Et si applicaretur ad intelligibilia
 182. prima quae etiam pueri intelligunt, inveniretur ignorans, et
 183. multum nescius, et non potest aptari? Est alius intelligens et
 184. purus in natura qui potest intelligere de facili rationes cum levi
 185. explanatione, et talis vocatur intelligens incantationem, sed non
 186. laborat in sapientia nec acquirit eam. Qui vero habet scientias in
 187. actu vocatur sapiens magistrorum, et pro ipso dictum est quod
 188. cum loquitur, omnes obsurdescunt. Pone cor tuum et vide
 189. quomodo induxerunt conditiones hominis perfecti ex verbis
 190. scripturae in regimine civitatis, et in scientiis speculativis cum
 191. natura munda, et intelligentia et solutione verbi ad sciendas
 192. rationes in summis, et tunc dabunt ei occulta legis, sic etiam

| 166 conquiescat: conquiescit L | 167 suas: *om.* A | appraehensio: Salvatoris
add. A | 168 quae: qui E | 170 altus: *om.* K | 171 hoc: *om.* C | Talmud: Thalamut
 A; Talmut BCKL | non: quam A | dabuntur: dabunt E | 172 initia: inicia BCE |
 scolae: stolae L | qui: quam A; que C | 173 cor (1): *om.* C; quam *add.* B | intra:
 infra ABCK | 174 adiuncta: adiuncta B | 175 consiliario: consiliari B | 176 incan-
 tationem: in creatorem C; incantatorem K | 177 indigent: indignanter C | 178
 est aliquis: *inv.* A; aliquid B | 180 consilia recta: *inv.* C | sunt: sibi K | in: *om.* E
 | 181 nullius: ullius C | intellectus: intellectos E | 182 intelligunt: et *add.* C |
 183 est: et A | 184 purus: puros E | levi explanatione: *inv.* KL | 185 sed: set E |
 nec: et non L | 188 loquitur: loquor E | obsurdescunt: absconde sunt L | 189
 induxerunt: dixerunt A | conditiones: rationes C; cogitationes E | 189-190 con-
 ditiones ... scripturae: ex verbis scripturae conditiones hominis perfecti B | 190
 regimine: regione E | speculativis: speculationis L | 191 munda: mundi E |
 intelligentia: intelligenda C | solutione: solutio C; est *add.* C | verbi: *om.* L | 192
 sic: sicut A |

193. dixerunt. Dixit Rabi Channa a rabi Alazar, 'Veni et docebo te
 194. opus de Mercana', qui respondit, 'nondum incanui' idest
 195. nondum senui, et adhuc invenio in me fervorem corporis et
 196. naturae et levitatem iuvenilem invenio. Appone cor tuum et vide
 197. quomodo coniunxerunt conditiones annorum conditionibus
 198. morum. Et ex quo sic est, quomodo ergo expedit loqui et
 199. revelare secreta huius sapientiae universitati populi in quo sunt
 200. per maiori parte familiae et mulieres?
 201. Causa quinta est negotia hominum et necessitates corporum
 202. quae sunt in prima perfectione; quanto magis si coniungantur
 203. istis necessitates uxorum et filiorum, et quanto magis si
 204. coniungantur istis persecutio super adiectione victus in quo
 205. laborat efficaciter homo secundum usum et maliciam
 206. consuetudinum. Quoniam homo etiam perfectus sicut diximus, si
 207. voluerit laborare in talibus quae sunt multum necessaria, quanto
 208. magis in hiis quae non sunt adeo necessaria, et creverit cupiditas
 209. eius, in illis debilitabitur desiderium animae in appraehensione
 210. sapientiae, submergetur in mari cupiditatum, et amor eius ad
 211. sapientiam erit cum debilitate voluntatis et cordis. Et ideo non
 212. acquirit quod habet in potentia ut appraehendat, vel possibile est
 213. quod acquirit appraehensione laboriosa et mixta inter
 214. appraehensionem et defectum. Igitur secundum has omnes
 215. opiniones fuerunt secreta ista necessaria solis et singularibus qui
 216. sunt paucissimi, non universitati gentium. Et ideo celant illa
 217. incipientem addiscere, et prohibent ipsum attingere illa, sicut
 218. prohibetur puer parvulus ne comedat cibos duros et ne portet
 219. onus grave.

| 193 Channa: Ohanna A | Alazar: Alataz A | 194 Mercana: Merchana C |
 respondit: verbum vel nondum (?) *inser.* A | nondum: *om.* BKL | idest: et E |
 195 senui: senus L | invenio: *om.* CL | fervorem: terrorem L; est *add.* C | 196 et
 (1): *om.* CKL | invenio: *om.* AE | 197 coniunxerunt: vel conveniunt *corr. et inser.*
 A | 198 sic: *om.* E | 200 per: pro L | 201 negotia: negocia CE | hominum: *om.*
 B | et: *om.* L | 202 sunt: *om.* L | in: *om.* EK | | 203 et (1): *om.* A | et (2): *om.* CKL
 | 204 coniungantur: coniungatur AC; coniungitur E | adiectione: addicione B
 | victus: iudicis C; motus E | 206 si: sicut A | 207 necessaria: necessari C | 207-
 208 quanto ... necessaria: *om.* K | 208 necessaria: necesarii C | 209 eius: *om.* KL
 | in (2): etiam C; et E | 210 sapientiae: et *add.* ACKL | 211 cum: si L | volun-
 tatis: notis L | 213 appraehensione: reprehensione C | 214 secundum: *om.* A |
 215 solis: solum A | qui: que K | 217 incipientem: insipientem A | 218 prohi-
 betur: *om.* KL | comedat: comedas E | duros: *om.* L | 219 onus: honus E |

Liber II, Incipit

1. Propositiones quae sunt necessariae in assertione essentiae
2. Creatoris et in propositionibus per quas demonstrabimus quod
3. Creator non est corpus nec potentia in corpore, et quod est unus,
4. sunt XXV, quarum quaelibet nullam habet dubitationem, de
5. quibus disputavit Aristoteles et qui secuti sunt eum probando
6. quamlibet illarum. Est autem una propositio, in qua conveniemus
7. cum eis, quia per ipsam demonstratur quaestio nostra, sicut
8. explanabo: et ipsa est antiquitas mundi.
9. Prima propositio. Ponere ens infinitae quantitatis est vanitas.
10. Secunda propositio. Ponere corpora certae quantitatis infinita
11. numero in uno tempore vanum est.
12. Propositio III. Ponere causas et causata infinita, licet non habeant
13. magnitudinem, vanum est; verbi gratia, si dicatur quod unus
14. intellectus sit causa alterius et alter sit causa illius, et sic in
15. infinitum.
16. Propositio IV. Quatuor sunt mutationes: secundum substantiam,
17. quae dicitur generatio et corruptio; secundum quantitatem, scilicet
18. augmentum et diminutio; secundum qualitatem, scilicet alteratio;
19. secundum locum, loci mutatio.
20. Quinta propositio. Omnis motus est mutatio, scilicet exitus de
21. potentia ad actum.
22. Sexta propositio. Motuum alius substantialis, alius accidentalis;
23. iterum alius naturalis, alius violentus; iterum motus qui est in parte
24. est species motus accidentalis. Substantialis sive per se, sicut cum
25. corpus movetur de uno loco ad alium. Accidentalibus vero, sicut
26. nigredinis quae est in corpore quod movetur de loco ad locum;
27. violentus, sicut lapidis proiecti sursum; partis vero, sicut clavi in navi
28. mota.
29. Propositio VII. Omne mobile est partibile et est corpus; et quod
30. non est divisibile non est mobile, et idcirco non est corpus.
31. Propositio VIII. Omne quod movetur secundum accidens quiescit

| 2 propositionibus: probationibus KL | demonstrabimus: demonstravimus B |
 3 unus: et *add.* A | 6 illarum: *om.* A | una: *om.* C; via XXVIa, scilicet *add.* LK |
 conveniemus: convenimus A | 7 ipsam: ipsum A | 8 et: in *add.* L | 10 infinita:
 vero *add.* C et *cancell.* | 12 causata: creata B | 14 sit (1): est E | sit (2): *om.* A |
 17 et: vel CELK | scilicet: sed E | 18 augmentum: augmentatio L | scilicet: *om.*
 EKL | 19 loci: *cancell.* A | mutatio: mutacio L | 20 mutatio: mutacio L | 23
 iterum (1): item EK | iterum (2): item AEK | parte: tempore LK | 24 sive: sine
 LK | sicut: sive AB | sicut cum: nunc est L | 26 quod: quae AB | 27 sursum: rur-
 sum KL | navi: nave EKL; naves B | 29 partibile: parcibile L | quod: quando K
 | 31 propositio VIII: octava propositio C | secundum: vel L |

32. aliquando, quia non movetur ex se. Et ideo non potest esse ut
33. semper moveatur illo motu secundum accidens.
34. Nona propositio. Omne corpus quod movet aliud corpus non
35. movet illud nisi ipsum moveatur.
36. Propositio Xa. Omne quod est in corpore vel est accidens vel eius
37. forma substantialis et dividitur secundum divisionem corporis.
38. Propositio XIa. Quae sunt in corpore dividuntur secundum
39. divisionem corporis, sed per accidens, sicut colores et aliae
40. dispositiones quae sunt in corporibus; sed intellectus non
41. dividuntur.
42. Propositio XIIa. Omnis potentia quae est in corpore finita est, quia
43. corpus est finitum.
44. Propositio XIIIa. Nulla species mutationum est continua praeter
45. motum localem.
46. Propositio XIVa. Motus localis est antiquior omni alia mutatione et
47. prior naturaliter. Nam generationem et corruptionem praecedit
48. mutatio alterationis quam praecedit appropinquatio alteratoris ad
49. alteratum; augmentum vero et diminutionem praecedit generatio
50. et corruptio.
51. Propositio XVa. Tempus est accidens motus et comitatur ipsum, et
52. neutrum eorum invenitur sine reliquo, nec intellectus apprehendit
53. tempus sine motu. Et quod non movetur non cadit sub tempore.
54. Propositio XVIa. Omne quod non habet corpus non
55. comprehenditur ab intellectu multiplicari numero nisi sit potentia
56. in corpore. Tunc etenim singularia potentiarum possunt numerari
57. secundum numerum materierum et subiectorum in quibus sunt. Et
58. idcirco separata quae non sunt corpora nec potentiae in corporibus
59. non comprehenduntur ab intellectu multa nisi fuerint causae et
60. causata.

| 32 quia: quod E | et ideo: idcirco E | 33 motu: actu KL | secundum: sed E | 34 nona propositio: propositio IXa C | aliud: alius B | non: nisi L | 36 in corpore: corpus A; corpore E | 38 quae: quod B | dividuntur: dividantur C | 39 colores: -is L | 40 dispositiones: -ibus L; formae *De uno deo* | sed: secundum animam *add.* AB | intellectus: intellectos A | 44 nulla: si ulla L | 46 mutatione: mutacione L | 48 mutatio ... praecedit *om.* KL | praecedit: praecedet B | alteratoris: alterationis EKL | 52 neutrum: neuter A | 53 cadit: accidit C | 54 corpus: materiam KL | 55 multiplicari: multiplici EL | 56 etenim: et eius E | 57 secundum: per L | 58 non: nisi K | 59 multa: *om.* A | causae: *om.* C | 60 causata: creato A; creata CEB |

61. Propositio XVIIa. Omne motum habet motorem omnibus modis vel
 62. extra se, sicut lapis quem movet manus, vel intra se, sicut animal
 63. quod componitur ex motore et moto. Et idcirco cum defecerit
 64. motor, scilicet anima, remanebit motum, scilicet corpus, sine motu.
 65. Et quoniam motor talis est latens nec apprehenditur a sensu,
 66. putant homines quod animal movetur sine motore. Omne autem
 67. motum quod habet intra se motorem dicitur moveri per seipsum,
 68. quia virtus motiva in mobili per se est in omnibus partibus eius.
 69. Propositio XVIIIa. Omne quod exit de potentia ad actum exit per
 70. aliud quod est extra ipsum omnibus modis. Nam si esset intra
 71. ipsum et non esset impediens, non esset in potentia in aliqua hora,
 72. sed esset semper in actu. Quod si fuerit intra ipsum qui extrahit
 73. ipsum et habuerit impediens, sine dubio removens impedimentum
 74. dicitur extrahere illud de potentia ad actum. Et tu attende ad ista!
 75. Propositio XIXa. Omne ens quod habet causam eius esse est
 76. possibile, cum intelligimus eius substantiam. Quia si causae ipsius
 77. fuerunt, et ipsum erit, et si non fuerint vel defecerint, vel mutata
 78. fuerit ipsarum comparatio quae facit ipsum esse, illud non erit.
 79. Propositio XXa. Omne necesse esse in probatione nostra suae
 80. substantiae non habet causam sui esse ullo modo.
 81. Propositio XXIa. Omne compositum ex duobus sua compositio erit
 82. causa suae essentiae secundum quod est de necessitate. Quod si ita
 83. est, non est necessarium in esse in sua substantia, quia essentia sua
 84. est in essentia partium suarum et in earum compositione.
 85. Propositio XXIIa. Omne corpus est compositum dupliciter
 86. necessario, et coniunguntur in eo accidentia de necessitate. Duo
 87. autem quae dant ei esse sunt materia et forma. Accidentia vero

| 62 quem: quoniam A; qui L | animal: animalis EL | 63 componitur: contempnitur C | cum: si L | defecerit: deffecerit L | 64 anima ... scilicet: *om.* A | scilicet: et C | 65 nec: non E | 66 motore: motu L | 68 virtus: *rep.* A | 70 aliud: aliquid E | ipsum: seipsum E | intra: extra E | 71 in (2): *om.* ACKL | 72 esset semper: *inv.* A | ipsum: seipsum E | 72-73 qui ... ipsum: *om.* KL | 73 habuerit: habuit B | 74 illud: ista E | attende: intende CEKL | 75 ens: *om.* A | 76 eius: esse E | 77 fuerunt: finiunt E; fuerint K | fuerint: finiunt E; fuerunt CB; erunt L | defecerint: defuerunt AB | mutata: mutatio A | 78 fuerit: fuerint C | 79 necesse esse: necessarium est E | 80 non: nec L | 81 ex duobus: duobus modis EB | 82 suae essentiae: *rep.* E | secundum: sed E; vel K | ita: ibi B | 83 essentia sua: *inv.* BEKL | 84 compositione: positione K; potentiae L | 85 omne: esse *add. et cancell.* A | dupliciter: duplex E | 86 eo: necessaria: *add.* C |

88. ipsius sunt sicut quantitas et figura et compositio.
89. Propositio XXIIIa. Omne quod est in potentia et habet in sua
90. substantia possibilitatem aliquam, potest esse, ut aliqua hora non sit
91. actu.
92. Propositio XXIVa. Omne quod est in potentia ad aliquid, attinet
93. materiae aliquo modo, quia possibilitas semper invenitur in
94. materia.
95. Propositio XXVa. Principia substantiae compositae singularis sunt
96. materia et forma, et eget omnibus modis operatore, scilicet motore,
97. qui moveat materiam donec sit apta recipere formam, et iste est
98. motor propinquus qui est praeparator materiae singularis. Et exigit
99. hoc considerationem circa motum et motorem et rem motam. Iam
100. ergo demonstratum est in omnibus istis quod erat necessarium
101. demonstrari. Aristotelis autem verba sunt quod materia non
102. movet seipsam. Haec autem propositio est fortis quae inducit
103. nos ad inquisitionem motoris primi.
104. Istarum ergo XXV propositionum quaedam probantur
105. consideratione levi et propositionibus probabilibus et
106. intelligibilibus primis vel talibus quae sunt propinqua illis;
107. quaedam vero egent probationibus et propositionibus multis.
108. Omnes tamen iam probatae sunt probationibus in quibus non est
109. dubitatio, partim in libro de naturali auditu et suis
110. expositionibus, partim vero in methaphysica et sua expositione.
111. Sed iam feci te scire quod non est intentio mea in hoc libro
112. transferre verba philosophorum, sed ostendere propositiones
113. propinquas et remotas, scilicet quibus indigemus secundum
114. intentionem rationis in qua sumus.
115. Aditiam autem super praemissas propositiones unam
116. propositionem ex qua sequitur antiquitas mundi. Et Aristoteles
117. credit quod est vera et quod necessarium est ut credatur, et nos
118. convenimus cum eo in illa, donec perveniamus ad locum ubi

| 88 quantitas: quantitatis L | 90 hora: potentia E | 93 quia: quo E | 95 prin-
cipia: principalia C | compositae singularis: *inv.* E | 96 modis: materia et forma
add. et cancell. K | 97 iste: ille A | 98 praeparator: operator A | 99 hoc: hanc K |
100 demonstratum: monstratum C | 102 haec: hoc E | 104 XXV propositionum:
inv. C | 108 omnes: quae E | probationibus: propositionibus E | 109 auditu:
audito AE | 111 feci: fecit C | mea: nostra K | 114 intentionem: intentione B |
116 Aristoteles: ergo *add.* KL | 117 credit: creditur KL | est (2): *om.* EL | 118 eo:
illo C | illa: via A | perveniamus: perveniamus AKL |

119. exponemus sententiam nostram. Et haec est propositio XXVIa.
 120. Est autem illud quod dicit Aristoteles quod tempus et motus sunt
 121. sempiterni et semper in actu. Et ideo sequitur necessario
 122. secundum sententiam eius et secundum istam propositionem
 123. quod sit corpus motum motu sempiterno et sit aeternum semper
 124. in actu, et hoc est corpus quintum.
 125. Propter hoc etiam dicit quod caeli non sunt generabiles vel
 126. corruptibiles, quia motus secundum ipsum non est generabilis vel
 127. corruptibilis. Dicit enim quod omnem motum necessario
 128. praecedit alius motus suae vel alterius speciei. Quod autem
 129. putamus in animalibus quod motum localem non praecedit
 130. alius motus non est verum secundum ipsum, quoniam causa
 131. motus post eius privationem est vel mutatio sui status quae
 132. inducit desiderium ad quaerendum sibi conveniens, vel
 133. fugiendum eius contrarium vel ymaginatio possibilis vel sensus
 134. renovatus in uno istorum trium motuum, et quilibet illorum
 135. inducit alios motus. Sic etiam dicunt quod omne quod mutatur
 136. praecedit in eo possibilitas mutationem suam secundum tempus;
 137. et ex istis rationibus sequitur assertio praedictae propositionis
 138. suae. Et secundum istam propositionem, erit mobile finitum
 139. quod movetur in spatio finito vicibus infinitis in reversione sua
 140. super idem spatium, quod non convenit nisi in motu circulari,
 141. sicut ostenditur per probationem XIIIae istarum propositionum;
 142. et secundum illos, sequitur ut sint infinita secundum sucessionem
 143. unius post aliud, non quod sint simul. Haec autem propositio est
 144. quam nititur totis viribus affirmare semper et ostendere quod sit
 145. vera. Quod autem mihi videtur est quod ipse non praecise iudicat
 146. quod probationes suae in hoc sint demonstrationes, sed sunt
 147. convenientes et certae secundum intellectum suum. Posteriores
 148. autem et expositores librorum suorum dixerunt quod ista

| 119 haec: *om.* C | haec est: *inv.* K; est hoc EB | est: *om.* L | 121 sequitur neces-
 sario: *inv.* L | 122 istam propositionem: *inv.* KL | 123 motu: motum B | sit: sic A
 | 125 dicit: dicitur A | 127 enim: etiam B | quod: quia KL | necessario praec-
 edit: *inv.* KL | 128 suae: sui C | 130 secundum: sed B | 131 est vel: *inv.* E | 133
 possibilis: vel transibilis *add.* E | 134 et: vel KL; *om.* E | illorum: istorum KL | 135
 sic: ergo *add.* B | dicunt: dicit EKL | 136 possibilitas: *om.* A; impossibilitas L; in
 potentias K | secundum: vel K; suum *add.* A | 137 rationibus: *om.* C | 139 vicibus:
 iuribus K | 142 sint: sicut E | 143 simul: similes EL | 144 semper: *om.* L | ostendere:
 semper *add.* L | 145 est: esse E | non: *om.* C | 146 sint: sunt KL | sed: *om.* K; quae
add. KL | sunt: fuerunt B | 148 autem: etiam A | ista: una L; illa K |

149. propositio est necessaria, non possibilis, et quod probata est.
 150. Omnes autem loquentes laborant astruere quod est impossibilis.
 151. Dicunt enim quod non ascendit in cor, quomodo renoventur res
 152. infinitae secundum successionem, et de virtute verborum suorum
 153. provenit quod est secundum ipsos intelligibile primum. Quod
 154. autem mihi videtur de ista propositione, dico quod est possibilis,
 155. non necessaria, ut dixerunt expositores verborum Aristotelis, et
 156. non est impossibilis, sicut dixerunt loquentes. Non est autem
 157. intentio mea nunc exponere verba Aristotelis quae sunt dubia,
 158. nec ostendere sententiam meam in novitate mundi, sed intendo
 159. modo adunare propositiones necessarias in istis tribus
 160. quaestionibus. Postquam ergo praemisi praedictas propositiones
 161. et conveni in illas, incipiam exponere quod sequitur ex illis.

| 149 quod: quia B | 151 quomodo: quoniam KL | 152 verborum suorum: *inv.* E |
 153 primum: primam B | 154 dico: dicta B | quod: quia EB | est: *om.* A | 155 ut:
 sicut EB | et: *om.* C | 155-157 et ... Aristotelis: *om.* E | 156 non est (2): *om.* L | 157
 intentio: mententio B | 158 sententiam: *om.* KL | novitate: novitatem K | intendo:
 intentio BC | 159 modo: mea est C | adunare: adiuvaré ACEL; per *add.* A | 160
 praemisi: istas *add.* A; praemissi B |

Liber II, Capitulum 2

1. Ex propositione XXVa sequitur quod motor est qui movet
2. materiam generabilium et corruptibilium donec recipiat formam.
3. Cum vero quaesiverimus de isto motore propinquo quid moverit
4. ipsum sequitur omnibus modis ut habeat motorem suae speciei vel
5. alterius, mutationum siquidem quatuor sunt genera, sicut
6. praemissum est in propositione IVa. Et hoc non procedit in
7. infinitum sicut dicitur in propositione IIIa. Invenimus autem quod
8. omnis motus pervenit usque ad motum quinti corporis et ibi statur,
9. nec proceditur ultra. Et ex illo motu provenit omne mobile et ex
10. eo pendet omnis motor et omnis compositor in mundo inferiori.
11. Caelum vero movetur motu locali qui est antiquus et primus sicut
12. diximus in propositione XIVa.
13. Sic etiam omnis motus localis pervenit usque ad motum caeli, verbi
14. gratia: lapidem motum movit baculus motus a manu quam
15. moverunt cordae brachii, quas moverunt nervi qui sunt in musculis,
16. quos moverunt alii nervi moti a calore naturali, quem movet forma
17. ipsius quae est primus motor. Motorem autem istum ut moveret
18. induxit quasi consilium aliquod, verbi gratia: si videret expedire, ut
19. applicaret lapidem illum cum impulsione baculi ad fenestram
20. aliquam, ut clauderet ipsam ne ventus intraret per eam. Motor
21. autem venti et creator motus eius est motus caeli. Et sic invenies
22. quod omnis causa generationis et corruptionis pervenit usque ad
23. motum caeli. Cum autem perventum fuerit ad caelum quod
24. movetur sequitur ut habeat motorem sicut dictum est in
25. propositione XVIIa. Motor autem ipsius vel est intra ipsum vel
26. extra, necessario. Quod si dixeris quod est extra, vel est corpus vel
27. non corpus; quod si est non corpus non dicitur de eo quod est
28. extra sed dicitur quod est separatum.

| Capitulum 2: BC; Capitulum 1: *alia* | 1 propositione: positione B | XXV: XXXa
 C | 2 corruptibilium: corruptum L | 3 quaesiverimus: quaesivimus A | 4 omnibus:
 vel aliud *add.* E | ut: quod K | 5 mutationum: mutationum A; motuum C | 6 non:
om. C | 8 quinti corporis: *inv.* CEK | 9 provenit: pervenit B | 10 pendet: pondet K
 | omnis compositor: *inv.* L | 11 vero: non C | qui: quod A | 12 propositione: posi-
 tione B | 13 sic etiam: sicut et A; *om.* L | 15 moverunt (1): movetur E | moverunt
 (2): movent AC | 15-16 qui ... nervi: *om.* C | 16 quem: quoniam AE | movet: move-
 tur E | 17 quae: qui KL | primus motor: *inv.* K | motor: motus C | 18 verbi gratia:
 sicut *add.* A | ut: ut *rep.* A | 18-19 ut applicaret: *om.* K | 19 cum: *om.* K | 20 claud-
 eret: clauderes C | ipsam: *om.* C | 21 motus (1): est eius *add.* et *cancell.* K | 22 omnis:
 communis A | pervenit: *om.* E | 23 caeli: dei A | 24 movetur: intrat L | ut: quod K
 | 26 quod (2): quia BCL | 27 est (1): *om.* CKL | est non: *om.* E; non est B | 28 sed
 dicitur: si dicitur C | quod: non *add.* E | sed ... separatum *om.* EB |

29. Si vero fuerit intra ipsum motor, vel erit potentia diffusa per totum
 30. corpus partibilis secundum partitionem ipsius sicut calor in igne,
 31. vel erit potentia impartibilis sicut anima et intellectus, sicut dictum
 32. est in propositione Xa: necesse est ergo ut motor caeli sit aliquo
 33. istorum modorum quos praediximus.
 34. Si enim dixeris quod est corpus aliud extra ipsum: vanum est hoc
 35. quia cum sit corpus necesse est ut moveatur cum moverit aliud,
 36. sicut dictum est in propositione IXa. Cum ergo corpus istud sextum
 37. motum fuerit a septimo, septimum movebitur ab octavo, et sic in
 38. infinitum, et sequitur ex hoc ut sint corpora infinita, et hoc vanum
 39. est sicut dictum est in propositione IIa.
 40. Si vero motor caeli fuerit potentia diffusa per corpus eius hoc
 41. etiam vanum est, cum caelum sit corpus finitum, sicut dictum est in
 42. propositione Ia. Et erit potentia eius finita sicut dicitur in
 43. propositione XIIa. Quae dividitur secundum ipsius divisionem
 44. sicut dicitur in propositione XIa.
 45. Quod si ita est, non est motus sempiternus infinitus sicut positum
 46. est supra. Quod si dicatur quod motor caeli est potentia diffusa in
 47. ipso sed impartibilis sicut anima hominis, et hoc etiam est vanum
 48. quod iste motor solus sit causa motus sempiterni, licet non
 49. dividatur. Cuius expositio est: si iste motor fuerit primus motor
 50. eius idem movetur secundum accidens, sicut dictum est in
 51. propositione VIa.
 52. Adiciam insuper ad hoc expositionem. Dicam ergo gratia exempli:
 53. quod cum homo movetur ab anima sua quae est eius forma ut
 54. ascendat in solium, corpus eius movetur substantialiter, quoniam
 55. anima est motor primus, et movetur secundum accidens in corpore
 56. moto localiter, sicut habetur ex propositione VIa. Quod si quieverit
 57. motus animae quiescet corpus motum ab ea. Cum vero quieverit
 58. corpus cessabit motus animae qui est secundum accidens.

| 29-31 diffusa ..., potentia *om.* E | 30-31 secundum ... impartibilis *om.* K | 32 Xa: XIa *De uno deo* | 33 istorum modorum: *inv.* C | ergo: *om.* B | 32-33 necesse... praediximus *om.* KL | 34 aliud: *om.* B; aliquod K | est hoc: *inv.* CKL | 35 est: *om.* K | aliud: aliquod K | 36 sicut: ut C | istud: illud E | 37 movebitur: membrorum K | ab: a K | 38 et (1) *om.* K | vanum: dicitur *cancell.* K | 38-39 vanum est: *inv.* C | 41 cum: ut KL | caelum: corpus L | corpus: caelum L | finitum: infinitum E | 42 propositione: finita *cancell.* L | finita: infinita KL | 43-44 XII ... propositione *om.* A | 43 quae: qui B | 46 quod (1): quia B | quod (2): quia KL | diffusa: et *add.* A | 47 etiam est: *inv.* KL | 48 quod iste: quo ille L | sit: fit B | 49 expositio: propositio L | si iste: set ille E | 50 eius idem: eiusdem C | dictum: *om.* CKL | 52 hoc: hanc L | expositionem: -e E | gratia exempli: *inv.* C | 53 movetur: morietur E | anima: materia K | eius: *om.* E | 54 solium: caelum K | 55 est: eius B | 56 sicut ... VIa *om.* EB | ex: *cancell.* L, *add.* in | 57 animae: et *add.* C |

59. Omne enim quod movetur per accidens de necessitate quiescet,
 60. sicut dicitur in propositione VIIIa, et cum quieverit quiescet
 61. motum ab ipsa, et sequitur quod talis primus motor habeat aliam
 62. causam omnino praeter coniunctum quod componitur ex motore
 63. et moto. Cum autem fuerit illa causa quae est principium motus,
 64. primus motor qui est in coniuncto, movebit motum quod est pars
 65. coniuncti. Si autem non fuerit illa causa, quiescet. Propter hoc ergo
 66. non moventur semper corpora animalium, quamvis in quolibet
 67. illorum sit motor primus qui non dividitur, quoniam motor non est
 68. semper motor in substantia sua nisi propter causas quae accidunt ei
 69. ut moveat quae sunt extra ipsum, vel ut quaerat conveniens sibi, vel
 70. ut fugiat contrarium, vel secundum arbitrium cogitationis in eo qui
 71. utitur intellectu et tunc movebitur. Et cum movetur, est motum
 72. secundum accidens et omnino quiescet sicut praediximus. Si ergo
 73. motor caeli fuerit intra ipsum secundum hunc modum non
 74. semper movebitur. Quod si motus caeli est sempiternus sicut
 75. dictum est supra, et hoc est possibile sicut dictum est in
 76. propositione XIIIa, sequitur omnibus modis secundum istam
 77. sententiam quod prima causa motus caeli sit secundum quod
 78. dictum est scilicet quod sit res separata a caelo, sicut dictum est in
 79. divisione praemissa.
 80. Sic ergo demonstratum est quod primus motor caeli, si motus eius
 81. fuerit sempiternus, de necessitate nec est corpus nec potentia in
 82. corpore ullo modo ut non sit in eo motus substantialis vel
 83. accidentalis et ideo non est partibilis vel mutabilis ullo modo, sicut
 84. dictum est in propositione Va et VIIa. Hic autem motor est creator
 85. benedictus scilicet causa prima motus caeli. Ex hoc etiam colligitur
 86. quod non sint duo vel plures propter destructionem
 87. multiplicationis rerum abstractarum quae non sunt corpora nisi sit
 88. altera causa et altera causatum, sicut dictum est in propositione
 89. XVIa. Ostensum est etiam quod non cadit sub tempore propter
 90. imposibilitatem motus in ipso sicut dictum est in propositione XVa.

| 59 enim: vero EB | quiescet: quiescit L; *om.* C | 60 propositione: positione B |
 quiescet: quiescit AE | 61 ab: in B | ipsa: ea A | 62 quod (2): et E | 64 qui est: quod
 A | coniuncto: coniunctione E | 65 ergo: *om.* A | 67 qui: quod A | 68 motor: *om.*
 K | 70 ut: vel C | qui: quod A; quoniam B | 71 tunc: non L | 73 modum: modus
 L | 74 movebitur: movetur E | est: sit A | 75 supra: *om.* C | 76 XIIIa: XXIIIa CEK;
 XXIVa L | 78 scilicet: secundum A | sit res: *inv.* A | 80 sic: si KL | motor: motus
 E | caeli: *om.* A | motus: motor B | 81 est corpus: corpus est E | 82 ut: sicut? E |
 non: *om.* K | ut non: nisi L | in eo motus: motus in eo L | 83 partibilis: parcibilis
 L | vel: nec E | 85 ex: et E | colligitur: tollitur A | 87 rerum abstractarum: *inv.* C
 | 88 altera (1): alterum K; alteram B | causatum: creatum E | dictum: *om.* K | 89
 est etiam: *inv.* A | 89-90 XVIa ... propositione *om.* L |

91. Haec ergo consideratio induxit nos per viam demonstrationis ad
 92. credendum quod caelum non movet seipsum motu sempiterno et
 93. quod causa prima motus eius nec est corpus nec est potentia in
 94. corpore, sed primus motor est unus qui non mutatur, quoniam
 95. essentia eius non est in tempore. Istae sunt tres quaestiones super
 96. quibus induxerunt probationes boni philosophi.
 97. Consideratio IIa apud illos. Proposuit Aristoteles et ostendit quod
 98. cum aliquid componitur ex duobus quorum alterum invenitur
 99. separatum, sequitur necessario quod et reliquum possit inveniri
 100. separatum, quoniam si componentium natura esset ut non
 101. invenirentur separata, sicut materia et forma, neutrum eorum
 102. inveniretur separatum ullo modo. Sic ergo esse unum illorum
 103. separatum erit signum super privatione coniunctionis, et sic
 104. alterum erit de necessitate. Verbi gratia: cum oximel sit
 105. compositum ex aceto et melle et mel invenitur per se, sequitur
 106. necessario ut et acetum inveniat per se. Postquam ergo exposuit
 107. hanc propositionem, dixit quod nos invenimus res compositas ex
 108. motore et moto, scilicet motore extrinseco, et hoc est
 109. manifestum. Et invenimus motum quod nullo modo movet aliud,
 110. et illud est motum ultimum, et sequitur necessario ut sit motor
 111. qui non moveatur omnino, et ille est motor primus in quo non
 112. potest esse motus. Unde non dividitur nec est corpus nec cadit
 113. sub tempore, sicut ostensum est in probatione quam
 114. praemisimus.
 115. Consideratio IIIa per viam philosophie in ista materia, sumpta de
 116. verbis Aristotelis, licet induxerit eam propter aliam rationem. Hic
 117. autem est ordo dictionum: non est dubium, quoniam entia sunt, et
 118. sunt sensu comprehensibilia, nec effugiunt quin cadant in
 119. aliquod membrorum trimembris divisionis necessario omnibus

| 91 ergo: autem E | nos: vos E | 93 nec (1): non E | nec (2): est *add.* A | 94
 mutatur: miratur B | 95 sunt: *om.* L | 96 quibus: quas LK | 97 proposuit: autem
add. KL | ostendit: dicit L | 98 cum: si L | aliquid: aliquod E | duobus: *om.* KL
 | 99-100 sequitur ... separatum: *om.* C | 101 invenirentur: inveniat L; invenire-
 tur B | sicut: *om.* KL | eorum: illorum K | 101-102 sicut ... separatum: *om.* C |
 102 separatum: *om.* A | illorum: eorum K | 102-103 illorum separatum: *inv.* L |
 103 erit: *om.* L | sic: scilicet separatum *add.* E | 105 aceto: acceto E | 106 ut: *om.*
 AEKL | acetum: accetum E | inveniat: invenitur K | 107 propositionem: com-
 positionem A | invenimus: inveniemus A | 108 moto: motu A | scilicet: sed E |
 109 est manifestum: *inv.* KL | quod: *om.* L | nullo: ullo CL | 111 qui: quod A |
 114 praemisimus: primisimus A | 115 ista: illa K | materia: est *add.* L | 116 eam:
 ea AB | propter: per E | hic: haec C | 117 non: nec L | entia: essentia *cancel.* A
 | 118 sunt: *om.* CKL | cadant: ea dant K | 119 membrorum: membrum A |
 trimembris: ut in membris A | necessario: *om.* A |

120. modis. Hoc est quia omnia nec sunt generabilia nec corruptibilia,
 121. vel omnia sunt generabilia et corruptibilia, vel quaedam sunt
 122. generabilia et corruptibilia, quaedam vero nec generabilia nec
 123. corruptibilia. Ecce prima pars vanitas est manifesta, nos namque
 124. videmus multa generari et corrumpi. Item pars secunda vanitas
 125. est, quoniam si omne ens fuerit generabile et corruptibile,
 126. dicemus quod omnia sunt possibilis corrumpi. Possibile autem
 127. in genere necessario est generabile et corruptibile, sicut scis, et
 128. sequitur necessario quod omnia entia sunt corrupta. Quod si ita
 129. fuerit nihil remanebit, ergo nec dator esse, et sequeretur quod
 130. nihil esset omnino. Nos autem videmus multa esse, et nos etiam
 131. sumus. Sequitur ergo necessario secundum istam
 132. considerationem quod si sunt aliqua generabilia et corruptibilia,
 133. sicut nos videmus, quod sit aliquod ens non generabile nec
 134. corruptibile, in quo non est possibilitas ad corruptionem
 135. omnino, sed est necessarium in esse, non possibile esse. Dixit
 136. etiam quod suum esse necesse esse non effugit hoc, cum
 137. intellexerimus substantiam suam vel cum intellexerimus causam
 138. suae essentiae et suae privationis possibile in probatione nostra
 139. suae substantiae et necessarium in probatione nostra suae causae,
 140. et erit causa sua propter necesse esse, sicut dictum est in
 141. propositione XIXa. Iam ergo demonstratum est quod est omnino
 142. ens quod est necesse esse in nostra probatione.

| 120 hoc: haec K | 122 vero: *om. E* | 123 vanitas: vanitatis K | vanitas est: *inv. L*
 | namque: autem KL | 123-125 manifesta ... est: *om. E* | 124 videmus multa: *inv.*
 K | vanitas: vanitatis K | 126-127 dicemus ... est: *om. E* | 126 quod: quoniam K |
 127 necessario: vel de necessitate erit *add. K* | generabile et corruptibile: *om.*
 CKL | et (2): *om. A* | 128 entia: *om. KL* | sunt: sint EB | 129 sequeretur: sequitur
 KL | 130 esset: esse B | 135 possibile esse: KL *inset.*, sed hoc erit propter suam
 substantiam aut [aut: et sit K; ac L] propter necessitatem suae causae. Si propter
 necessitatem suae causae, esset suum esse possibile in se et necessarium propter
 suam causam, esset ergo causa necessario omnino. *vid. De uno deo* | 136 necesse
 esse: *om. KL* | esse (2): est E; *om. C* | hoc cum: *om. L* | 137 intellexerimus (1):
 intelleximus AKL | intellexerimus (2): intelleximus AKL | causam: causa B | 138
 suae essentiae: *inv. KL* | possibile: possibilem EB | in: *om. L* | nostra: *om. CKL* |
 139 suae substantiae: *inv. A* | nostra: *om. CKL* | 135-142 *suppl. F textus libri De uno*
deo: et cum necesse sit ipsum esse, aut erit necesse propter suam causam, quam
 necesse est esse, aut propter seipsum. Et dico propter suam causam, ita ut illud
 esset in se possibile, quod in comparatione ad suam causam sit necesse; quoniam
 causa eius est principium necessitatis essentiae suae, sicut ostensum est in propo-
 sitione XIXa. Et iam manifestum est quod impossibile est, quin inveniat omni
 modo unum quod necesse sit esse in seipso ex necessitate propria. |

143. Et si hoc non esset, omnino nihil esset generabile vel
 144. corruptibile, vel non generabile et non corruptibile, nisi sit
 145. aliquod ens, sicut dixit Aristoteles, scilicet quod nec esset
 146. generabile nec corruptibile, quia est causatum causa necessaria in
 147. esse. Haec autem est demonstratio quae non habet repulsam vel
 148. contradictionem nisi apud illum qui ignorat viam
 149. demonstrationis. Post hoc dicimus quod omne necesse esse in
 150. nostra probatione suae substantiae sequitur omnibus modis, ut
 151. non habeat causam suam esse nec erit in eo multitudo, sicut
 152. dictum est in propositione XXIa. Et ideo sequitur quod nec est
 153. corpus nec potentia in corpore, sicut dictum est in propositione
 154. XXII. Iam ergo demonstratum est secundum considerationem
 155. istam quod est ens quod est necesse esse omnibus modis in
 156. probatione nostra suae substantiae. Ipse autem est cuius esse non
 157. habet causam nec est in eo compositio, et idcirco nec est corpus
 158. nec potentia in corpore, qui est creator benedictus. Sic ergo
 159. probatum est levi probatione quod necesse esse in probatione
 160. nostra ipsius substantiae non potest esse in duobus, quoniam erit
 161. species necesse esse res addita super substantiam utriusque, et
 162. neuter eorum est necesse esse in sua substantia solummodo, sed
 163. erit necesse esse in illa manerie quae est species necessitatis esse
 164. quae est in eo et in alio praeter ipsum. Explanatum est autem iam
 165. multipliciter quod necesse esse non habet secundum nec est

| 139-142 causae ... probatione: L; *alia*: causae, et erit causa sui esse necessarii in esse, sicut est dictum in propositione XIXa. Iam ergo demonstratum est quod est omnino ens quod (est omnino est quod: omnino ens est quod C) est necesse esse in nostra probatione suae substantiae A; essentiae, et erit causa sui esse necessarii in esse, sicut dictum est in propositione XIXa, vel sic et erit sua causa ipsum necesse esse. Iam ergo demonstratum est quod est omnino ens quod est necesse esse in nostra probatione suae substantiae E; causae, vel sic et erit causa sua propter necesse esse, et erit causa sui esse necessarii in esse sicut est dictum in propositione XIXa. Iam ergo demonstratum est quod est omnino ens quod est necesse esse in nostra probatione | 143 nihil esset: *inv.* A | 144-146 nisi ... corruptibile: *om.* K | 145 aliquod: aliquid EL | scilicet: secundum A | nec esset: non E | esset: est C | 146-147 quia ... esse: A *in marg. inf. alia manus add.* alias, quia est tantum supra causa necessaria in esse | 147 haec: hoc A | est: *om.* K | vel: *om.* K; seu L | 149 post hoc: autem *add.* B | esse: est K | 150 suae: illae K | 151 nec... multitudo: *om.* B | in eo: *om.* C | 151-153 nec ... corpore: *om.* E | 152 ideo: idcirco B | quod: *om.* L | 152-153 XXIa ... propositione: *om.* C | 153 est: *om.* B | 155 quod (1): quia EB | esse: est B | 156 probatione: propositione L | 157 est (1): *om.* K | nec: non E | 158 qui: quod A | creator: *om.* C | 159 quod: *om.* B | 160 duobus: attende *add. in marg.* A | quoniam: quod E | 161 necesse: est *add.* E | substantiam: substantia K | 162 neuter: neutrum L | est: erit B | 164 alio: propter *cancell.* L | autem: est A | 165 quod: quam B | esse: non est *add.* B |

166. idem nec diversum in potentia secundationis ullo modo nec est
 167. in comparatione nec in diversitate.
 168. Causa vero omnium istorum est simplicitas mera, a qua non
 169. provenit per suam largitatem sibi simile, et privatio causae ex
 170. omni parte. Quod si ita est, non est in eo participatio ullo modo.
 171. Consideratio IVa de via philosophie. Notum est quod nos
 172. videmus semper quaedam quae sunt in potentia et exeunt ad
 173. actum; quicquid autem exit de potentia ad actum eget extractore,
 174. sicut dictum est in propositione XVIIIa. Palam autem est quod
 175. extractor ille fuit extractor in potentia, postea fuit in actu
 176. extractor, causa vero eius esse in potentia fuit propter aliquod
 177. impediens ex parte ipsius vel propter aliquam comparationem
 178. deficientem ante hoc inter ipsum et id quod extraxit. Cum autem
 179. inventa fuit illa comparatio, processit ad actum. Utrumque autem
 180. istorum exigit omnibus modis extractorem vel remotorem
 181. impediendi omnibus modis. Idem etiam dicendum est in
 182. extractore secundo vel remotore impediendi Hoc autem non
 183. procedit in infinitum et non potest esse, quin perveniatur ad
 184. extractorem de potentia ad actum qui semper sit uno et eodem
 185. modo, et nullo modo sit potentia in eo, scilicet ut non sit aliquid
 186. in substantia eius in potentia; quoniam si fuerit in illius substantia
 187. possibilitas erit deficiens aliquando, sicut dictum est in
 188. propositione XXIIIa. Et vanitas est ut iste attineat materiae, sed
 189. est abstractus, sicut dictum est in propositione XXIV. Abstractus
 190. vero in quo nulla est possibilitas omnino, sed est ens in sua
 191. substantia, ipse est creator. Et demonstratum est quod non est
 192. corpus, quod si ita est, unus est, sicut dictum est in propositione
 193. XVIa. Omnes autem istae viae sunt super quibus venit
 194. demonstratio super essentia creatoris unius qui nec est corpus
 195. nec potentia in corpore cum credulitate antiquitatis mundi. In

| 167 nec: est *add.* C | 168 vero: autem KL | mera: vera K; B *man. sec. mutav.*
 mere in naturae | 169 provenit: pervenit AL | sibi: scilicet L | simile: mera *add.*
 B | causae: esse E | ex: in L | 170 si: *om.* E | 172 videmus: viderimus E | quae
 sunt: *inv.* E | 173 quicquid: quiquid B | autem: aut K | ad actum: *om.* L | extracto-
 re: exactor: C | 175 postea fuit: *om.* E | 175-176 in actu extractor: extractor
 in actu KL; *om.* L | 176 extractor: *om.* E | causa: cum K | in: veri E | propter:
 per E | 177 impediens: impertinens L | propter: per E | comparationem: oper-
 ationem L | 178 ante: *om.* E | 180 istorum: ipsorum B | modis: *om.* A | 183 in:
om. B | 185 scilicet ut: cum E | 186 in potentia *om.* E | quoniam: *om.* K | si: *om.*
 L | 187 est: *om.* C | 188 est: *om.* C | iste: ille K | 189 sicut: ut KL | dictum est:
 dicitur E | 190-191 sua substantia: *inv.* K | 192 sicut: secundum quod C | 193
 istae: ille K | viae: materiae KL | 194 qui: quasi L | 195 in corpore: *om.* C |

196. hoc etiam est via probata super remotione corporeitatis et
 197. assertionem unitatis. Si enim essent duo dii, sequeretur necessario
 198. quod haberent aliquid commune in quo participarent, per quod
 199. uterque eorum est deus; haberent etiam alia, propter quae sunt
 200. diversi, et ita duo sunt. Quoniam cum in utroque sit aliquid quod
 201. non est in altero, erit uterque eorum compositus ex duobus.
 202. Quod si ita est, neuter eorum est causa prima nec necesse esse in
 203. probatione nostra suae substantiae, sed uterque illorum habet
 204. causas, sicut ostensum est in propositione XIXa. Si vero causa
 205. diversitatis fuerit in altero illorum, erit ille in quo sunt duo non
 206. necesse esse in sua substantia.
 207. Via altera in ratione unitatis. Demonstratum est autem quod
 208. omnia entia sunt quasi unum corpus cuius pars coniungitur
 209. alteri, et quod virtus caeli diffunditur in materiam istam
 210. inferiorem, et aptat ei virtutes suas. Cum hoc ergo non potest
 211. astrui quod unus deus sit separatus in altera parte entium et quod
 212. deus secundus sit separatus in altera parte, quoniam una pars
 213. colligationem habet cum altera. Quod si ita est, non remanet in
 214. hac participatione nisi ut unus sit operator in una hora reliquus
 215. vero in altera, vel quod ambo operentur simul semper in eadem
 216. hora, ita quod nullum opus perficiatur nisi ab ambobus simul.
 217. Quod autem unus operetur in una hora reliquus in altera, hoc est
 218. vanitas multis de causis. Quoniam si tempus in quo unus eorum
 219. operatur fuerit possibile ut alter operetur in ipso, quae est causa
 220. quare unus operatur et alter quiescit? Quod si fuerit impossibile
 221. ut alter operetur in tempore in quo reliquus operatur, erit alia
 222. causa quae facit alterum operari, et dat alteri impossibilitatem
 223. operandi; tunc, quoniam in tempore non est ista diversitas, res
 224. etiam quae aptae sunt ut operentur in illis, sunt colligate inter se,
 225. sicut exposuimus. Uterque etiam ipsorum erit sub tempore

| 198 aliquid: aliquid EKL | per: propter L | 199 etiam: et C | 200 cum: si L |
 201 erit uterque eorum: *rep. et cancell.* A | 202 quod: et L | causa prima: *inv.* A
 | necesse esse: est C | esse: *om.* A | 203 nostra: nostrae K: *cancell.* L | sed uterque
 illorum: *rep. et cancell.* C | 204 XIXa: XXXa E | 205 duo: duae A | 206 esse: in
 quo sunt duo *add. et cancell.* L | 207 Probatio quod unus sit Deus (via altera)
add. E | autem: *om.* A | 208 sunt: *om.* KL | 209 virtus: videtur AE | 210 hoc: *om.*
 C | hoc ergo: *inv.* L | 211 altera: aliqua EKL | 211-212 entium ... parte: *om.* A |
 213 si: *om.* KL | 215 semper: *om.* C | 217 operetur: operatur A | reliquus: alter
 L; reliquo C | 218 multis: istis L | eorum: illorum L | 219 possibile: impossibile
 E | 219-221 in ... operetur: *om.* A | 220 quare: quaerere EK | operatur: opere-
 tur E | impossibile: possibile L | 221 ut: quod EL | 222 dat alteri: *inv.* AKL |
 223 in tempore non est: non est in tempore A | ista: illa KL | 224 etiam: et A;
 autem E | illis: aliis E | inter: intra E | 225 uterque: *om.* AKL | erit: exit E; de
 potentia ad actum *add. et cancell.* E |

226. quoniam eius operatio adhiberet tempori; praeterea uterque
 227. illorum exit de potentia ad actum in hora in qua operatur, et
 228. uterque indigebit aliquo qui extrahat ipsum de potentia ad
 229. actum, et in substantia utriusque erit possibilitas. Quod autem
 230. ambo sint operatores semper omnium eorum quae sunt, ita quod
 231. neuter sine reliquo aliquid operetur, hoc etiam est vanitas, sicut
 232. dicam: quoniam generaliter nullum opus perficietur nisi ex
 233. coniunctione amborum; quod si ita est, neuter eorum est
 234. operator cum intelleximus substantiam eius, et neuter eorum est
 235. causa prima illi operi, sed causa prima est coniunctio illorum.
 236. Demonstratum est autem iam quod necesse esse necessario non
 237. habet causam. Praeterea, coniunctio amborum ad unum opus est
 238. propter aliam causam quam coniungit ambos, quae si fuerit talis
 239. sine qua non possit perfici opus, est unum, et hoc est creator sine
 240. dubio. Quod si fuerit alia coniunctio causa istius coniunctionis,
 241. erit alius coniunctor, et ita necesse est omnibus modis ut
 242. perveniatur finaliter ad unum quod est causa esse huius mundi
 243. qui est unus, quolibet modo: sive in eo quod incepit esse
 244. postquam non fuit, sive ex parte necessitatis quod unum
 245. perveniat ex alio. Patet igitur iam tibi per viam istam quod unitas
 246. universitatis demonstrat unitatem factoris sui.
 247. Via altera in remotione corporeitatis. Omne corpus est
 248. compositum, sicut demonstratum est in propositione XXIIa, et
 249. omne compositum habet operatorem omnino qui est causa
 250. existentie forme suae in sua materia. Explanatum est etiam bene
 251. quod omne corpus est receptibile divisionis et habet extremitates,
 252. et est locus accidentium sine dubio. Quod si ita est, corpus non
 253. est unus, nec secundum partitionem nec secundum
 254. compositionem et necessario est unum et aliud. Probatum est
 255. autem quod necesse esse nullam habet compositionem omnino.
 256. Postquam autem probationes istas praemisi, incipiam depurare
 257. viam nostram secundum quod promisi.

| 227 illorum: *om.* L | 227-228 potentia ... de: *om.* E | 228 uterque: *om.* KL | 229 erit: est L | 230 ambo: *om.* A | sint: sunt K | semper: *om.* KL | 231 aliquid: *om.* A | aliquid operetur: *inv.* KL | etiam: *om.* AL | 233 quod: et L | 234 cum: si L | intelleximus: intellexerimus AEK | eius: ipsius CEKL | 235 causa prima: *inv.* C | 236 autem: *om.* AL | non: *om.* K | 237 est: *om.* E | 238 aliam: illam C | quam: quae CK | quae: quam A; qui E | 239 possit: potest L | creator: omnino *add.* L | 241 alius: alicuius L | 242 finaliter ad unum: ad unum finaliter L | quod: qui CEKL; quae L | est: esset L | esse: essentiae C | 243 incepit: incipit E | 245 perveniat: proveniat L | alio: altero L | igitur: ergo EL | iam: *om.* L | quod: quam C | 247-248 est compositum: *inv.* K | 250 est etiam: *inv.* E; est autem L | bene: et *add.* C | 253 nec (1): neque CE | partitionem: participationem K | nec (2): neque EK | 255 compositionem: comperationem L | 257 viam: *om.* A |

Liber II, 18

1. Omne novum scito quod est generatum postquam non fuit, licet
2. eius materia fuerit ens, sed spoliatur una forma et induit alteram,
3. natura vero novi post novitatem suam et perfectionem et quietem,
4. est alia quam natura ipsius quae fuit in hora generationis et
5. inceptionis suae ad exeundum de potentia ad actum. Et fuit alia a
6. natura quam habuit antequam moveretur ad exeundum de
7. potentia ad actum. Verbi gratia, natura seminis feminei dum est
8. sanguis in matrice, est alia quam ipsius natura in hora conceptionis
9. cum miscetur cum spermate virili. Cum vero incipit moveri, est
10. ipsius natura alia quam natura animalis perfecti cum nascitur.
11. Nullo autem modo debet sumi probatio de natura rei post esse
12. suum perfectum in fine perfectionis dispositionum suarum ad
13. eandem rem in hora sui motus ad exeundum ad generationem, nec
14. accipietur probatio de modo existentiae suae in hora motus sui
15. super modo existentiae antequam incipiat moveri. Si autem
16. erraveris et volueris accipere probationem de natura rei existentis
17. in actu super eiusdem naturam cum est in potentia, orientur tibi
18. multae dubitationes, et auferentur de sensu tuo quaedam quae
19. necesse est esse, et consequenter quaedam nugatoria.
20. Adhibe consensum in similitudine quam proponemus: Homo
21. quidam valde perfectus in creatione natus est, cuius mater mortua
22. est postquam lactavit eum per aliquot menses. Laboraverunt autem
23. aliqui ut perficerent eius nutrituram in quadam insula, per quam
24. nullus homo transibat, donec crevit et intellexit et scivit. Ipse vero
25. nunquam vidit mulierem nec aliam feminam cuiuscumque generis.
26. Postea vero quaesivit a quodam de assistentibus sibi, quomodo
27. fuimus facti, et qualiter fuimus creati. Responsum est ei ab asistente
28. in hunc modum: singularis homo fit in ventre alterius singularis
29. nostrae speciei quod vocatur femina, et est talis et talis formae, et
30. singulare dum est in ventre parvae quantitatis est, et movetur, et
31. nutrietur, et crescit paulatim, et vivit, donec pervenit ad terminum

| 4 alia: aliam B | 5 suae: *om.* KL | potentia: potencia B | 7 seminis feminei: *inv.* KL | 9 miscetur: cummiscetur K; cummiseretur L | incipit: inceptit KL | 10 natura (2): non K | 11 sumi: summi BL | 14-15 in ... existentiae: *om.* C | 17 eiusdem: eius KL | naturam: natura BL | cum: si L | tibi: sibi B | 19 consequenter: consequuntur K | 20 similitudine: similitudinem C | 22 eum: *om.* B | aliquot: aliquos KL | autem: *om.* B | 23 per: post E | 24 crevit: creavit L | 25 cuiuscumque: cuiuscunque BC; cuiusque KL | 26 assistentibus: asistentibus L | 27 fuimus (2): sumus C | 28 modum: mundum L | singularis homo: singulis hoc L | 30 parvae: parte C | 31 crescit: crevit L |

32. quantitatis diffinitae.
 33. Tunc autem aperitur porta in fine corporis, et exit inde, et crevit
 34. postea donec perficitur, sicut tu vides. Orphanus autem ille quaeret
 35. instanter, sic: Istud singulare nostrae speciei, quando erat in ventre
 36. matris et vivebat, et movebatur, et crescebat, et comedebat, et
 37. bibebat, et inspirabat per os et nares, et egerbat? Responderetur
 38. ei: Non. Ipse vero festinanter contradixit huic responsioni,
 39. inducens probationes super omnia ista quae vera sunt, quod sunt
 40. impossibilia, accipiendo probationem suam de ente perfecto, et
 41. dixit: Video quod omne singulare nostrae speciei cum non inspirat
 42. vel respirat, modico tempore morietur, et destruentur motus eius.
 43. Quomodo ergo ascendit in cor alicuius quod homo singularis sit in
 44. vase undique clauso et duret ibi per aliquot menses vivens et
 45. mobile? Praeterea si fortassis aliquis nostrum transglutiret passerem
 46. vivum, moreretur ipse passer statim cum intraret in stomachum;
 47. quanto magis in matrice, quae est inferior? Item quilibet singularis
 48. homo si non comederit et non biberit ore suo, in modico tempore
 49. morietur. Postquam ergo ita est, quomodo durabit illud singulare
 50. animal multis mensibus, nec manducans nec bibens? Quilibet etiam
 51. singularis homo si cibetur et non egerat, in parvo tempore
 52. morietur, inualescentibus aegritudinibus. Quomodo ergo vivet illud
 53. singulare tot mensibus, si non diverterit ad requisita naturae? Item,
 54. si perforaretur venter alicuius hominis, moreretur in non multis
 55. diebus. Quomodo ergo credit aliquis quod umbilicus istius nati fuit
 56. apertus, quomodo etiam non aperuit oculos suos et non expandit
 57. manus suas, nec extendit pedes membris suis, omnibus existentibus
 58. sanis, sicut dicitur. Haec ergo est opinio illius quam credit quod
 59. non contingit hominem creari secundum istum modum.

| 33 crevit: crescit CKL | 34 quaeret: quaerit K | 35 sic: hoc B | 36 et (4): *om.*
 BEL | 37 inspirabat: sputabat C; insputabat L | et (2): per *add.* CL | et (3): *om.*
 E | egerbat: regerebat K | responderetur: responderunt EK | 38 ipse: iste E |
 contradixit: contradicit CEKL | 39 omnia: eam C | quod: quae EL | 40 impos-
 sibilia: impossibilia B; in *add.* B | 41 dixit: dicit CL | cum: si L | 42 vel respirat:
om. E | morietur: moriatur C; moritur KL | destruentur: destruuntur CK | 44
 aliquot: aliquos CK | vivens: movens E | 46 moreretur: moriretur L | stom-
 achum: stomacho BE; stomacho L | 48 non (1): *om.* C | comederit: comederet
 KL | non (2): *om.* KL | biberit: biberet KL | 49 morietur: moriretur L | ergo:
 igitur C | 50 nec (1): non | 51 cibetur: cebetur K | egerat: egerit C | 52 mori-
 etur: moreretur KL | 53 non: nunc C | 54 perforaretur: perforetur L | in non:
inv. KL | 55 ergo: *om.* B | 56 non (1): *om.* L | aperuit: aperit CKL | 57 nec: et
 non CKL | extendit: existendit B | pedes: cum *add.* L | 58 sanis: *om.* E | quam:
 qui BEL | 59 contingit: convenit L | istum modum: *inv.* KL |

60. Nunc ergo pone cor tuum ad similitudinem istam, et meditare in
 61. ea, et invenies quod ratio nostra cum Aristotele eodem modo se
 62. habet, quoniam nos qui credimus Moysi magistro nostro, et
 63. Abrahae patri nostro, credimus quod mundus fuit creatus
 64. secundum talem et talem formam, et quiddam fuit factum ex alio,
 65. et quaedam creata post alia. Aristoteles vero volens destruere fidem
 66. nostram, inducit probationes contra nos de natura entis perfecti in
 67. actu, de quo concedimus quod post statum suum ad quod
 68. perfectionem non assimilatur in aliquo ei quod erat in hora
 69. creationis, quia est post privationem absolutam.
 70. Quod autem ratio de universitate rationum suarum firmabitur
 71. contra nos, illa vero sequeretur concedenti, quod natura huius esse
 72. quoddam modo est, demonstrat super esse suae renovationis. Nunc
 73. autem revertar, et dicam radicem viarum suarum, et ostendam tibi
 74. qualiter non obligant nos in aliqua re in eo quod dicimus, quod
 75. mundum universum creavit Deus post privationem, et fecit ipsum
 76. donec perfectus est, sicut vides. Dixit Aristoteles quod materia
 77. prima nec est generabilis nec corruptibilis, et induxit probationem
 78. super hoc de rebus generabilibus et corruptibilibus, et ostendit
 79. impossibilitatem suae generationis, et hoc idem verum est. Non
 80. enim dicimus quod materia prima est facta sicut fit homo ex
 81. spermate, neque corrumpitur sicut homo qui convertitur in
 82. pulverem, sed dicimus quod Creator fecit eam esse de nichilo, et
 83. est sicut eam fecit esse, quoniam ex ipsa facta sunt omnia, et in eam
 84. corrumpitur quicquid est generatum ex ipsa, nec invenies eam
 85. nudam a forma, et usque ad ipsam pervenit generatio et corruptio.
 86. Ipsa vero non generatur sicut illud quod generatur ex ea neque
 87. corrumpitur sicut illud quod corrumpitur in ipsam, sed est creata et
 88. non de aliqua re, et cum voluerit Creator ipsius faciet ipsam non
 89. esse privatione perfecta et absoluta. Eodem modo dicimus de
 90. motu, quia ipse accepit probationem de natura motus, quod est nec

| 61 ratio nostra: *inv.* E | cum Aristotele: crearet *cancell.* E, causarum E | 63 fuit
 creatus: *inv.* KL | 64 alio: quo K | 67 ad quod: atque CEKL | 68 assimilatur: assim-
 ilata E | 70 quod: quae CL | 71 sequeretur: sequerentur CKL | huius: his L | 72
 quoddam: quod BEKL | 73 et (1): inducam *add.*, *cancell.* E | viarum suarum: *inv.* L
 | 76 sicut: ut L | Aristoteles: supra eodem Liber tertio *inser.* E | 77 nec (1): non C
 | induxit: inducit L | 78 hoc: haec E | generabilibus et corruptibilibus: *inv.* L | 79
 impossibilitatem: impossibilitate K | verum: dictum L | 80 dicimus: nos *add.* BE |
 82 dicimus: dicimus EL | eam: *om.* KL | nichilo: nullo K; nihilo L | 83 eam fecit:
inv. KL | in eam: *meam* K | 84 quicquid: quidquid K | 86 ea: illa L | neque: nec L
 | 88 re: *om.* KL | 89 privatione: privationem B | 90 quod: qui E | est nec: *inv.* KL |

91. generabilis nec corruptibilis, quod quidem est verum.
92. Nos enim dicimus quod postquam motus est ens huius naturae in
93. qua est, non ascendit in cor quod sit generabilis et corruptibilis
94. generatione et corruptione universali, sicut generatio motuum
95. particularium, et corruptio ipsorum, et haec est opinio in omni eo
96. quod sequitur naturam motus. Eodem modo se habet res in motu
97. circulari qui non habet initium, et hoc est verum post esse corporis
98. sphaerici, quod movetur circulariter, et non ascendit in cor quod
99. similiter in motu eius sit principium. Similiter dicemus in
100. possibilitate quae debet praecedere in omni generato quod non
101. est adiuncta nisi in natura huius entis, in quo quicquid generatur,
102. generatur ex aliquo ente. Quod autem creatur ex privatione non
103. est aliquid nec in sensu, nec in intellectu propter quod sit aliqua
104. possibilitas ante illud. Sic etiam dicimus in generatione
105. coelorum, quod non est in eis contrarietas, et hoc verum est. Sed
106. nos non credimus quod coeli facti sunt sicut homo vel equus, et
107. non credimus quod suam compositionem sequatur corruptio,
108. sicut in plantis et animalibus propter contrarietatem quae in ipsis
109. est. Fundamentum autem rationis est quod diximus quod modus
110. existentiae entis perfecti non demonstrat super modo existentiae
111. suae ante perfectionem eius. Nec est inconueniens aliquod
112. secundum nos in eo quod dicitur quod coeli fuerunt facti
113. antequam terra, vel terra antequam coeli, vel quod coeli fuerunt
114. sine stellis, vel aliqua species animalium sine aliis speciebus,
115. quoniam ista fuerunt in tempore generationis omnium istorum,
116. sicut in omni animali prius generatur cor quam testiculi, sicut
117. oculis contingit videre, et nervi generantur antequam ossa,
118. quamvis post suam perfectionem non invenitur unum membrum
119. sine aliis, sine quibus homo non debet esse. Haec omnia
120. necessaria sunt cum accipitur Scriptura secundum suum planum,

| 91 generabilis: generabile L | corruptibilis: corruptibile L | quod: et E | 92 nos: non BE | enim: *om.* E; vero KL | 94 et: vel BE | 95 haec: *om.* E | 97 initium: initium B | 98 et: *om.* BE | in: super KL | 99 similiter (1): quod *add.* B; *om.* KL | 100 generato: generatio B | 101 quicquid: quidquid K | 103 in (2): *om.* B | 104 possibilitas: potestas B | 105 verum est: *inv.* KL | 106 non: *om.* BE | vel: et EKL | equus: equus B | et: nos *add.* KL | 108 plantis: planetis KL | et: *om.* E; in *add.* EKL | 109 diximus: scilicet in principio huius capituli *inser.* E | modus: motus KL | 111 inconueniens: conueniens C | 113 vel (1): et L | fuerunt: fuerint KL | 115 ista: illa KL | 117 contingit: convenit K | generantur: generatur B | 118 invenitur: in *add.* E | 119 debet: dicit, *cancell.* L | 120 cum: si L | accipitur: accipitur L | suum planum: *inv.* L |

121. quamvis res ita se non habeat, sicut explanabo in
 122. agnominacionibus. Est autem necessarium tibi ut caveas in hac
 123. ratione, quia murus fortis est quem aedificavi circumcirca legem,
 124. quem munit ipsam ut prohibeat dampnum ab omni eo qui
 125. proiecerit lapidem ad illam.
 126. Si vero disputaverit contra nos Aristoteles ut sequamur
 127. sententiam ipsius, et dixerit ex quo non accipimus probationem
 128. ex hoc ente, quomodo scitis vos quod universum est ens creatum
 129. et generatum, et quod est alia natura quae creavit ipsum?
 130. Dicemus non obligamus nos in hoc secundum nostram
 131. quaestionem, quia non quaerimus modo astruere quod mundus
 132. est novus, sed quod quaerimus est possibilitas suae inceptionis, et
 133. non tollitur ista ratio in eo quod accipimus probationem de
 134. natura entium, cui nos non contradicimus. Cum autem firmata
 135. fuerit possibilitas rationis, sicut ostendimus, revertemur postea ad
 136. ponendam praeminentiam opinioni novitatis mundi.
 137. Nichil autem remansit in hac ratione quae inducit nobis
 138. dubitationem in possibilitate novitatis mundi, et non est de
 139. natura entium, sed de eo quod exigit intellectus in eo quod
 140. convenit Creatori. Ista tria sunt quae praemisimus, et quod ipsi
 141. inducunt probationem in antiquitate mundi, ex parte Creatoris.
 142. Nunc autem ostendam tibi viam dubitationum quae veniunt
 143. super ipsos, donec nulla demonstrationum ipsorum firmetur ullo
 144. modo in capitulo quod inducam.

| 121 ita se: *inv.* E | ita se non: non ita se K; ita non se L | 122 caveas: tibi *add.* CEKL | 124 quem: quae CEKL | ipsam: ipsum L | prohibeat: profugate L | dampnum: damnum L | qui: quod K | 127 accipimus: accepimus KL | 128 hoc ente: *inv.* C, *et corr.* | vos: *om.* E | quod: *om.* KL; hoc *add.* C | est ens: *inv.* BCKL | 133 ista: illa KL | accipimus: accepimus EKL | 136 opinioni: opinionis CK; opinionem E; *om.* L | nichil: nihil L | inducit: inducat BC | 141 Creatoris: creationis C | 142 nunc: sicut KL | autem: etiam L | ostendam: ostendamus C | veniunt: conveniunt B; venit L | 143 demonstrationum: dubiorum *add.* E | ipsorum: ipsarum KL |

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