A Hypothesis about the Science of the Transcendentals as *Passiones Entis* according to Saint Thomas Aquinas

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After the publication of the two volumes of Jan Adrianus Aertsen[1] on the transcendentals according to Thomas Aquinas[2], it could seem like writing something on the same topic is too great a challenge. However, since the Philosopher has characterized the question about being as what is "eternally sought after" and as an "eternal problem"[3], we believe that we can study the properties of *ens* to the degree that one turns the attention of scholars to as yet unstudied *aporiae* and solutions.

Metaphysics is the "science that considers being as being and those [things] that are found in it *per se*"[4]. What are these *per se* attributes of *ens*? In his commentary on Book Four of the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas interprets them as "*per se accidentia entis*", namely, as prop-

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[1] See J. A. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, *The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, [Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 52], Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996; ID., *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Tought*, *From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez*, [Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 107], Brill, Leiden – Boston 2012.

[2] Since this study is about the thought of Thomas Aquinas on the transcendentals, his name will not be indicated when one of his works is quoted.

[3] ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, Z, 1, 1028 b 2-4: "that which from ancient times, just as now and always, constitutes the eternally sought object and eternal problem: 'what is being'…".

[4] ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, Γ, 1, 1003 a 20-21.

erties that flow necessarily from *ens* and therefore belong to it *per se*, in opposition to the attributes that are predicated of *ens* only *per accidens*, even if they are *per se* of some categorially limited genus of *ens*[5]. When, in the same book, Saint Thomas exemplifies these "*per se* accidents", he draws up a list that could surprise his readers. In fact, he lists "same", "diverse", "like", "dissimilar", "genus", "species", "whole" and "part"[6]. These notions are certainly found in the Aristotelian text on which Aquinas is commenting, where they are linked to the *subiectum* of First Philosophy; in this way he is trying to justify their connection to *ens qua ens*. What is surprising is that we do not find, in this text, any reference to the transcendentals of the Scholastic tradition. In other closely-related contexts, and with the same meaning, Thomas also uses *passiones entis*[7], *per se passiones entis* (only once)[8], and *propria entis*[9], which are all synonyms of *per se accidentia entis*.

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[5] See *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 1 n. 1 (Marietti, n. 529): "est quaedam scientia, quae speculatur ens secundum quod est ens, sicut subiectum, et speculatur 'ea quae insunt enti per se', idest entis per se accidentia"; n. 3 (Marietti, n. 531): "Sic igitur huiusmodi scientia, cuius est ens subiectum, non oportet quod consideret de omnibus quae insunt enti per accidens, quia sic consideraret accidentia quaesita in omnibus scientiis, non tamen secundum quod est ens. Quae enim sunt per se accidentia inferioris, per accidens se habent ad superius, sicut per se accidentia hominis non sunt per se accidentia animalis".

[6] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 4 n. 18 (Marietti, n. 587): "[...] illa scientia non solum est considerativa substantiarum, sed etiam accidentium, cum de utrisque ens praedicetur. Et est considerativa eorum quae dicta sunt, scilicet eiusdem et diversi, similis et dissimilis, aequalis et inaequalis, negationis et privationis, et contrariorum; quae supra diximus esse per se entis accidentia. Et non solum est considerativa istorum, de quibus ostensum est singillatim propriis rationibus, quae cadunt in consideratione huius scientiae; sed etiam considerat de priori et posteriori, genere et specie, toto et parte, et aliis huiusmodi, pari ratione, quia haec etiam sunt accidentia entis inquantum est ens".

[7] In particular, see *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 4 n. 2 (Marietti, n. 571): "Eius est considerare primas passiones entis, cuius est considerare ens secundum quod est ens. Sed praedicta omnia sunt per se accidentia entis et unius secundum quod huiusmodi. [...] Similiter et ens inquantum ens, habet quaedam propria, quae sunt communia praedicta. Ergo consideratio eorum pertinet ad philosophum".

[8] See CG I, c. 65 n. 4 (Marietti, n. 532): "Natura generis perfecte non potest cognosci nisi eius differentiae primae et passiones propriae cognoscantur; non enim perfecte sciretur natura numeri si par et impar ignorarentur. Sed universale et singolare sunt differentiae, vel per se passiones entis. Si igitur Deus, cognoscendo essentiam suam, perfecte cognoscit naturam communem entis, oportet quod perfecte cognoscat universale et singulare".

[9] See ST I, q. 76 a. 6 ad 1: "Manifestum est autem quod unumquodque genus consequuntur propria accidentia. Sicut ergo materia praeintelligitur perfecta secundum esse ante intellectum corporeitatis, et sic de aliis; ita praeintelliguntur accidentia quae sunt propria entis, ante corporeitatem".

In some places, the situation is somewhat different, since the *passiones entis* or the *accidentia entis* are referred to *unum*:

> Like 'one' and 'many', 'same' and 'diverse' are not proper to one genus, but are like the *passiones* of being as being[10].
> Whoever knows a nature knows the *per se* accidents of that nature. Now the *per se* accidents of being as being are one and many, as is proved in IV *Metaphysics*[11].

Notwithstanding their brevity, these texts allow us, without forcing the Thomistic texts, to list *unum* among the *per se* properties of *ens*. The fact that it is linked to multiplicity does not take away the foundational relationship that makes *unum* depend on *ens*, and not viceversa. Moreover, the Platonic matrix of the two couplets of one and many, of identical and diverse, underscore a surpassing of Platonism, since these are, for Aquinas, posterior to being, and no longer prior, contrary to what is postulated by the *Sophist* and the Platonic doctrines already confuted by the Stagirite[12]. Consequently, we can consider that the notion of the *passiones entis*, including *unum*, virtually comprehends all the classical transcendentals, but that we should not forget that its extension is much broader.

Now, a *per se accidens*, namely, a property, has its place in a precise epistemological sequence, as the following text makes clear:

> For, if *unum* is a proper and *per se* accident of *ens*, it must be caused by the principles of *ens* insofar as it is *ens*, just as any proper accident is caused by the principles of its subject[13].

Since *ens* is the *subiectum* of metaphysics, it follows that *unum* is one of its *proprium*; however, the properties arise within their subject

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[10] *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 4 a. 1 ad 3: "sicut unum et multa, ita idem et diuersum non sunt propria unius generis, set sunt quasi passiones entis in quantum est ens".

[11] CG I, c. 50 n. 6 (Marietti, n. 423): "Quicumque cognoscit naturam aliquam, cognoscit per se accidentia illius naturae. Per se autem accidentia entis, inquantum est ens, sunt unum et multa, ut probantur in IV Metaph.".

[12] For the participation-foundation of *ens* in Plato, see PLATO, *Sophist*, 254 d – 256 d; and for the couplet identity and diversity in the sources of Aquinas, see G. VENTIMIGLIA, *Differenza e contraddizione, Il problema dell'essere in Tommaso d'Aquino: esse, diversum, contradictio*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1997, p. 51-105.

[13] *Sentencia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 2 n. 12 (Marietti, n. 559).

from the *principia* that constitute the latter. Thus, the systematic investigation of *unum* and the other transcendentals must show how the properties of *ens* belong necessarily to *ens* by virtue of the principles into which *ens* is resolved. In this study, we intend to analyze the problems that this theoretical framework presents, and to propose a solution to the problem. This will be carried out in three stages:

1. first, we recall the procedures that, according to Thomas, a properly scientific *iter* should follow, and how the science of *ens* ought to be inscribed within this epistemological framework;
2. second, we examine the most important texts of the Angelic Doctor on the transcendentals so as to explore their characteristics and see how we can broadly and analogically apply these epistemological procedures;
3. third, we conclude the study, showing that Aquinas' work deals with the properties of *ens* according to two complementary – but specifically diverse – procedures.

1. The epistemology of the *passiones subiecti* and metaphysics

Science, like wisdom which is at the summit of science, is defined as an intellectual and theoretical habit that contemplates necessary truths in an organic way, but that are only mediately accessible – namely, *per aliud notae*. It differs from the *habitus principiorum*, which concerns immediately accessible truth thanks to the mere comprehension of the subject and the predicate of the propositions that form it – namely *per se notae*[14]. Thus, every science should first objectify a field of investigation, that is to say a *genus subiectum*, and then seek everything that belongs to it in a strictly necessary way. In this process, two phases are distinguished:

> For in every science there are the principles of its subject, and these must be considered before all else: for example, in natural science the first consideration is about matter and form, and in grammar about the alphabet. But in every science there is also something ul-

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[14] On this elementary epistemology, see ST Ia-IIae, q. 57 a. 2c; *QD De virtutibus in communi*, a. 12c; *Sentatia Libri Ethicorum* VI, lc. 3 n. 4-8 (Marietti, n. 1145-1149).

timate, at which the consideration of that science terminates, namely, that the *passiones* of the subject be manifested[15].

Once the *subiectum* of a specific science is constituted, it finds itself before two tasks. In the first place, science must analyze the principles to which the *subiectum* in question owes its consistency. This procedure is a *resolutio*, a causal analysis of the *subiectum* to be investigated. When the principles and causes are intrinsic, the *resolutio* is called *secundum rationem*, since it stays within its object; and when these principles and causes are extrinsic, then the *resolutio* is *secundum rem*, since it ascends from one thing to another as from the founded to its foundation[16]. Once this first procedure is concluded, the philosopher then has a resolutive description of the *subiectum* at his disposal, on which his study hinges, and he can move to a second procedure, using this same description (almost like a definition), as the fulcrum of an apodictic syllogism[17] which establishes that the *passio* belongs to the *subiectum*.

In his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, Saint Thomas evidences the logical structure in which one can formalize this foundation of the properties in the principles of the subject in question:

> It should be noted that, since in a demonstration a *passio* is proved of a subject through a middle which is the definition, it is required that the first proposition (whose predicate is the *passio* and whose subject is the definition which contains the principles of the *passio*) be *per se* in the fourth mode, and that the second proposition (whose subject is the subject itself and the predicate its definition) must be <in> the first mode. But the conclusion, in which the *passio* is predicated of the subject, must be *per se* in the second mode[18].

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[15] *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* I, lc. 41 l. 202-208: "In qualibet enim sciencia sunt quedam principia subiecti de quibus est prima consideratio, sicut in sciencia naturali de materia et forma, et gramatica de litteris; est etiam in qualibet sciencia aliquid ultimum ad quod terminatur consideratio sciencie, ut scilicet passiones subiecti manifestentur".

[16] On these two *resolutiones*, see *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6 a. 1 sol. 3c.

[17] See *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* II, lc. 1 n. 9 l. 254-258: "manifestum est enim quod principia que continet diffinitio subiecti sunt principia passionis. Non ergo demonstratio resoluet in primam causam, nisi accipiatur ut medium demonstrationis diffinitio subiecti". On this point, see also R. SCHMIDT, *The Domain of Logic according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1966, p. 262-268.

[18] *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* I, lc. 13 n. 3 l. 60-69: "Sciendum autem est quod, cum in demonstratione probetur passio de subiecto per medium quod est diffinitio, oportet quod

The second proposition, namely the minor of the argument, is *per se primo modo*, since its predicate, as the definition of its subject, explicates its constitutive characteristics. This mode of attribution is given in a strict sense when one has an essential difference by genus and differences at their disposal; but it seems that it can be taken in the broad sense when the *resolutio* goes beyond the sphere of the categories. The decisive instance of the demonstration is in the first proposition, namely, the major of the argument, thanks to which the intellect sees that the property must flow *per se quarto modo* from the principles of the subject, like an effect from its cause. With the *per se secundo modo* attribution, the conclusion affirms that the *passio* belongs necessarily to the *subiectum*[19]. The apodictic *subiectum* thus describes a circle, by which the property proceeds from the principles of the thing, by way of active emanation, then, by means of these principles, the property is received in the thing, by way of passive inherence. This scientific circle in the mind refers normally to the ontological circle in reality, by virtue of which the subject actuates its properties insofar as it is in act, while the same subject receives the same proprieties insofar as it is in potency[20].

The important prologue to his *Commentary on the Metaphysics* clearly shows us that Aquinas also employs in First Philosophy the threefold epistemological sequence that we have just outlined. In synthesis, *ens commune* is the *subiectum* of metaphysics; the separated substances are identified with the causes of the *subiectum*[21]; and, from

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prima propositio, cuius predicatum est passio et subiectum diffinitio que continet principia passionis, sit per se quarto modo; secunda autem, cuius subiectum est ipsum subiectum et predicatum ipsa diffinitio, <in> primo modo; conclusio uero, in qua predicatur passio de subiecto, est per se in secundo modo".

[19] For the modes of perseity, see *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* I, lc. 10 n. 3-7 l. 25-135; *Sententia super Metaphysicam* V, lc. 19, n. 11-14 (Marietti, n. 1054-1057).

[20] See ST I, q. 77 a. 6c: "[...] actualitas per prius invenitur in subiecto formae accidentalis, quam in forma accidentali: unde actualitas formae accidentalis causatur ab actualitate subiecti. Ita quod subiectum, inquantum est in potentia, est susceptivum formae accidentalis; inquantum autem est in actu, est eius productivum. Et hoc dico de proprio et per se accidente: nam respectu accidentia extranei, subiectum est susceptivum tantum; productivum vero talis accidentis est agens extrinsecum".

[21] See *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, Proemium: "[...] praedictae substantiae separatae sunt universales et primae causae essendi. Eiusdem autem scientiae est considerare causas proprias alicuius generis et genus ipsum [...]. Unde oportet quod ad eamdem scientiam pertineat considerare substantias separatas, et ens commune, quod est genus, cuius sunt praedicatae substantiae communes et universales causas. […] Hoc enim est subiectum in scientia, cuius

the commentary on Book Four, it is clear that the *per se accidentia entis* are the properties of the same *subiectum*, as we have seen. It is clear that each moment of this framework will also need to be refined and clarified at length. Here, we will limit ourselves to what is strictly necessary for this study on the transcendentals.

a) The subiectum *of metaphysics*

There has been much discussion about our access to the *subiectum* of metaphysics, as seen by the famous article of Fr. Louis-Bertrand Geiger on *separatio*[22]. Here I will say simply that the metaphysical *question* hinges primarily on the being of *ens*, even though *ens* itself should be the object, in a *reflexive* manner, of a judgment of separability according to which it does not necessarily include matter. With this, I want to underscore that "*nomen entis sumitur ab esse rei*"[23], in such a way that the *quaesitum* with which one institutes the *subiectum* will above all be *esse*. We can link this to the "intensive" interpretation of Thomistic metaphysics, as proposed by Cornelio Fabro or, with a different emphases, as proposed by Eudaldo Forment Giralt[24]. At the same time, the present study looks to be welcomed also by those who do not fully share this approach.

b) The principia subiecti

The affirmation according to which the separated substances are the causes of the *subiectum* requires, from a theoretical perspective, a clarification. This thesis is true with regard to God, who insofar as

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causas et passiones quaerimus, non autem ipsae causae alicuius generis quaesiti. Nam cognitio causarum alicuius generis, est finis ad quem consideratio scientiae pertingit".

[22] See L.-B. GEIGER, "Abstraction et séparation d'après saint Thomas *In de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3", *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 31 (1947), p. 3-40. For a recent evaluation of the theme, see J. WIPPEL, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, *From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 2000, p. 23-62.

[23] *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 25 q. 1 a. 4c.

[24] For example, see C. FABRO, *Partecipazione e causalità secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino*, [Opere Complete, 19], EDIVI, Segni 2010, p. 198-213; ID., "Actualité et originalité de l'"esse" thomiste", *Revue thomiste* 56 (1956), p. 240-270; 480-507, reprinted in *Revue thomiste* 111 (2011), *Hors série*, *Cornelio Fabro, l'être, la liberté et l'Église au XXe siècle*, p. 7-70; Eudaldo FORMENT, *Lecciones de Metafísica*, Rialp, Madrid 1992, p. 224-257.

Esse subsistens is the transcendent principle that is reached by the *resolutio secundum rem*[25]. One should integrate it with the *resolutio secundum rationem*, in which we can distinguish three phases. The point of departure is the many meanings of *ens*: "*ens multipliciter dicitur*"; these meanings, however, are not without an order: "*tamen omne ens dicitur per respectum ad unum primum*"[26]. In fact, the many meanings of *ens* are able to be ordered under a first meaning, the real substance in act, according to the well-known text of Book Five[27]. In the second phase, which corresponds to the Aristotelian analysis of *ens*, both substance and act are investigated. They are founded respectively on the *quod quid erat esse* and on the *esse in actu* of the existing thing[28]. Aquinas' stroke of speculative genius was to surpass this duality of formal specification and real actuality by means of a third foundational phase, at the end of which the ultimate resolutive principles of *ens* are essence and *esse*. In a created *ens*, the essence is the potency which fundamentally limits *esse*, assigning it its constitutive degree; for this reason, essence and *esse* refer to one another as *potentia essendi* to *actus essendi*[29]. In God, on the other hand, his es-

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[25] See *Lectura super Ioannem*, Proemium, 1: "Cum ergo omnia quae sunt, participent esse, et sint per participationem entia, necesse est esse aliquid in cacumine omnium rerum, quod sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam, idest quod sua essentia sit suum esse: et hoc est Deus, qui est sufficientissima, et dignissima, et perfectissima causa totius esse, a quo omnia quae sunt, participant esse".

[26] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 1 n. 11 (Marietti, n. 539).

[27] See ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* Γ, 2, 1003 b 5-10: "So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one principle; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or corruptions or privations, or qualities of substance, or productions or generations of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of these things or of substance itself". See also *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 1, n. 7-15 (Marietti, n. 535-543).

[28] For *quod quid erat esse*, see *Sententia super Metaphysicam* VII, lc. 17, in particular the conclusion of n. 31 (Marietti, n. 1678): "Substantia enim quae est quod quid erat esse, est prima causa essendi». This formulation highlights the resolutive, causal nature of *quod quid erat* esse. For act, things are less clear: since act transcends form, it cannot be defined and is grasped by way of proportionality; cf. *op. cit*,. IX, lc. 5 n. 3: "[...] actus est, quando res est, nec tamen ita est sicut quando est in potentia. Dicimus enim in ligno esse imaginem Mercurii potentia, et non actu, antequam lignum sculpatur; sed si sculptum fuit, tunc dicitur esse in actu imago Mercurii in ligno".

[29] The term *potentia essendi* is a valuable *hapax* that is found, with this meaning in *Sententia super Physicam* VIII, lc. 21 n. 13 (Marietti, n. 1153): "Omnis ergo substantia quae est post primam substantiam simplicem, participat esse. Omne autem participans componitur ex participante et participato, et participans est in potentia ad participatum. In omni ergo

sence is not other than his being, such that He is pure Subsistent Being. This can be exemplified as follows. In this man, Theodore, common knowledge can reach two correlative truths: "Theodore is a man", a proposition reveals the *esse quid* of Theodore, who possess human nature in act; and then "This man, Theodore, is", a proposition that manifests the *esse in actu* of the man Theodore, namely, his existing as a man. *Esse quid* is nothing other than *quod quid erat esse*, and objectifies the determination of being that belongs to Theodore; *esse in actu* indicates the real actuality of this determination. Up to this point, we are still at the level that corresponds to the Aristotelian analysis of *ens*, essence and actuality; *esse quid* and *esse in actu* are imperfectly distinct since they include one another. To reach a higher level, it is necessary to surpass the merely perceptive or quidditative judgment and to employ a metaphysical *resolutio.* In light of this, one will say that this man, Theodore, is the result of the synthesis between, on the onehand, his originary act of being, that founds both his existential perfection and his formal perfection, and, on the other, his delimiting potency of being, that determines his being within the confines of being man. Since this analysis is analogically valid for every *ens* in the strong sense, we should say then that the subject of metaphysics is resolved, ultimately, first in *esse ut actus* and then in the essence considered as the measure of being[30].

c) The passiones subiecti *convertible with being as being*

In light of what we have seen, we can formulate the Thomistic problematic of the transcendentals in a very precise epistemological manner. Unlike the *per se accidentia* of a disjunctive type, a transcendental is a property of *ens qua ens* that is convertible with it, in such a way that it can be inserted into a proposition that allows for the reverse: since *x* is a transcendental, it is true that "every *ens* is *x*" and it is also true that "every *x* is *ens*". According to the model of the *Poste-*

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substantia quantumcumque simplici, post primam substantiam simplicem, est potentia essendi".

[30] We have tried to expound systematically the stages of this *resolutio* of *ens qua ens* in my "L'étant, l'*esse* et la participation selon Cornelio Fabro", *Revue thomiste* 111 (2011), p. 357-403.

rior Analytics that we have seen, the foundation of every *passio entis*, symbolized by *x* should be structured as follows:

[minor]   every *ens* is that which is by virtue of the act of being;

[major]   now, everything that is by virtue of the act of being is *x*;

[conclusion]   therefore, every *ens* is *x*.

The major evidences *per se quarto* that the transcendental property *x* arises necessarily from the principles of *ens*, and, above all, from the *esse* in which *ens* participates. The conclusion will show *per se secundo* that the transcendental is proper to *ens*, and that consequently it is convertible with it. Therefore, what one is showing is that the *resolutio secundum rationem* of *ens* into participated *esse*, which is summarized in the minor, is successively prolonged in each one of the transcendentals that proceed, so to speak, from *esse* itself.

Against the application of this epistemic procedure to the transcendentals, Jan Aertsen raises a very strong objection:

> A *per se* accident is a predicate that is consequent upon the subject, but does not belong to its essence. It adds something real to the subject. But transcendental properties cannot make such an addition to being. The structure of Aristotelian science cannot simply be applied to the study of the transcendentals[31].

In fact, in the categorial and physical order the properties are predicamental accidents that are ontologically added to their subject as one *res* to another, for which they are logically attributed to this same subject *per se secundo*, and not *per se primo*: they are not part of the definition of the subject, but include the subject in their definition[32]. In

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[31] J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*…, p. 158. He develops this objection in *op. cit.*, p. 142-146, as well as in *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Tought*..., p. 236.

[32] On the opposition of the first two modes of perseity, see *Sentencia Libri De anima* II, lc. 14 n. 3 l. 42-56: "Per se autem dicitur dupliciter. Vno enim modo dicitur propositio per se cuius predicatum cadit in diffinitione subiecti, sicut ista : Homo est animal ; animal enim cadit in diffinitione hominis ; et quia id quod est in diffinitione alicuius est aliquo modo causa eius, in hiis que sic per se dicuntur, predicatum est causa subiecti. Alio modo dicitur propositio per

the transcendental order, however, the notions in question do not add anything real to *ens*, since they are limited to explicating the *rationes* that *ens* contains *in se*, but that it does not express *quoad nos*. Consequently, one naturally hesitates with regard to the question of the logical status of the propositions according to which one attributes this type of *passio entis* to *ens*: they seem to be *per se primo modo* insofar as they are part of the integral nature of *ens*, but appear to be *per se secundo modo* insofar as they are conceptually diverse from the *ratio entis*. To strengthen this theoretical *aporia*, one should recall that Aquinas, in his commentary on the *Metaphsyics*, names *unum* among the terms that signify the "*subiectum* of this science"[33]: read in this way, *unum* is identical to *ens*, and therefore is studied with the subject of first philosophy and not as one of its properties. In the same vein, one could also mention the absence of an explicit reference to the sequence *subiectum / principia / passiones* in the texts which outline *ex professo* the doctrine of the transcendentals.

Consequently, we find ourselves before a very clear *dubitatio*, namely we are faced with a choice between the two positions we have briefly explored: presupposing that the subject of metaphysics is *ens*, and that its principles are participated *esse* measured by the essence at the immanent level and *Esse subsistens* at the transcendental level, can we or can we not elaborate a science of the transcendentals that follows the method expounded in the *Posterior Analytics*?

2. The relation between *ens* and the transcendentals in Aquinas' texts

To deal with this difficult problem without unnecessary complications, we will need to restrict it, in this study, to the five transcendentals present in the first article of the *Quaestio disputata De veritate*. This means leaving aside the case of *pulchrum*, whose complexity requires its own study, and the question of the *passiones entis*

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se, cuius e contrario subiectum ponitur in diffinitione predicati, sicut si dicatur : Nasus est simus, uel : Numerus est par ; simum enim nichil aliud est quam nasus curuus, et par nichil aliud est quam numerus medietatem habens ; et in istis subiectum est causa predicati".

[33] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* V, lc. 7 n. 1 (Marietti, n,. 842). See *op. cit.* X, lc. 1 n. 1 (Marietti, n. 1920): "ista scientia habet pro subiecto ens, et unum, quod cum ente convertitur".

which are mentioned, but not dealt with very often, by Aquinas –
passiones like *multum* and *diversum*, whose transcendentality are yet
to be explored. With these limits in place, we need to examine the
principal texts in which Thomas studies the relation between *ens* and
the transcendentals. We will first consider those that proceed by way
of the *additio* to *ens*, and then those texts where we return to the same
ens by way of *resolutio*.

2.1 *Additio sine contractione* to *ens*

As is well known, a transcendental is characterized, in *De
veritate*, by the technical notion of "addition of reason without con-
traction". This means that the transcendentals are distinguished from
ens only within the mind, not within *ens* itself, and that they do not re-
strict *ens* within the limits of a genus, as do the categories, or within a
non-universal perfection, as do *vivere* or *intelligere*. As Aquinas
teaches:

> But since *ens* is what is first conceived by the intellect, as Avicen-
> na says, every other noun must either be a synonym of being or
> add something at least according to reason. The former cannot be
> said of good, since it is not nonsense to call an *ens* good. Thus
> good, by the fact of its not contracting *ens*, must add something
> merely of reason to it. What is merely of reason, however, can be
> twofold: namely, negation and a certain relation[34].

In the first article of these same *quaestiones*, Saint Thomas ob-
served that "*nomen entis ab actu essendi sumitur*"[35], and thus he re-
called both the etymology of the term (*ens* as present participle of the
verb *esse*) and its meaning: "something is insofar as it participates in
esse itself"[36], since an *ens* is an *ens* to the degree that it partakes of the

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[34] *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 1c: "Cum autem ens sit id quod primo cadit in conceptione
intellectus, ut Avicenna dicit, oportet quod omne aliud nomen vel sit synonymum enti, quod
de bono dici non potest cum non nugatorie dicitur ens bonum, vel addat aliquid ad minus
secundum rationem: et sic oportet quod bonum ex quo non contrahit ens addat aliquid super
ens quod sit rationis tantum. Id autem quod est rationis tantum non potest esse nisi duplex,
scilicet negatio et aliqua relatio".

[35] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 in contr.: "nomen entis ab actu essendi sumitur".

[36] *QD De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 1 ad 8: "in tantum unumquodque est in quantum ip-
so esse participat".

act of being. Now, the notion of good, and therefore of every other transcendental, does not add some actuality or reality to *ens* that is not already contained in *ens*, but rather adds a being of reason to it, thanks to which we grasp within *ens* something that the notion of *ens* does not make us know. Such an addition, therefore, is founded within the thing, but is placed formally on the merely notional register. For this reason, it can only be of two types: either it is a negation, which one immediately understands does not posit anything in reality, or it is a relation of reason, which is not real since its subject does not owe its being such to its terminus. This last point is of capital importance to understand the relative transcendentals:

> That relation, according to the Philosopher in Book V of the *Metaphysics*, is found to be only of reason insofar as by it something is said to be related which is not dependent upon that to which it is referred, but rather the converse occurs, since a relation is a sort of dependence, as is clear in knowledge and the knowable, sense and the sensible; for knowledge depends on the knowable an not vice versa. Hence a relation by which knowledge is referred to the knowledge is real, but the relation by which the knowable is referred to knowledge is of reason alone; for, according to the Philosopher, the knowable is said to be related, not because it is itself referred, but because something else is referred to it[37].

Aquinas' reasoning is clarified by an analogy between, on the one hand, the relation between the *knowable* and *knowledge*, and, on the other, the relation between *ens* and that to which it can be referred. From knowledge to its object, the relation is real, since the former depends ontologically on the latter, while the inverse relation is only of reason, since the scientifically demonstrable object does not depend on the habit of science that this specifies. Similarly, the

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[37] *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 1c: "Illa autem relatio, secundum Philosophum in V Metaphysicae, invenitur esse rationis tantum secundum quam dicitur referri id quod non dependet ad id ad quod refertur, sed e converso cum ipsa relatio quaedam dependentia sit, sicut patet in scientia et scibili, sensu et sensibili: scientia enim dependet a scibili sed non e converso. Unde relatio qua scientia refertur ad scibile est realis, relatio vero qua scibile refertur ad scientiam est rationis tantum; dicitur enim scibile relatum secundum Philosophum non quia ipsum referatur sed quia aliud refertur ad ipsum". On the use of relation of reason in the context of the transcendentals, see A. KREMPEL, *La doctrine de la relation chez saint Thomas: exposé historique et systématique*, Vrin, Paris 1952, p. 65-72.

relation between intellect or will and an intelligible or desirable *ens* is real, insofar as the *ens* in question extrinsically specifies the act of intellection or volition, while the inverse relation, which goes from *ens* to the faculty that it determines, is of reason, since *ens* cannot receive any positive actuality from being known or loved. If the *ratio* of the transcendental, therefore, is distinguished from that of *ens* by means of a negation or a relation of reason, it is necessary to stress that this still includes *ens*: the notion of *unum*, for example, is not reduced to the negation of division, but includes *ens* and adds this negation to it[38]. Thus, the Thomistic transcendental refers to *ens* in an inclusive, and not exclusive, way: everything that the intellect grasps in *ens* is also objectified in the transcendental, which adds an *additio rationis* to it.

Once the two components of the transcendental notion have been clarified, it is still necessary to show in what the addition of each transcendental consists. Aquinas' texts leave no doubt as to the type of *ens rationis* of three of the transcendentals, whose convertibility with *ens* Aristotle already recognized[39] and which have been commonly received into medieval scholasticism:

> Thus to *ens*, the first concept of the intellect, *unum* adds what is merely of reason, namely, a negation: for *unum* means *quasi ens indivisum*. But true and good, are predicated positively, hence, they cannot add anything except a relation which is merely of reason[40].

In the sections that follow, we seek only to define the precise character of the *additio* that distinguishes each one of these three notions from *ens*. Then, we will examine *res* and *aliquid*, the precise natures of which are much more difficult to determine.

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[38] See *Quaestiones de quolibet* X, q. 1 a. 1c: "unum quod conuertitur cum ente non superaddit enti rem aliquam, set solum negationem diuisionis, et sic huiusmodi unum et ponit aliquid in quantum in suo intellectu includit ens, et dicitur remotiue tantum, quantum ad id quod superaddit enti".

[39] See ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* α, 1, 993 b 30-31 (true); Γ, 2, 1003 b 22-33 (one); ID., *Etica Nicomachea* A, 6, 1096 a 19-29 (good).

[40] *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 1c: "Sic ergo supra ens, quod est prima conceptio intellectus, unum addit id quod est rationis tantum, scilicet negationem: dicitur enim unum quasi ens indivisum; sed verum et bonum positive dicuntur unde non possunt addere nisi relationem quae sit rationis tantum".

a) *Unum*

Beginning with *unum*, we see that the negation that distinguishes it from *ens* is, in realty, the negation of a negation:

> But division falls in the intellect d from the very negation of *ens*. So what first falls into the intellect is *ens*; secondly, that this being (*hoc ens*) is not that being (*illud ens*), and thus we apprehend division as a consequence; thirdly, comes the notion of *unum*; fourthly, the notion of multitude[41].

Even if the steps are summarized rather quickly, the text shows that the double negation in question is not simply a return to the point of departure. In fact, *ens* that first falls in the intellect is the notion of that which has being; but being is received by that which has it according to different measures, namely, according to multiple essences, and according to diverse modes, namely, in a subsistent or inherent way. Therefore, after *ens* has been exercised by the mind in an apprehension, it must be successively distributed according to *hoc* and *illud*, in such a way that the relation that runs between one and the other is a negation: *hoc non est illud*. By means of the negation consequent to the subjects of which one can predicate *ens*, the intellect grasps *in actu exercito*, the division between beings, in virtue of which this *a* that has being (in itself or in another) is not that *b* which also, but in a different way, has being (in itself or in another). At this point, the intellect turns upon being *a*, and knows that this, *in se*, is undivided, denying then the negation that refers only to being *b* insofar as it is other than *a*, namely precisely to every *ens* that is *non-a*, and then affirming the unity of *a* itself. The sequence that has been followed could be formalized in this way: α) this *ens* is; β) this *ens* is not that *ens*; γ) this *ens* is not not-that *ens*. Thus, the indivision which characterizes the unity of

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[41] ST I, q. 11 a. 2 ad 4: "Sed divisio cadit in intellectu ex ipsa negatione entis. Ita quod primo cadit in intellectu ens; secundo, quod hoc ens non est illud ens, et sic secundo apprehendimus divisionem; tertio, unum; quarto, multitudinem". See *Sententia super Metaphysicam* X, lc. 4 n. 16 (Marietti, n. 1998): "Sic ergo primo in intellectu nostro cadit ens, et deinde divisio; et post hoc unum quod divisionem privat". One finds a more detailed ex position in *QD De potentia*, q. 9 a. 7 ad 15. For a study on the circle *ens – divisio – negatio divisionis*, see P.-C. COURTES, *L'être et le non-être selon Thomas d'Aquin*, Téqui, Paris 1998, 219-242.

ens appears to us thanks to a negative judgment, but we are dealing with a negation in a subject, which is *ens*; for this reason, Aquinas sees a privation in this more than a simple negation. He writes:

> Since the negation which is included in a subject (otherwise a non-being could be called *unum*), it is evident that *unum* differs from simple negation and rather resembles the nature of privation[42].

In this way, *ens* is enriched, by and in the human intellect, by its own indivision. Because *ens* is the subject of this *privatio divisionis*, and is prior to this division, Thomistic realism excludes any constitutive solidarity with its negation, unlike what happens in Plato's *Sophist*, where the idea of Being needs the idea of Diverse to be itself, or in Hegel's *Logic*, where the truth of being is manifested first in nothingness, and then in the becoming which results from this first passage[43]. On the contrary, that which the integral notion of *unum*, by means of the double negation of reason, objectifies in *ens* is, on the whole, positive and not negative: "for it does not signify indivision itself, but *ens indivisum* itself"[44].

b) *Verum*

As we have already noted, the addition that distinguishes, for us, *verum* and *bonum* from the notion of *ens* should clearly be a *relatio rationis*, whose terminus is the intellect in the case of the former, and the will in the case of the latter. In the first *Quaestio disputata De veritate*, Saint Thomas recalls that the human soul is *per se* open to the totality of being, and not only to one of its realms, such that all that is to be found in the *ratio entis* is susceptible to being the object of knowledge or desire:

> Another way is based on the agreement (*convenientia*) of one being to another, and this is possible only if there is something which is such that it agrees with every being; such is the soul,

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[42] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 3 n. 2 (Marietti, n. 565).

[43] For example, see PLATO, *Sophist* 256 d – 257 a; HEGEL, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), §§ 86-88.

[44] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* X, lc. 4 n. 6 (Marietti, n. 1988).

which, as is said in *De anima*, "in some way is all things". The soul, however, has both knowing and appetitive powers. The term *bonum* expresses the *convenientia* of *ens* to the appetite […]. The term *verum* expresses the *convenientia* of *ens* to the intellect[45].

According to this famous text, the transcendentality of true and good seems to be founded on the *convenientia* that links both to the superior powers of the soul: true adds to *ens* a relation of reason to the human intellect, and good adds a relation of reason to the will.

This reading, however, seems to go against other texts, both from *De veritate* and from later works. In effect, Aquinas writes that the link between *ens* and the human intellect is *per accidens*, since the latter might not exist, while the nexus that links the same *ens* to the divine intellect is *per se*, since it depends on this as on its uncreated exemplar[46]. Now we know that every transcendental should be, for us, a necessary property of *ens*, which is predicated of it *per se* and not *per accidens*. Should we then deduce from this that the terminus of the relation of transcendental truth is the divine intellect and not the human intellect? Many texts of Aquinas, from the beginning to the end of his career, push us strongly in that direction, such as the late text, taken from the *Expositio Libri Peryermenias*:

> Now all natural things are related to the divine intellect as artifacts to art and therefore a thing is said to be true insofar as it has its own form, according to which it imitates divine art; false gold, for example, is true copper. It is in terms of this that being and true are converted, since any natural thing is conformed to divine art through its form[47].

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[45] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c: "Alio modo secundum convenientiam unius entis ad aliud, et hoc quidem non potest esse nisi accipiatur aliquid quod natum sit convenire cum omni ente; hoc autem est anima, quae 'quodammodo est omnia', ut dicitur in III De anima: in anima autem est vis cognitiva et appetitiva; convenientiam ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum [...], convenientiam vero entis ad intellectum exprimit hoc nomen verum".

[46] See *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 4c: "Veritas autem quae dicitur de rebus in comparatione ad intellectum humanum est rebus quodam modo accidentalis, quia, posito quod intellectus humanus non esset nec esse posset, adhuc res in sua essentia permaneret; sed veritas quae de eis dicitur in comparatione ad intellectum divinum, eis inseparabiliter concomitatur, cum nec subsistere possint nisi per intellectum divinum eas in esse producendum". The same doctrine is found in ST I, q. 16 a. 1c.

[47] *Expositio Libri Peryermenias* I, lc. 3 l. 138-146: "Et quia omnia, etiam naturalia, comparantur ad intellectum diuinum sicut artificialia ad artem, consequens est ut quelibet res

The convertibility of *verum* with *ens*, which is the logical sign of its ontological transcendentality, is founded on the relation of *imitatio* which links each thing to the *ars divina*, by means of its form. Thus, it seems that the relation of truth, understood as a *per se* property of *ens*, has as its proper terminus the divine practical intellect insofar as it is measured by the form of the thing, namely its specific degree of being. Hence, we find ourselves before two possibilities: the constitutive relation of the transcendental *verum* is specified either by the divine intellect or by the human intellect.

In light of resolving this delicate problem, we need to establish two premises. To begin with, we note that the genesis of the dynamic transcendentals is completed, according to Thomas himself, in the immanence of the human spirit once it has been moved by *ens* which transcends it:

> Now the intellect first apprehends *ens* itself; second, it apprehends that it understands *ens*; and third, it apprehends that it desires *ens*. Hence, the *ratio entis* is first, the *ratio veri* second, and the *ratio boni* third[48].

This text proves that the *ratio veri* is authentically exercised by the mind before either metaphysics or theological faith has established the relation of conformity that unites *ens* to the divine practical intellect. In this initial phase of the intellectual life, truth is grasped as the being understood of *ens* in and by intellection; now, such being understood requires a measuring of the fruit of intellection on behalf of the *ens* that this sees; because of this, *ens*, in this moment, adds to its notion that of a relation of reason to the intellect in act that this is measuring. Afterwards, *ens* is also loved, by means of its being known, such that it adds a second relation of reason to its notion, that of good-

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dicatur esse uera secundum quod habet propriam formam secundum quam imitatur artem diuinam : nam falsum aurum est uerum auricalcum. Et hoc modo ens et uerum conuertuntur, quia quelibet res naturalis per suam formam arti diuine conformatur". See also *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 10c: "comparatio rei ad intellectum divinum est ei essentialis et secundum eam per se dicitur vera, sed comparatio ad intellectum humanum est ei accidentalis, secundum quam non dicitur vera sed quasi secundum quid et in potentia".

[48] ST I, q. 16 a. 4 ad 2: "Intellectus autem per prius apprehendit ipsum ens; et secundario apprehendit se intelligere ens; et tertio apprehendit se appetere ens. Unde primo est ratio entis, secundo ratio veri, tertio ratio boni".

ness which has the will for its terminus. Can these two *additiones* be attributed to being (*ens*) *per se* or are they attributed only *per accidens*? If the addition in question depends on an actual intellection or volition, this is certainly *per accidens*, since being actually known or loved by a human soul does not belong to *ens* in a necessary way, both because the intentional acts are momentary and because the very existence of the soul is accidental with respect to *ens*. If, however, we c0nsider the capacity of every real being to be known or willed, then the truth or goodness understood in this sense is reduced to intelligibility and appetibility, and belong *per se* to *ens* in itself. What remains then is to clarify whether or not these two aptitudes constitute, by themselves, relations of reason.

A second, very useful premise for our proposal is provided by a text from the *QD De potentia*, which deals with the typology of the "relative":

> This distinction between relatives according to being (*secundum esse*) and according to speech (*secundum dici*) does not prove the relations in question to be real. Certain relatives *secundum esse* do not signify a real relation, for instance, right and left as ascribed to a pillar; and some relatives *secundum dici* signify real relations, for instance, knowledge and sensation. Relatives are said to be *secundum esse* when terms are employed to signify the relations themselves, while they are said to be *secundum dici* when the terms are employed to signify qualities or something of the kind primarily, from which relations arise. Nor as regards the question at issue does it matter whether they be real relations or relations of reason[49].

Following this twofold division of the relative, and moving it from the predicamental to the transcendental sphere, we say that true

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[49] *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 10 ad 11: "distinctio ista relativorum secundum esse et secundum dici, nihil facit ad hoc quod sit relatio realis. Quaedam enim sunt relativa secundum esse quae non sunt realia, sicut dextrum et sinistrum in columna; et quaedam sunt relativa secundum dici, quae tamen important relationes reales, sicut patet de scientia et sensu. Dicuntur enim relativa secundum esse, quando nomina sunt imposita ad significandas ipsas relationes; relativa vero secundum dici, quando nomina sunt imposita ad significandas qualitates vel aliquid huiusmodi principaliter, ad quae tamen consequuntur relationes. Nec quantum ad hoc differt, utrum sint relationes reales vel rationis tantum". The same doctrine is found in *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 30 q. 1 a. 3 ad 4.

and good, as properties of *ens*, each connote a *relativum secundum dici* since they do not signify a pure relation, but rather something absolute. What they signify is *ens* itself which implies a relation, in the same way in which the knowable (*scibile*) refers to knowledge (*scientia*). I stress that this relation *secundum dici* can be both real and of reason, depending on whether or not *ens* depends on that to which it is referred.

Thanks to these clarifications, we already have the key that opens a solution:

> God's knowledge is compared to things in a way different from our knowledge; since it is compared to them as their cause and measure. Such things are true insofar as God ordained them by his knowledge. On the other hand, things are the cause and measure of our knowledge. Wherefore just as our knowledge really refers to things and not vice versa, so are things really related to God's knowledge and not vice versa[50].

In the light of the two texts we have just quoted, *ens* enjoys a twofold truth. The first truth, ontologically anterior *in se*, is the truth that orders *ens* to the divine intellect, to the divine practical science to which the thing necessarily conforms. This means that *ens*, insofar as it is true, refers to the divine exemplar that measures it only *secundum dici*, since its consistency is not exhausted in this relation to God and makes it something other than God: although *ens* receives its essence from the divine intellect, it has being, in itself or in another, outside of God. Even though it is *secundum dici*, this first relation of truth is still real, since the very being of *ens per participationem* depends really on its conformity with the divine practical intellect throughout the duration of its existence, just as a house, analogically speaking, depends on the project thought by its architect during the time of its construction. The second truth, genetically anterior for us, is that which links *ens* to the human intellect, to the act to which the thing is conformable *per se*. This second meaning is also *secundum dici*, since *ens* does not

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[50] *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 10 ad 5: "scientia Dei aliter comparatur ad res quam scientia nostra; comparatur enim ad eas sicut et causa et mensura. Tales enim res sunt secundum veritatem, quales Deus sua scientia eas ordinavit. Ipsae autem res sunt causa et mensura scientiae nostrae. Unde sicut et scientia nostra refertur ad res realiter, et non e contrario: ita res referuntur realiter ad scientiam Dei, et non e contrario".

consist in its being the terminus of a possible intellection, but rather precedes this intellection. This referability is not real since the *ens* that is the object of intellection does not depend in any way on the act of intellection that conforms to it or that can conform to it. Therefore, we are dealing with a relation of reason that has *ens* for its subject, the intelligibility of *ens* (which is identical *in re* to *ens* itself) for its foundation and the human intellect for its terminus. This referability is founded on the first truth of *ens*, which makes *ens* depend on the divine intellect:

> By its form a thing existing outside the soul imitates the art of the divine intellect and, by the same form, it is such that it can bring about a true apprehension in the human intellect; through this form, moreover, each and every thing has *esse*; consequently, the truth of existents includes their entity in its *ratio*, adding to this a relation (*habitudo*) of adequation to the human or divine intellect […] for truth predicated of the stone includes in its *ratio* the entity of the stone, adding a reference to intellect, which is also caused by the thing itself since it has something according to which it can be referred to [the intellect][51].

Here we have all the elements necessary for a synthesis of our position. The transcendental truth of *ens* includes the notion of *ens*, expressed here in an abstract modality (*entitas*), and adds to it the referability to the human intellect (*habitudo adaequationis ad intellectum humanum*); the former consists in the capacity (*nata est*) to cause a true human intellection, and it is caused by the thing itself insofar as it is referable to God (*secundum quod referri posit*), namely, insofar as it possesses a specification that comes to it from its divine

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[51] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 8c.: "Res autem existens extra animam per formam suam imitatur artem divini intellectus et eandem nata est facere veram apprehensionem in intellectu humano, per quam etiam formam unaquaeque res esse habet; unde veritas rerum existentium includit in sui ratione entitatem earum et superaddit habitudinem adaequationis ad intellectum humanum vel divinum [...] veritas enim de lapide dicta claudit in sui ratione lapidis entitatem et superaddit habitudinem ad intellectum, quae causatur etiam ex parte ipsius rei cum habeat aliquid secundum quod referri possit". In his *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 8 q. 1 a. 3c, Thomas shows this duality of *verum*, but does so in a less explicit way: "verum autem et bonum addunt relationem quamdam; sed bonum relationem ad finem, verum relationem ad formam exemplarem; ex hoc enim unumquodque verum dicitur quod imitatur exemplar divinum, vel relationem ad virtutem cognoscitivam; dicimus enim verum aurum esse, ex eo quod habet formam auri quam demonstrat, et sic fit verum judicium de ipso".

exemplar. Thus, the reference to the divine intellect is real and is consequent upon the thing already constituted. In the perspective of our study, truth in relation to God concerns the *principia* of *ens* and of truth itself, while truth in relation to the soul is properly a *passio*, which requires a foundation.

c) *Bonum*

After this analysis of truth, the case of goodness does not present particular difficulties. The best way of grasping the constitutive *additio rationis* of *bonum* is to investigate the analogy that links it to *verum*. As in every analogy of proportionality, the two notions have a relative likeness: in fact, in the same way in which *verum* adds a relation of reason to the intellect to *ens*, its intelligibility, so also does *bonum* adds to *ens* a relation of reason to the will, its appetibility. For this reason, *bonum* is also a relation *secundum dici*, since it is not a pure relation, but something absolute which has the capacity of being the specifying terminus of an act that concerns the thing to which it belongs; and for this reason, *bonum* will only add a relation of reason, and not a real relation, to *ens*:

> Thus the word knowledge (*scientia*) is used to signify a certain quality which entails a relation (*respectus*), but not to signify the relation itself. In this way the *ratio* of good implies a relation, not because the term good itself signifies only a relation, but because it signifies something which has a relation along with the relation itself. The relation implied in the term good is the perfective relation (*habitudo*) according to which something is capable of perfecting not only according to the *ratio* of the species, but also according to the *esse* that things have; in this way an end perfects the means to that end[52].

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[52] *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 6c: "[...] hoc nomen scientia est impositum ad significandum qualitatem quandam quam sequitur quidam respectus, non autem ad significandum respectum ipsum. Et per hunc modum ratio boni respectum implicat non quia ipsum nomen boni significet ipsum respectum solum sed quia significat id ad quo sequitur respectus cum respectu ipso. Respectus autem importatus in nomine boni est habitudo perfectivi secundum quod aliquid natum est perficere non solum secundum rationem speciei, sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rebus; hoc enim modo finis perficit ea quae sunt ad finem".

The text just quoted enables us to discern a first difference between the good and the true. While the latter principally (but not exclusively) emphasizes the species or essence of *ens*, which should terminate the intellective act, good, on the other hand, is the object of volition due to its real being. A second difference consists in the very nature of the spiritual operations which correspond to these two transcendentals: while intellection is centripetal, because it attracts to itself the *ens* that it knows, volition is centrifugal, because it is attracted to the *ens* that it loves. For this reason, good is in the thing itself, while true terminates in the intellect: "true and false, which are the objects of knowledge, are in the mind. Good and evil, which are the objects of the appetite, are in things"[53]; hence, the *ratio veri* is found *per prius* in the intellect and *per posterius* in things, and vice versa the *ratio boni* belongs primarily to things and secondarily to the appetite, even though real *ens* includes both the *relatio rationis* to the will and the *relatio rationis* to the intellect.

d) *Res*

Notwithstanding our familiarity with the notion of *res*, or perhaps because of this, its precise relation with the *ratio entis* is not easily discernible. Aquinas clearly lists it among the *transcendentia* in two places that are well-known to Thomists[54]. However, it is a fact that many lists of the properties of *ens* do not make any mention of *res*, and that no text clarifies, not even generally, the type of *additio* that, for us, would differentiate it from *ens*. This moves Jan Aertsen, in his first lengthy monograph on the transcendentals, to integrate the study of the *res* in that of *ens*, showing that it explicates the quidditative aspect of *ens*[55]. More radically, Fr. Abelardo Lobato retains that *res* is a transcendental only insofar as it is convertible with *ens*, but that it is

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[53] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* VI, lc. 4 n. 18 (Marietti, n. 1240): "verum et falsum, quae sunt obiecta cognitionis, sunt in mente. Bonum vero et malum, quae sunt obiecta appetitus, sunt in rebus". The text continues: "sicut cognitio perficitur per hoc quod res cognitae sunt in cognoscente, ita appetitus quicumque perficitur per ordinem appetentis ad res appetibiles".

[54] See *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 2 q. 1 a. 5 ad 2: "res est de transcendentibus, et ideo se habet communiter ad absoluta et ad relata"; ST I, q. 39 a. 3 ad 3: "hoc nomen res est de transcendentibus".

[55] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals…* , 193-199.

still not, in the rigorous sense, a *per se accidens entis*. He holds that *res* is nothing more than a synonym of *ens* since it doesn't add any *relatio rationis* to the notion of *ens*, nor does it manifest anything new to the intellect[56]. From the textual point of view, this exegesis seems a little forced, since the concepts of *ens* and *res* are distinguished by virtue of the two principles that, in *ens per participationem*, are really diverse. Thomas affirms this in his youth and in his prime:

> The terms *ens* and *res* differ according to what is twofold to be considered in a thing, namely its quiddity and *ratio*, and its *esse*; and the term *res* is taken from the quiddity[57].
> The term *res* is imposed from the quiddity alone; while the term *ens* is imposed from the act of being; and the term *unum* from order or indivision. […] Hence, these three, *res*, *ens*, *unum*, signify absolutely the same thing (*idem*), but according to diverse notions[58].

The obvious meaning of the second text just quoted is that *res*, *ens*, and *unum* all signify the same realty – namely, that which is – but under diverse *rationes*, for which we cannot deny that there is a notional diversity between *ens* and *res*. However, it is true that *res*, unlike all the other transcendentals, does not appeal to a notion which is not already present in the elementary and synthetic description of *ens* as *id quod est*:

> '*ens*' is nothing other than 'that which is', and thus it is seen to signify <both> the thing, when I say <'that which', and *esse*, when I say> 'is'[59]

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[56] See A. LOBATO, *Ontologia*, Pars Prima, Pontificia Università di San Tommaso, Roma 1991[2], 187-189.

[57] *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 25 q. 1 a. 4c. Cf. *op. cit.* I, d. 8 q. 1 a. 1c: "hoc nomen ens et res differunt secundum quod est duo considerare in re, scilicet quidditatem et rationem ejus, et esse ipsius; et a quidditate sumitur hoc nomen res".

[58] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 2 n. 6 (Marietti, n. 553): "hoc nomen Res imponitur a quidditate tantum ; hoc vero nomen Ens imponitur ab actu essendi; et hoc nomen Unum, ab ordine vel indivisione. […] Unde ista tria, res, ens, unum, significant omnino idem, sed secundum diversas rationes".

[59] *Expositio Libri Peryermenias* I, lc. 5 l. 363-365. This is the text *ad litteram* of the Leonine edition: "'ens' nichil aliud est quam 'quod est', et sic uidetur <et> rem significare, per hoc quod dico <'quod', et esse, per hoc quod dico> 'est'".

Therefore, the term |*ens*| means both the thing and its being-in-act; however, the very derivation of the term from the verb *esse* (without entering into the scholastic controversy between *ens ut nomen* and *ens ut participium*) sees the latter emphasize *est*, and leaves *quod* on a secondary plane. On the other hand, the term |*res*| expresses, in common language, the quiddity or content of *ens*, which is by definition inseparable from the being that is its container. Thus, the passage from *ens* to *res* is not made by means of a third notion, as in the case of the *privatio divisionis* that mediates *ens* and *unum*, and later *a fortiori* in the cases of intelligibility and appetibility that constitute true and good: here, in the case of *res*, *ens* cannot not have a determination that indicates what it is. From this perspective, *res* appears as the result of the first reflection on *ens*, the reflection which objectifies the *quod* in *quod est*, from which *ens* receives its specific determination[60].

Does this return upon the content of *ens* imply or not imply a true *additio rationis*, which in the present case should be a *relatio rationis*, since there is nothing negative given in it? As the link between *res* and *ens* is completely within the latter, the closest model to the problem, in the *corpus thomisticum*, is that of the relation of identity, which Aquinas says is of reason, since it results from the duplication, in reflection, of an object that is one in itself[61]. Hence, we say that something is the same as itself, first considering that *ens* is one thing with itself, and second employing a comparison of *ens* with itself thanks to *unum*. This procedure terminates in the notion of *idem*, in which the Common Doctor sees, together with *diversum*, a disjunctive property of *ens qua ens*[62]. The relation between *ens* and *res* has a certain likeness with identity, insofar as both notions are able to be analyzed as *id quod est*, such that the two extremes of the relation are resolved into the same description;

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[60] In this way, one understands the well-known text from *Sententia super Metaphysicam* IV, lc. 2 n. 11 (Marietti, n. 558): "Esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquod superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed *quasi constituitur per principia essentiae*. Et ideo hoc nomen Ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, significat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia" (cursive ours).

[61] See *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 11c: "Quandoque vero accipit unum ut duo, et intelligit ea cum quodam ordine: sicut cum dicitur aliquid esse idem sibi; et sic talis relatio est rationis tantum".

[62] See *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 4 a. 1 ad 3, already quoted above in n. 9. See also *Sententia super Metaphysicam* X, lc. 4 n. 35 (Marietti, n. 2015): "Sed in omnibus entibus dicitur idem aut diversum. Omne enim quod est ens et unum in se, comparatum alteri, aut est unum ei, et sic est idem; aut non unum, aptum natum esse unum, et sic est diversum".

however, their relation is not formally a relation of identity, insofar as the passage from *ens* to *res* is done, in the first article of *De veritate*, before the notion of *unum*, and therefore, before that of same (*idem*), without which there is no identity in the strict sense. In fact, *res* does nothing other than explicate the content of *ens*, manifesting that the *esse* of the latter is determined by its own essence: the *quod quid erat esse*, which constitutes the substance, but that can analogically be extended to the accidents, is nothing other than the measure of being for that which is. If we employ a duplication, within the unique *id quod est*, between the *est* on the one hand, and the *quod* on the other[63], we can say that the notion of *res* results from the *respectus* that links *ens qua ens* to the determination that measures its entity, namely, the *esse in actu* of *ens* to its *quid est*. Thus, *res* would be defined as *ens quid*, by analogy with *unum*, which is *ens indivisum*. This *quid* exercises, in relation to *ens*, a role of measure, since it determines the intensity of its being; but one is dealing with an intrinsic measure, and not an extrinsic one. From this perspective, the transcendental "reality" adds to *ens* a intrinsic relation of reason *secundum dici* of passive measuring, whose terminus is its quiddity, understood in the broad sense.

e) *Aliquid*

The transcendental status of *aliquid* is still more subtle than that of *res*, since Saint Thomas develops it in an explicit way among the notions convertible with *ens* only in the first article of *De veritate*:

> If the mode of *ens* is taken in the second way – namely, according to the order of one being to another – this can be twofold. The first is based on the division of one *ens* from another, and this is expressed by the term *aliquid*, for *aliquid* means, as it were, something other (*aliud quid*), hence, as *ens* is said to be *unum* insofar as

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63 Similarly, see L. OEING-HANHOFF, "*Res* comme concept transcendantal et sur-transcendantal", in M. FATTORI – M. BIANCHI (eds.), *Res*, III° Colloquio Internazionale, Roma, 7-8 January 1980, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma 1982, 287: "Chez S. Thomas la signification exacte du terme 'res' est inséparable de la conception originale de l'étant. Selon lui, le concept 'étant' exprime *id quod est*, c'est-à-dire une essence individuelle en tant qu'elle est ou accomplit [*original text :* 'accompie'] l'acte d'être. Du côté de l'acte d'être ce qui est, est appelé 'étant' (*ens*), du côté de l'essence il est appelé 'res'".

it is undivided in itself, so it is said to be *aliquid* insofar as it is divided from others[64].

The connection between *aliquid* and *unum* is remarkable; they stem from a common matrix, namely, the notion of division. In fact, given that *hoc ens non est illud ens*, the former *ens*, as we have seen, is revealed to be undivided *in se*, while the latter *ens* is expressly divided from the former *ens*. *Aliquid*, therefore, expresses the relation of alterity that results, within *ens*, from its comparison to other beings.

What is the epistemological and ontological status of this *divisio ab altero*? Given Aquinas' silence on this precise problem, it is good to consult the opinion of his interpreters. In a way analogous to that proposed for the *res* which he places in a polar relation to *ens*, Jan Aertsen sees in *aliquid* the correlative transcendental of *unum* based on a very interesting annotation in the *Quaestio disputata De anima*: "Anything insofar as it is *unum* is undivided *in se* and distinct from others"[65]. Understood in this way, *aliquid* seems to be reduced to an implication of *unum*, even though the author does not assume a clear position on the matter. As well, Stanislas Breton, in a very interesting essay on the genesis of the transcendentals, suggests that *aliquid* has a place in a constellation where its autonomy is denied. In fact, it would be a consequence of the *diremtion* operated in beings from the essence, which cannot constitute an *ens* without distinguishing it from other beings. Thus, *aliquid* would be reconnected to *diversum*, which, in turn, is postulated from *unum* which follows upon *res*[66]. The com-

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[64] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c.: "Si autem modus entis accipiatur secundo modo, scilicet secundum ordinem unius ad alterum, hoc potest esse dupliciter. Uno modo secundum divisionem unius ab altero et hoc exprimit hoc nomen aliquid: dicitur enim aliquid quasi aliud quid, unde sicut ens dicitur unum in quantum est indivisum in se ita dicitur aliquid in quantum est ab aliis divisum".

[65] *QD De anima*, q. 3c.: "Vnumquodque enim in quantum est unum, est in se indiuisum et ab aliis distinctum". See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals…*, 223: "Every being is a 'thing', for it has through its essence or quiddity a stable and determinate mode of being. Every determination includes a negation. This being is not that being: they are opposed, not as beings as such but insofar as they have determinate modes of being. Only if "being" is considered as "thing" can one being be formally divides from another being. Our conclusion is that the transition from the negation of being to the division in Thomas's account of the primary notions is only comprehensible if the transcendentals *res* and *aliquid* are taken into consideration".

[66] See S. BRETON, "L'idée de transcendantal et la genèse des transcendantaux chez saint Thomas d'Aquin", in AA.VV., *Saint Thomas d'Aquin aujourd'hui*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris

mon difficulty, *mutatis mutandis*, to these two positions, resides in the refusal to take into account the proper *ratio* that opposes *aliquid* to *unum*: since the latter is a transcendental property, why would *ratio* not be that which opposes them in a polar way like *indivisum in se* from *divisum ab aliis*?

It is precisely in this prospective that Philip Rosemann grasps *aliquid* within the powerful dialectic of identity and alterity, which would be the cornerstone of the ontological Thomistic "~~system~~", crossed out to indicate its transcendental openness. In order to be, *ens* should be itself, but this occurs by it distinguishing itself from others, and, therefore, being other than the others; thus, *ens* mediates itself thanks to its relation to another that confers upon it its own identity. *Aliquid*, speculatively and not only etymologically read as *aliud quid*, thus becomes the fulcrum of all ontology, since the truth of *ens* consists, ultimately, in its being in relation to another[67]. From this hypothesis stems a very dynamic conception of *ens*, which constitutes itself by going out of itself. Now, even though there are very interesting developments in Rosemann about the necessary connection between *ens* and its operation, he does not seem to honor sufficiently the principle according to which "*esse est aliquid fixum et quietum in ente*"[68], by which the properties of *ens*, insofar as they follow upon their constitutive *esse*, should transcend mutability: just as the unity, truth or goodness of a being, whether substantial or accidental, are not subject to change, neither is *aliquid*.

For this reason, other authors attributes a specific *additio rationis* to *aliquid* that contradistinguishes it from *ens* without compromising

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1963, 51: "L'essence, avons-nous dit, est la première expression de l'être en tout ce qui est. Or l'essence ne constitue qu'en distinguant et ne distingue qu'en constituant. Elle implique dès lors, et nécessairement, une marge d'altérité, un horizon qui l'enrobe de tout ce qui n'est pas elle. La négation, en tant que division, n'est donc pas simple privation. Elle fonde un univers qui ne serait pas *un* dans le *divers* qu'elle introduit".

[67] See P. ROSEMANN, *Omne ens est aliquid*, *Introduction à la lecture du «système» philosophique de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Éditions Peeters, Louvain Paris 1996, 51: "Un étant est *quelque chose* ou *une* chose (*unum*) seulement en étant 'un autre "quoi"', une *autre chose* (*aliud quid*) – par quoi il faut entendre: en étant une autre chose *que les autres choses*, c'est-à-dire en *n'*étant *pas* autre qu'il n'est… Pour *être*, l'étant doit alors à la fois rester lui-même et se distinguer par rapport aux autres. Or un étant ne peut se distinguer *par rapport* aux autres que s'il s'*y rapporte*, c'est-à-dire s'il sort de son 'en-soi', s'éloigne pour ainsi dire de lui-même et s'aliène, voire devient "autre" que lui-même".

[68] CG I, c. 20 n. 27 (Marietti, n. 179).

the stability of the latter. In a well-known monographic article dedi-cated to this problem, Heinz Schmitz insisted on the originality of *aliquid* with respect to *unum*, as well as its independence with respect to the real multiplicity of beings. For this scholar, who recognizes his debt to Jacques Maritain and John of St Thomas, one should accurate-ly distinguish between, on the one hand, our knowledge of *aliquid* and, on the other, its formal constitutive. In the order of discovery, the notion of *aliquid* is revealed to us in the judgment *hoc non est illud* that presupposes, in turn, the real plurality of beings, and that leads us to intuit "something" in this *ens* that is diverse from this other *ens*. In this way, we come to the notion of *aliquid*, which comprehends the notion of *ens* and a negation of identity with respect to every "other" *ens*. However, in the order of being, this alterity does not presuppose necessarily the real existence of other beings: in fact, if there was only one *ens*, this would still be other than all the simply possible beings, and, consequently, would not stop being an *aliud quid*[69]. Such alterity is distinguished, therefore, from unity, which regards *ens in se*; but this belongs to *ens* in virtue of itself, because it is prior to the real mul-tiplicity of beings.

This position has been strongly contested by Giovanni Ventimiglia, for whom *aliquid* is the transcendental that expresses the necessary diversity of beings. To this end, he highlights the places where Saint Thomas lists *multum* among the transcendentals[70]. Now, multiplicity is defined using terms similar to those used for *aliquid*:

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[69] See H. SCHMITZ, "Un transcendantal méconnu", *Cahiers Jacques Maritain* 2 (1981), 21-51. We read on p. 41 : "L'*Aliquid* exprime l'*être* de chaque étant ; non certes l'être comme présenté purement et simplement par le concept d'être, mais l'être comme connotant la rela-tion d'altérité. Cette relation que notre esprit établit en comparant les êtres entre eux, doit être comprise comme une condition requise du côté de notre pouvoir intellectif afin qu'il puisse saisir l'être lui-même comme *Aliquid*. Dès lors que cette condition est réalisée, l'être lui-même se manifeste comme une perfection chaque fois originale et partout unique. Affirmer que l'être est quelque chose, qu'il est *Aliquid*, ne signifie nullement que la perfection d'être exige de soi une pluralité de réalisations. S'il n'y avait qu'un seul être, il serait encore *Aliquid*, c'est-à-dire nécessairement autre que tous les êtres possibles, et en ce sens nécessairement unique".

[70] For example, see ST I, q. 30 a. 3c: «considerandum est quod omnis pluralitas consequitur aliquam divisionem. Est autem duplex divisio. [...] Alia est divisio formalis, quae fit per oppositas vel diversas formas: et hanc divisionem sequitur multitudo quae non est in aliquo genere, sed est de transcendentibus»; q. 50 a. 3 ad 1: «multitudo est de transcendentibus»; *QD De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 8 ad 15: «in substantiis immaterialibus est multitudo que est de transcendentibus, secundum quod unum et multa diuidunt ens».

It is clear then that *unum* which is convertible with *ens*, posits *ens* itself but adds nothing except the negation of division. And the *multitudo* corresponding to it adds this to the things described as many, that each of them is one, and that each of them is not the other, wherein is the *ratio* of distinction. Accordingly then, while *unum* adds to being one negation inasmuch as a thing is undivided in itself; *multitudo* adds two negations, inasmuch as a certain thing is undivided in itself, and distinct from another; i.e. one of them is not the other[71].

In the light of this text, *aliquid* seems to be the *unum* that is part of a multiplicity, and that it is defined, under this precise aspect, as that which is *ab alio divisum*, which is equivalent to the formulation of *De veritate*. From this, Ventimiglia draws out two conclusions linked to one another: in the first place, *aliquid* should be interpreted as the *diversum* that is consequent on multiplicity[72]; in the second place, the transcendentality of *aliquid*, thus understood, proves that multiplicity is also intrinsic to *ens* as is its unity[73]. Ultimately, this co-extension of unity and plurality refers to the Trinitarian mystery, which thus appears like the resolutive key of ontology[74].

A similar Trinitarian foundation of *aliquid* cannot be accepted, since it would strip metaphysics of its status as a science accessible to

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[71] *QD De potentia*, q. 9 a. 7c: "Patet ergo quod unum quod convertitur cum ente, ponit quidem ipsum ens, sed nihil superaddit nisi negationem divisionis. Multitudo autem ei correspondens addit supra res, quae dicuntur multae, quod unaquaeque eraum sit una, et quod una earum non sit altera, in quod consistit ratio distinctionis. Et sic, cum unum addat supra ens unam negationem, - secundum quod aliquid est indivisum in se, - multitudo addit duas negationes, prout scilicet aliquid est in se indivisum, et prout est ab alio divisum. Quod quidem dividi est unum eorum non esse alterum".

[72] In *Sententia super Metaphysicam* V, lc. 11 n. 2 (Marietti, n. 907), in *diversum* Thomas sees multiplicity in the genus of substance; however, one can analogically extend the meaning of this term to every member of multiplicity.

[73] See G. VENTIMIGLIA, *Differenza e contraddizione...*, 245: "*Ovunque c'è essere, lì c'è anche* – dice Tommaso, dietro la cortina di quelle parole desuete e tecniche – *nello stesso tempo, unità e distinzione, l''uno' e, insieme, l''altro'*: è il paradosso ed il mistero stesso dell'essere che ci si presenta, in tutta la sua affascinante ed inquietante realtà, non appena cerchiamo un poco di allontanare la caligine 'in qua habitare dicitur'".

[74] See G. VENTIMIGLIA, *Differenza e contraddizione...*, 244, nota 106: "la *divisio* espressa dal termine *aliquid* corrisponde a quella proprietà per la quale Dio, essere unico ed individuale per essenza, è nello stesso tempo, in forza della Trinità delle sue Persone, in senso proprio e reale, internamente differenziato".

natural reason[75]. But, on the properly philosophical level, what is the relation between *aliquid* and *diversum*? If they are totally identical, as Giovanni Ventimiglia holds, then *aliquid* will depend on the real multiplicity of *ens*. It seems that a segment of the *Super Boetium De Trinitate* sheds light on the problem. In this article, Thomas asks if alterity is the cause of plurality, namely, of real multiplicity. To respond positively to this question, Aquinas introduces the distinction between *divisio*, that precedes plurality, and *diversitas*, which is posterior to plurality:

> So Boethius' statement is true, that alterity is the source of plurality, for alterity is found in some things because diverse items are present in them. Now, although division precedes the plurality of prior items, diversity does not, because division does not require that both of the items divided one from another be a being, since division is present through affirmation and negation. Diversity, however, does require that both items be a being, and so it presupposes plurality[76].

The principle of the solution to our problem is found in the sequence outlined in the text. First, there is division, which does not require the reality of its parts; then there is plurality, which is real; and finality there is diversity, which likewise presupposes the reality of diverse beings. Obviously, we need to clarify these steps, which if left unexplained remain somewhat exoteric. Only *non-ens* is opposed to *ens qua ens*; for this reason, what originarily opposes this determinate *ens* is the negation that takes away also a formal determination of this *ens*. For example, "non-rational animal" is opposed to "rational animal", the definition of man, leaving aside whether or not non-rational animals exist. At this point, we have a simple *divisio* between rational

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[75] We recall that the Trinitarian mystery, for Aquinas, absolutely exceeds the parameters of philosophical reason, as indicated by ST I, q. 32 a. 1c: «Per rationem igitur naturalem cognosci possunt de Deo ea quae pertinent ad unitatem essentiae, non autem ea quae pertinent ad distinctionem Personarum».

[76] *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 4 a. 1c.: "Et secundum hoc uerum est quod Boetius dicit, quod alteritas est principium pluralitatis: ex hoc enim alteritas in aliquibus inuenitur, quod eis diuersa insunt; quamuis autem diuisio precedat pluralitatem pri(m)orum, non tamen diuersitas, quia diuisio non requirit utrumque condiuisorum esse ens, cum sit diuisio per affirmationem et negationem, set diuersitas requirit utrumque esse ens, unde presupponit pluralitatem".

animal and non-rational animal, by virtue of affirmation and negation, namely, by virtue of an opposition of contradiction[77]. If then, as is the case, both rational animals and non-rational animals exist, which implies first the existence of both opposites, then their relation of alterity. In this phase, we have the real diversity between everything that is rational animal and everything that is non-rational animal, and, therefore, between man and beast. Returning to the transcendental level, we can now say that the opposition between *hoc ens* and *non hoc ens* is a division, which does not require, as such, the real existence of "not this *ens*", while the opposition between *hoc ens* and *illud ens*, on the other hand, connotes a real diversity between "this *ens*" and "that *ens*". Under the first aspect, *hoc ens* is an *aliquid*, because it is only virtually divided from other beings; under the second aspect, on the contrary, *hoc ens* is a *diversum*, since it is actually opposed to *illud ens*, which is also real. Thus, the characteristic division of *aliquid* precedes multiplicity, and also the cause of multiplicity[78], but only from the formal point of view, since the effective plurality of beings depends on the free will of the Creator, and certainly cannot be deduced from the *ratio entis*. In this way, we respond to Giovanni Ventimiglia that his considerations are valid with regard to multiplicity and to *diversum*, but that nevertheless, the transcendental *aliquid* remains anterior to the real multiplicity of beings, such that it can be predicated of God before the assent of faith to the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. *Mutatis mutandis*, the status of *aliquid* is likened analogically to that of the other two transcendentals that imply a certain *ordo unius ad alterum*: thus just as true and good express the virtual intelligibility and appetibility of every *ens*, that become actual in effective intellection and volition, so also *aliquid* evidences the virtual diversity of every *ens*, which becomes actual with the actual multiplicity of be-

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[77] See *Expositio Libri Peryermenias* I, lc. 9 n. 7 l. 102-105: "Dicit ergo primo quod, cum cuilibet affirmationi opponatur negatio et e converso, oppositioni huiusmodi imponatur nomen hoc quod dicatur 'contradictio'".

[78] See *QD De potentia*, q. 9 a. 7 ad 15: "divisio est causa multitudinis, et est prior secundum intellectum quam multitudo […]. Quantumcumque enim aliqua intelligantur divisa, non intelligetur multitudo, nisi quodlibet divisorum intelligatur esse unum". Now, the being one presupposes being *ens*; hence, multiplicity is not given *a priori*, but is given with beings themselves. The transcendentality of *multum* is therefore, consequent to the actual presence of a plurality of beings. In this case, *transcendens* has, above all, the meaning of super-categorial.

ings. However, we have also shown that the *additio rationis* that constitutes *aliquid* is the negation of reason by which we say that "this *ens* is not not-this-*ens*", for which it differs strongly from that of true and good, which are relations of reason.

2.2 The resolutio *of the transcendentals into the principles of ens*

In the *locus princeps* on the transcendentals, Thomas teaches that, for the human intellect, "*ens* is that into which all concepts are resolved"[79]. But metaphysics first establishes that *ens*, in turn, is resolved in the first place *secundum rationem* in *esse* which is *actus essendi* and in *essentia* which is *potentia essendi*, and is ultimately resolved *secundum rem* in *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. Thus, the metaphysician comes to the *principia* of *ens*, which should account for the *passiones entis*. In this section, we want to document briefly if and how Aquinas effectively proceeds to this foundation of the transcendentals on the principles of *ens*, limiting ourselves to the immanent principles that are evidenced by the *resolutio secundum rationem*[80]. To this end, we will follow the same order as before.

a) *Unum*

At the time of the *Scriptum*, Thomas explicitly resolves the unity of *ens* in its essence:

> For as *unum* is that which is undivided in itself and divided from others, whatever is created is distinguished from others by its essence; the created essence itself, according to which it is undivided in itself and distinguished from others, is its unity[81].

It is clear that the essence that is considered here is not the universal *in se*, but is the essence which determines the created *ens* in act.

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[79] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c.

[80] For the foundation of the transcendentals on *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, we refer to the optimal study of J. MITCHELL, "Aquinas on the Ontological and Theological Foundation of the Transcendentals", *Alpha Omega* 16 (2013), 39-78.

[81] *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 19 q. 4 a. 1 ad 2: "Cum enim unum sit quod est indivisum in se et divisum ab aliis, unumquodque autem creatum per essentiam suam distinguatur ab aliis; ipsa essentia creati, secundum quod est indivisa in se et distinguens ab aliis, est unitas ejus".

Now, this is, in the first place, undivided in itself, therefore it is individualized if it is material, and, in the second place, distinguishes this *ens* from that *ens*, and, therefore, divides, so to speak, *esse* into diverse beings. Thus, *unum* is founded, in this text, on the essence in act in *ens*. *Esse* is therefore not excluded, but remains in the background.

In the *Summa theologiae*, *unum* is clearly reduced to the being-in-act of the thing, by means of a disjunction:

> *Unum* does not mean something other than undivided *ens*. From this fact it is clear that *unum* is converted with *ens*. Now every *ens* is either simple or composite. But what is simple is undivided, both in act and in potency. Whereas what is composite does not have *esse* while its parts are divided, but rather has it after they constitute and compose the composite itself. Hence it is manifest that the *esse* of a thing consists in indivision[82].

The *reductio ad esse* of *unum* passes through two argumentative sequences. Either *ens* is simple, therefore undivided in act, since it does not have distinct parts in act, and also undivided in potency, since it does not have parts that could be separated within it; now, that which is undivided in act and in potency is one; therefore, simple *ens* is one. Or *ens* is composite, and there are two ontological situations to consider: either these parts are actually divided, and then one does not yet have an *ens* since it lacks the being-in-act that would give it consistency; or the parts in question are already integrated into a whole, and then this *ens* has a being that is proper to it. Consequently, whether *ens* is simple or composite, the *esse* of *ens* is undivided, and therefore *unum*. In this demonstration, the *esse* on which *unum* is founded seems to be that which results from the synthesis of parts, in the case of composite *ens*, or from the subsistent form, in the case of simple *ens*; for this reason, we are dealing with the *esse in actu* of real *ens*. But the being in act is rooted in the *esse ut actus* measured by the essence that has or does not have parts, depending on whether it is material or spiritual. On the whole, the *esse*

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[82] ST I, q. 11 a. 1c: "unum nihil aliud significat quam ens indivisum. Et ex hoc ipso apparet quod unum convertitur cum ente. Nam omne ens aut est simplex, aut compositum. Quod autem est simplex, est indivisum et actu et potentia. Quod autem est compositum, non habet esse quandiu partes eius sunt divisae, sed postquam constituunt et componunt ipsum compositum. Unde manifestum est quod esse cuiuslibet rei consistit in indivisione".

in actu of *ens* seems to be the proximate foundation of its unity, while its *esse ut actus* is its remote foundation, but not without the measure that is given it by the essence.

b) *Verum*

The analysis of truth follows, during the career of the *Doctor Angelicus* a different itinerary, yet with a similar outcome. In the early *Scriptum*, we find a well-known text, which seems to resolve truth directly to *esse*:

> Now, because there is quiddity and *esse* in a thing, truth is founded more on the *esse* of a thing than on the quiddity, as also the term *ens* is imposed from *esse*; and in the very operation of the intellect, receiving the *esse* of the thing as by a certain assimilation to it, is completed the relation of adequation, in which the *ratio* of truth consists. Hence I say that the very *esse* of a thing is the cause of truth, according to which it is in the knowledge of the intellect[83].

"Veritas fundatur in esse magis quam in quidditate": both the context and the adverb *magis* show that *esse* designates here the actuality of a quiddity, or even the actuality of the whole in which it is inserted, and not directly on the *actus essendi* in its originality. For example, reflecting on the proposition "this is a rose", in which is expressed the content of an elementary judgment of perception, we perceive, in fact, that the predicate signifies the formal quiddity of the rose, or rather that which we can know of it, while the entire enunciation places this quiddity in its real actuality, namely in its *esse* in reality. Likewise, the proposition "this rose is yellow" affirms the actuality of the quiddity of yellow in that particular subject which is this rose, such that the *esse rei* will be, this time, the inherence in act of the yellow in the rose, or the real actuality of this peculiar mode of being.

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[83] *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I, d. 19 q. 5 a. 1c: "Cum autem in re sit quidditas ejus et suum esse, veritas fundatur in esse rei magis quam in quidditate, sicut et nomen entis ab esse imponitur; et in ipsa operatione intellectus accipientis esse rei sicut est per quamdam similationem ad ipsum, completur relatio adaequationis, in qua consistit ratio veritatis. Unde dico, quod ipsum esse rei est causa veritatis, secundum quod est in cognitione intellectus"; the formulation is repeated in ad 7: "ratio veritatis fundatur in esse, et non in quidditate".

The *esse* on which the truth is founded is therefore, the *esse in actu* of *ens* which is the object of an affirmative judgment.

In *De veritate*, the relation of priority between being and quiddity seems to be reversed in favor of the latter:

> But in any *ens* there are two [principles] to be considered, the *ratio* of its species and the *esse* by which it subsists in that species. And so an *ens* can be perfective in two ways: in one way according to the *ratio* of the species alone, and in this way the intellect is perfected by an *ens*, for it perceives the *ratio entis*, but the *ens* is still not in it according to its natural *esse*; and it is this mode of perfecting which the true adds to *ens* […]. In another way, *ens* is perfective of another not only according to the *ratio* of the species, but also according to the *esse* which it has in reality, and in this way the good is perfective[84].

In this case, ontological truth seems to be rooted in the *ratio speciei*, namely, in the specific universal that the human intellect can abstract from sensible experience and objectify in a concept. The key to this thesis, perfectly correct in its precise scope, is found in the opposition between true and good, which we have already mentioned. Good is, by the will that desires it, centrifugal, since it makes it go out of itself so to speak; true is, on the other hand, centripetal, since it is brought within the intellect so to speak. From this perspective, the truth of *ens* consists primarily in that which the intellect can assimilate of the thing, and therefore in its quiddity. However, this does not take away nothing of the realism of intellective intentionality, which is fulfilled in the second operation, namely, in the act of referring the abstract forms to beings of which they determine being and without which they would not be. Therefore, although the dynamism of true hinges above all on the assimilation of some quidditive aspect of the

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84 *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 1c: "In quolibet ente est duo considerare, scilicet ipsam rationem speciei et esse ipsum quo aliquid subsistit in specie illa. Et sic aliquod ens potest esse perfectivum dupliciter: uno modo secundum rationem speciei tantum, et sic ab ente perficitur intellectus qui percipit rationem entis, nec tamen ens est in eo secundum esse naturale; et ideo hunc modum perficiendi addit verum super ens [...]. Alio modo ens est perfectivum alterius non solum secundum rationem speciei sed etiam secundum esse quod habet in rerum natura, et per hunc modum est perfectivum bonum".

thing known, this is founded definitively on the being in act of *ens* that is thus specified.

When Saint Thomas justifies again the convertibility of the true with *ens* in the *Prima Pars*, which presents us with a *resolutio ad esse* of ontological truth:

> Just as *bonum* has the *ratio* of appetibility, so also *verum* has the order to knowledge. Insofar as something has *esse*, it is knowable. And because of this, it is said in *De Anima*, Book III, that the soul is in a certain sense all things according to the sense and intellect. And therefore, as *bonum* is converted with *ens*, so also is *verum*[85].

The decisive moment is that of the rigorous proportion between the intensity of the *esse* which defines *ens* and that of its knowability, which, in turn, constitutes its truth. Just as the *esse* of which is dealing extends analogically to the entire scale of beings (*unumquodque*), it is the being in act of some *ens*, which is both substantial or accidental, static or dynamic. Thus, we come, by a more direct way, to the same focal point that both the *Scriptum* and the *De veritate* have indicated: the transcendental truth of *ens*, convertible with it, is a property that derives from its *esse in actu*. In its simplicity, the parallel *inquantum esse / intantum cognoscibile* shows from the beginning the nexus between the principle and the property that unites, within *ens*, the density of being to the transcendental truth that results from it.

c) *Bonum*

It is in the analysis of *bonum* that Aquinas reduces in the most explicit way a transcendental to *esse*, but his reflections pass through at least two major stages. In question 21 of *De veritate* (from the academic year 1258-1259), the *ratio boni* is already attributed to the being of *ens*, but not without restrictions:

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[85] ST I, q. 16 a. 3c: "sicut bonum habet rationem appetibilis, ita verum habet ordinem ad cognitionem. Unumquodque autem inquantum habet de esse, intantum est cognoscibile. Et propter hoc dicitur in III De anima, quod anima est quodammodo omnia secundum sensum et intellectum. Et ideo, sicut bonum convertitur cum ente, ita et verum".

Esse itself, therefore, has the *ratio* of good; just as it is impossible,
then, for anything to be an *ens* which does not have *esse*, so too it
is necessary that every *ens* be good by the very fact of its having
esse, even though in many beings many other *rationes* of good-
ness are added over and above the *esse* by which they subsist[86].

Which *esse* are we dealing with in this text? Since the theme of
the article is the convertibility of *ens* and *bonum* in the supposit, one
shows in the concluding part of the *responsio* that what subsists is
good because the principle of its subsistence, *esse*, is also good. To
this fundamental goodness of the substance are added other degrees of
goodness, which are placed in the accidental categories. Therefore, we
have, on the one hand, the substantial goodness of the supposit which
stems originally from its *esse*, and then, on the other, the ulterior
goodness of the accidents and the operations that are added to it. In
this phase of his metaphysical reflection on *bonum*, which draws in-
spiration from Boethius' *De Hebdomadibus*[87], Saint Thomas under-
scores the distinction between the being (*esse*) that belongs above all
to the substance, and action, that proceeds from it by means of its ac-
cidents. The question about their relation within *ens* itself still remains
open. In the framework of the present study, we should affirm that the
substantial *esse* of things is good *per se*, and that, consequently, the
other levels of goodness proceed from the being proper to the acci-
dents and to operations. The unique *esse ut actus* of the supposit is not
yet been addressed in itself.

The *prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae* (begun in 1265) signals
a second stage, since it reaches *esse* as constitutive act:

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[86] *QD De veritate*, q. 21 a. 2c: "Ipsum igitur esse habet rationem boni, unde sicut
impossibile est quod sit aliquod ens quod non habeat esse, ita necesse est ut omne ens sit
bonum ex hoc ipso quod esse habet, quamvis etiam et in quibusdam entibus multae aliae
rationes bonitatis superadduntur supra suum esse quo subsistunt".

[87] See *Expositio libri De ebdomadibus*, lc. 4 l. 145-157: "Est igitur considerandum
secundum premissa quod in bonis creatis est duplex bonitas, una quidem secundum quod
dicuntur bona per relationem ad primum bonum, et secundum hoc esse eorum et quicquid in
eis est a primo bono est bonum ; alia uero bonitas consideratur in eis absolute, prout scilicet
unumquodque dicitur bonum in quantum est perfectum in esse et in operari, et hec quidem
perfectio non competit bonis creatis secundum ipsum esse essenciale eorum, set secundum
aliquid superadditum quod dicitur uirtus eorum ut supra dictum est".

> The *ratio* of good consists in this, that it is in some way desirable: hence the Philosopher says in I *Ethic.*: "*bonum* is that which all desire". Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only insofar as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect insofar as it is in act: therefore it is clear that inasmuch as something is good, to the same extent it is *ens*; for *esse* is the actuality of all things, as is clear from the foregoing[88].

The resolutive process is very linear, and reduces *bonum* to *ens* by means of a conceptual sequence that comprehends four intermediate terms: *appetibile / perfectum / actualitas / esse*. The crucial passage is that which founds the actuality, and, therefore, the goodness, of each thing in its *esse*, referring to the notion of intensive *esse* formulated in the two questions that immediately precede it:

> *Esse* is the actuality of every form and nature: for goodness and humanity are signified in act, only because we speak about them as being (*esse*)[89].

Unlike what was done in the texts we quoted with regard to *unum* and *verum*, Saint Thomas pushes the reduction of good all the way to *esse ut actus*, beyond *esse in actu*, since it goes to the original source of actuality that accounts for *bonitas*. The reason for this greater metaphysical radicality is found in the emergence of good with respect to substantial being. In fact, its *esse in actu* makes the substance to be an *ens simpliciter*, since it has being in itself and not in another, but the *esse* itself is, for the substance, only a *bonum sucundum quid*, since it has not yet reached its ultimate perfection, which will depend on its *operari*; on the flip side, the *esse in actu* of the accidental forms and the operations add an *ens secundum quid* to the substance, since their being is a being in another, while these same forms and operations added to the substance grant it its *bonum simpliciter*, because

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[88] ST I, q. 5 a. 1c: "Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetibile: unde Philosophus, in I Ethic., dicit quod bonum est id quod omnia appetunt. Manifestum est autem quod unumquodque est appetibile secundum quod est perfectum: nam omnia appetunt suam perfectionem. Intantum est autem perfectum unumquodque, inquantum est actu: unde manifestum est quod intantum est aliquid bonum, inquantum est ens: esse enim est actualitas omnis rei, ut ex superioribus patet".

[89] ST I, q. 3 a. 4c: "esse est actualitas omnis formae vel naturae: non enim bonitas vel humanitas significatur in actu, nisi prout significamus eam esse".

they make it perfect *in actu secundo*[90]. The integral goodness of the operating substance, therefore, requires three levels of ontological actuality: the substantial level, accidental formal level, and the accidental operational level; but the root of this threefold *esse in actu* is the unique *esse ut actus* of the supposit, whose *virtus essendi* expands within *ens* by means of the successive levels of substantial form, accidental forms and operations. For this reason, the foundation of the *ratio boni* requires, with respect to that of the *ratio veri*, a more explicit emphasis on the originary being from which all perfection stems, essential and operative, of the supposit.

d) *Res*

The reduction of *res* to being-in-act is facilitated notably by the nexus, which we have shown, between this transcendental and the quiddity or essence. In fact, the first article of *De veritate* clearly outlines the circle that moves from the thing to the essence, and from latter to being-in-act:

> We can, however, find nothing that can be predicated of every *ens* affirmatively and, at the same time, absolutely, with the exception of its essence by which it is said to be. To express this, the term *res* is used; for, according to Avicenna, *res* differs from *ens* because *ens* gets its name from *esse*, but *res* expresses the quiddity or essence of the *ens*[91].

Hence, even though *res* is placed on the side of the essence, in a polar relationship to *ens* which is taken from the act of being, the essence itself, then, is that by which "*ens* is said to be" (*secundum quam esse dicitur*). This phrase recalls an earlier one from *De ente et*

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[90] See the lengthy response of ST I, q. 5 a. 1 ad 1, of which we quote the concluding part: "Sic ergo secundum primum esse, quod est esse substantiale, dicitur aliquid ens simpliciter et bonum secundum quid, idest inquantum est ens; secundum vero ultimum actum, dicitur aliquid ens secundum quid et bonum simpliciter".

[91] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c: "non autem invenitur aliquid affirmative dictum absolute quod possit accipi in omni ente nisi essentia eius secundum quam esse dicitur, et sic imponitur hoc nomen res, quod in hoc differt ab ente, secundum Avicennam in principio *Metaphysicae*, quod ens sumitur ab actu essendi sed nomen rei exprimit quidditatem vel essentiam entis".

essentia: "essence is said insofar as through it and in it *ens* has *esse*"[92]. In this way, Thomas *iunior* perfectly describes the twofold role of the essence as that which, by mediating being to *ens* (*per eam*), species it, and as that which, consequently, receives it in itself (*in se*). From this perspective, *res* signifies *ens* as something that has a specification and that is also in some way the subject of its being in act. The lime (obviously a real lime) is an *ens* insofar as it is; and it is a *res* insofar as its being-in-act is that of a lime, and not of a plane tree or an oak, as well as insofar as it is what it is. Analogically, the scent of the lime in June is also a *res*, insofar as its being-in-act is that of this precise odor.

The mature Thomas does not change his position. Even though he does not specifically address the problem of the transcendental *res*, he does offer however some indications that confirm what we have just concluded – in particular when in his *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, he analyzes the Aristotelian *quod quid est*. For example, he clarifies that the *esse quid*, to which we have reduced *res*, is found in all the predicaments, and therefore, it transcends them:

> all the other categories have the *ratio entis* from substance, therefore, the mode of entity of substance – namely, the *esse quid* – is participated in by all the other categories according to a certain proportional likeness[93].

Therefore, every category implies a certain *esse quid* derived from that of the substance. Now, the *esse quid* is nothing other than the determination of *esse*, by way of limitation in *ens per participationem* which is considered in this text, and by way of pure distinction in *Esse per essentiam*[94]. Thus, it appears again that the

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[92] *De ente et essentia*, c. 1: "essentia dicitur secundum quod per eam et in ea ens habet esse".

[93] *Sententia super Metaphysicam* VII, lc. 4 n. 4 (Marietti, n. 1334): "omnia alia praedicamenta habent rationem entis a substantia, ideo modus entitatis substantiae, scilicet esse quid, participatur secundum quamdam similitudinem proportionis in omnibus aliis praedicamentis".

[94] See *Quaestiones de quolibet* VII, q. 1 a. 1 ad 1: "aliquid dicitur determinatum dupliciter, primo ratione limitationis, alio modo ratione distinctionis ; essencia autem diuina non est quid determinatum primo modo, set secundo, quia forma non limitatur nisi ex hoc quod in alio recipitur, cuius modo commensuratur, in essencia autem diuina non est aliquid in alio receptum, eo quod esse eius est ipsa natura diuina subsistens, quod in nulla re alia contingit, unde quelibet res alia habet esse receptum et sic limitatum. Et inde est quod

quid, in which *res* consists, refers to *esse*, in the common analogical sense of *esse in actu*.

e) *Aliquid*

As we have seen, Heinz Schmitz has the merit of individuating the ultimate foundation of the transcendental *aliquid* in the singularity of *esse*. However, while Schmitz interprets it as a relation of reason, we have interpreted it as the negation between *hoc ens* and *non hoc ens*. Every *ens* is *aliud quid*, to the degree in which it is virtually distinct from every other *ens*. Now, this property stems from the *esse* of *ens*, insofar as it is differentiated from every other *ens* by its own nature:

> God's *esse* is distinguished and individualized from every other *esse* by the very fact that it is *esse per se subsistens*, and is not something additional to a nature that is other from *esse* itself. Now every other *esse* that is not subsistent must be individuated by the nature and substance that subsists in that *esse*. And in these beings it is true that the *esse* of these is other from the *esse* of those by the fact that it is of another nature[95].

Therefore, Divine Subsistent Being is distinct from every other being by itself - since his nature is his being –, while created substances owe their ontological individuation to the singular nature that contracts their act of being. *Mutatis mutandis*, this foundation is also valid for the other predicaments, whose being-in-act is diverse from every other due to the first substance in which it inheres and on which it depends: "*esse accidentis dependet ab esse substantiae*"[96]. Therefore, being something distinct from every other thing stems immediately from the being-in-act of this thing: "*esse uniuscuiusque est ei*

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essencia diuina ab omnibus distinguitur per hoc quod est in alio non recipi, sicut si esset aliqua albedo existens non in subiecto, ex hoc ipso ditingueretur a qualibet albedine in subiecto existente, quamuis in ratione albedinis non esset recepta et sic nec limitata".

[95] *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 2 ad 5: "ipsum esse Dei distinguitur ed individuatur a quolibet alio esse, per hoc ipsum quod est esse per se subsistens, et non adveniens alicui naturae quae sit aliud ab ipso esse. Omne autem aliud esse quod non est subsistens, oportet quod individuetur per naturam et substantiam quae in tali esse subsistit. Et in eis verum est quod esse huius est aliud ab esse illius, per hoc quod est alterius naturae".

[96] ST III, q. 77 a. 3 ad 2.

proprium, et distinctum ab esse cuiuslibet alterius rei"[97], which, in turn, is rooted in the act of being proper to the subsistent reality to which the thing in question belongs. Thus, the transcendental *aliquid* is resolved into the *esse* of *ens* precisely insofar as it is distinct from every other act of being.

3. The Constitution and the Resolution of the Transcendental Properties of *ens*

The previous inventory of texts and clarifications allow us to take a stand on what constitutes each transcendental. It is helpful here to provide a synthetic assessment, in which we will clarify the *additio rationis* characteristic of each transcendental, indicating when and in what way we are going beyond Aquinas' explicit doctrine. In this judging phase (*via iudicii*), and no longer inventive phase (*via inventionis*), we should return to the order in which the properties of *ens* appear in the initial article of *De Veritate*, since, as we will see, this text follows a rigorous progression.

We recall that the distinction between *ens* and the transcendentals exclusively concerns the *ratio entis*, and that it does not touch in any way the very nature of *ens*, that contains everything that is only conceptually explicated by the different transcendental *rationes*. Thus, the comparison takes place on the notional level, and not on the real level. In this sense, *res* is the closest notion to that of *ens*, because it is limited to evidencing that the *est*, in *id quod est*, is necessarily specified by a certain *quid*. For this reason, it appears that the notion of *res* adds a relation of reason of intrinsic measuring to that of *ens*, a relation that explicates what being is for this *ens*. This relation is internal not only to the nature of *ens*, but also to its notion, unlike the other transcendentals. Hence, I hold that the proposition in which one attributes to *ens* its own quiddity enters in the first mode of perseity, and not in the second, since when we posit the predicate, in the present case, the *quid* of the subject, namely of *ens*, we are only making a constitutive note explicit: every *ens* is an *ens quid* since every *ens* includes its own *quid* in its notion. The result is that, although *res* is definitely a transcendental, since it characterizes *ens* be-

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[97] *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 3c.

fore any categorical determination, it is not a *passio entis* in the epistemological sense proper to this term.

Unum is the transcendental of which Thomas himself better clarifies the ontological and epistemological status. *Unum* adds indivision to the notion of *ens*; it is a negation insofar as it takes away every division from *ens*, yet it approaches privation insofar as it is, so to speak, in a subject. As the notion of unity is not contained in that of *ens*, the proposition according to which *omne ens est unum* will be, from the merely notional point of view, *per se secundo modo*, since the predicate includes the notion of subject, but does not belong to its comprehension. For this reason, *unum* is the first transcendental that formally adds another *ratio* to the *ratio entis*; however, it does this by remaining within every determinate *ens*, as the Common Doctor notes: "*negatio autem consequens omne ens absolute est indivisio*"[98]. As we have seen, the comparative judgment *hoc non est illud*, which justifies the formalization of *unum*, also allows one to deal with *aliquid* in the sense of *aliud quid*, as is suggested in the same text: "*ens […] dicitur aliquid in quantum est ab aliis divisum*"[99], on the condition, however, that *illud* is understood, in a first moment, as *non-hoc*. The notion of *aliquid*, then, is founded on the negation that separates this determinate *ens* from what this *ens* is not, and that, therefore, for this reason, it has the value of *non ens*. In fact, this determinate *ens* differs necessarily from everything that, on account of it, is not-this-*ens*: thus, *ens*, insofar as it is this *ens*, is divided from everything that it is not, and this is the case even before there are other beings. Like the notion of *indivisum in se*, the notion of *divisum ab aliis* adds to the determinate *ens* something that belongs to its nature, but not to its notion, and that is not confused with the constitutive indivision of *unum*: for this reason, the proposition according to which *omne ens est aliquid* also falls within the second mode of perseity.

After our investigations, the cases of *verum* and *bonum* do not bring up any difficult. These two transcendentals add relations of reason to the *ratio entis* and express intelligibility and appetibility:

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[98] *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c.
[99] See *QD De veritate*, q. 1 a. 1c, in the part quoted above in n. 64. See also *Sententia super Physicam* VII, lc. 9 n. 5 (Marietti, n. 960): "Sic enim aliquid est ens, sicut et unum; unum autem est quod est in se indivisum et ab aliis divisum".

It is necessary that the other three add something that does not contract *ens*: for if they contracted *ens* they would no longer be primary notions. Now this is impossible unless that which they add were only according to reason, and this is either a negation which is added by *unum* as already stated, or a relation or something which by its very nature is universally able to be referred to *ens*; and this is either the intellect to which *verum* implies a relation, or the appetite to which *bonum* implies a relation[100].

And it is also clear that truth and goodness refer to *ens* as *per se* properties of the second mode, since these include their subject in the defining description: *verum* is nothing other than *ens* insofar as it can terminate an act of intellection that is adequated to it, and *bonum* coincides with *ens* insofar as it can be the object of volition.

At this point, it will be helpful to outline the results that we have attained thus far:

Transcendental	*Additio rationis* indicated by Aquinas	*Additio rationis* hypothesized by us	Type of perseity
res	--	relation of internal measuring	first
unum	negation of division		second
aliquid	--	negation or virtual division between beings	
verum	virtual relation of intelligibility		
bonum	virtual relation of appetibility		

The chart shows the progression of the successive additions to the notion of *ens*. We begin with "thing", which is limited to clarifying

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100 *QD De potentia*, q. 9 a. 7 ad 6: "Oportet autem quod alia tria super ens addant aliquid quod ens non contrahat; si enim contraherent ens, iam non essent prima. Hoc autem esse non potest nisi addant aliquid secundum rationem tantum; hoc autem est vel negatio, quam addit unum (ut dictum est), vel relatio, vel aliquid quod natum sit referri universaliter ad ens; et hoc est vel intellectus, ad quem importat relationem verum, aut appetitus, ad quem importat relationem bonum".

the content that derives, within *ens*, from the quidditative measure of *ens*. Remaining within *ens*, we deny its ontological divisibility; however, since the indivisibility of an *ens in se* is correlative to its divisibility from others, we consider the first relation that the singular *ens* has with the other beings that are external to it, namely the division between this and that. We characterize this division as virtual in a very precise sense: namely, insofar as this division stems from the actuality – or from the ontological *virtus* – that contradistinguishes every *ens* from all beings, even before there are other beings, we are dealing with a negation of reason. Finally, we contemplate truth and goodness, both of which are virtual relations to the intellect and to the will, and are prior to human intellection and volition. By including *ens* in our list, we thus have three pairs of transcendental notions:

1. *ens* and *res*, which concern every *ens in se* leaving aside all others and oppose each other, in an inclusive, and not exclusive, way as act and content;
2. *unum* and *aliquid*, which concern every *ens* insofar as it is singular and distinct, and they oppose one another as undivided *in* se and divided from other;
3. *verum* and *bonum*, which concern every *ens* insofar as they can perfect spiritual *ens*, and they oppose each other according to the inverse directions of this perfectioning in intellective assimilability and volitional attractiveness.

This outline follows a rhythm that is easily able to be discerned:

1. first, we consider a determinate *ens in se*, and through this *ens* every *ens*, which appears as *ens* and *res*;
2. then, we compare this *ens* to another *ens*, starting with the judgment *hoc ens non est illud*, or better yet, *hoc ens non est non hoc ens*, and the notions of *unum* and *aliquid* appear;
3. finally, we reflect on the relation of the soul to *ens*, and the notions of *verum* and *bonum* are objectified.

With this, we know what is the order of discovery of the transcendentals listed in the first article of *De veritate*. *Ens* is the absolutely first known; its content is objectified saying what it is; in a second moment, one addresses the two extremes of the relation of opposition

between this *ens* and that *ens*[101], expressing the unity and the "alter-reity" – *sit venia verbi* – of one same *ens*; in a third moment, one returns upon the subject that is able to understand and to desire every *ens* insofar as it is *ens*, grasping truth and goodness. Therefore, it is a process which goes from *ens in se* to *ens* in opposition to beings, and then once again from *ens in se* to the *ens* for the soul which refers immaterially to *ens*.

Having shown the order in the discovery of the transcendentals, we still need to indicate their resolutive principle. We have already established that each transcendental makes explicit, in a way proper to each of them, an aspect of *esse in actu*. Any *ens* is a *res* insofar as its being-in-act is determinate and, so to speak, concretized by its quiddity, first by substantial quiddity, then by its accidental quiddity. Insofar as its being-in-act remains undivided, *ens* is *unum*; and insofar as this same being-in-act is distinct from every other by its individual quiddity, *ens* is an *aliud quid*. Finally, the actuality of being confers its truth to *ens*, insofar as this is specified by its quiddity, while the same actuality coincides, in its ipseity, with the real goodness of *ens*: "*esse autem, in quantum huiusmodi, bonum est*"[102]. Beyond the specific case of the good, this last assertion enables us to see that each transcendental refers, in the last analysis, to *esse* in the strong sense. In fact, transcendental perfections, and still more the predicamental perfections, are subject to the principle according to which "*omnium autem perfectiones pertinent ad perfectionem essendi*"[103]. Now, the *perfectio*

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[101] See *Sentientia super Metaphysicam* X, lc. 4 n. 14 (Marietti, n. 1997): "Divisio autem quae praesupponitur ad rationem unius, secundum quod convertitur cum ente, non est divisio quantitatis continuae, quae praeintelligitur uni quod est principium numeri. Sed est divisio quam causat contradictio, prout hoc ens et illud, dicuntur divisa, ex eo quod hoc non est illud".

[102] *QD De potentia*, q. 3 a. 6c. The dependence of the transcendentals with respect to the being-in-act of *ens* has been grasped by Cornelio Fabro, in the context of a comparison to the Kantian transcendental, in "Il trascendentale moderno e il trascendentale tomistico", *Angelicum* 60 (1983), 552-553: "L'errore di Kant, con la Scolastica decadente, è di avere messo a fondamento non l'infinita apertura e concretezza dell'*ens*, ma la *essentia* astratta equiparata all'*unum* [...], invece di riportarle al supremo che è l'*ens* ed alla sua dinamica di participio presente che indica l'esercizio in atto dell'*esse*. È questo esercizio in atto dell'*esse* che mette in atto nel soggetto spirituale l'attualità del *verum* a fondamento dell'attività dell'intelletto e di quella di *bonum* a fondamento della tensione della volontà. Così sono affermati, cioè fondati, il primato fondante dello *ens* e la trascendentalità derivata statica di *essentia* e di *unum* e quella operativo-dinamica dello spirito col *verum* e il *bonum*".

[103] ST I, q. 4 a. 2c.

essendi of anything is reduced to the resolutive principle of *ens*, which is the fundamental act of being, which, in the Creator, is subsistent in the Creator, and, in the creature, is received in a specifying and limiting potency. This *resolutio* is valid for *res* as well as for the four *passiones entis* that we have studied: the essential perfection of *ens*, those of its unicity and of its singularity, and those of its intelligibility and its appetibility. In God, these transcendentals are infinite and subsistent as is *Esse subsistens* itself. In the created supposit, however, *res*, unity, singularity, truth and goodness are distributed in the levels of being in act that participate in the constitutive act of being, namely, the being-in-act of the substance, that of the stable accidental forms and that of the operations.

    We summarize now the results that we have attained in our study:

Transcendental	Proximate foundation *Esse in actu*	Ultimate foundation *Esse ut actus*
Res	Specification of being in act of every *ens* thanks to the individual essence	*Esse* is the actuality of every being-in-act, and therefore of every transcendental perfection according to an intensity measured by the essence
Unum	Indivision of being in act of every *ens* thanks to its own actuality	
Aliquid	Distinction of every level of being in *ens* and among beings thanks to the individual essence	
Verum	Intelligibility of every level of *ens* in *ens* insofar as it is an act specified by its essence	
Bonum	Appetibility of every level of *ens* in *ens* insofar as it is, in itself, in act	

    We note that every transcendental is identified with a certain type of being-in-act, and then that this is resolved into the principles of *ens* itself, namely, the act of being on the one hand, and the essence on the other. Thanks to this link with *esse*, the transcendentals are inscribed in the epistemological triangle, of which we have expounded the components. Since *ens qua ens* is the subject of metaphysics, the transcen-

dentals are its necessary predicates, which are the object of two investigative procedures. The first follows the *via inventionis*, and consists in the *additio rationis* thanks to which are successively evidenced *res*, then the pair of *unum* and *aliquid*, and finally, that of *verum* and *bonum*, as we have seen. The other procedure is done according to the *via iudicii*, and manifests how every transcendental flows from the constitutive principles of *ens*, in which they are inversely resolved. In this sense, the transcendentals are able to be structured within a demonstrative syllogism:

- major *per se* – the act of being measured by a correlative substantial essence ultimately founds, in *ens*, each level of being-in-act, the richness of which human reason explicates through the notions of *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum*;
- minor *per se primo modo* – now, every *ens* has as its ultimate resolutive principle an act of being measured by a correlative substantial essence;
- conclusion *per se* – therefore, every *ens* has properties that human reason explicates as *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum*.

Therefore, not only is every transcendental predicated *per se* of *ens qua ens*, but also such an attribution is founded on principles in which the subject of metaphysics is resolved.

Thus, it seems that the systematic investigation of the transcendentals is an apodictic deduction of an Aristotelian nature and that it proceeds according to the sequence *subiectum / principia / passiones*. In reality, the epistemological model of the *Posterior Analytics* cannot be employed in this theme without subjecting the model to two very important clarifications. The first regards the way in which the transcendental properties are attributed both to their subject and to their principles. We have already noted that *res* cannot be predicated of *ens* according to the second type of perseity, since it only reduplicates the content of the notion of *ens*, in such a way that the proposition "every *ens* is a *res*" is said *per se primo modo*. If, then, the other transcendentals that we have studied are referred *per se secundo* to *ens*, this nexus is valid only with respect to the *ratio entis*, and not with respect to the *natura entis*: precisely because the transcendental notion does not add anything real to that of *ens*, and does not even restrict it, everything that is expressed by the transcendentals is already included in the real-

ity of *ens*. There is a similar situation regarding the relationship be-
tween being-in-act and its transcendental characteristics: these are
contained in the *esse in actu* in question, but are added to the notion
that we can have according to a relation of provenance, which falls
under, for the notions that come after *res*, the fourth mode of perseity.
With regard to the passage from intensive *esse* to *esse in actu*, we are
clearly dealing with a foundation *per se quarto*: "hoc quod habet esse,
efficitur actu existens"[104]. Because the act of being is not exterior to
being in act, either in its existential dimension or in its perfective di-
mension, it cannot be the efficient cause of the latter *stricto sensu*.
Nevertheless *esse ut actus* is, by its nature, the actuating principle of
esse in actu, and this is enough since the nexus that unites the former
to the latter is according to the fourth mode. From the act of being to
the transcendental notions, the comprehensive link, therefore, is made
per se quarto. Except for the case of *res*, the global demonstrative cir-
cuit that we have delineated proceeds, therefore, *per se primo* from the
ens in act to its constitutive principles, and principally to the act of be-
ing (in the minor), then it continues *per se quarto* from this *esse ut
actus* to the transcendental properties that this founds in the different
levels of *esse in actu* of the real supposit (in the major), and comes to
a conclusion with the attribution *per se secundo* of the transcendentals
to *ens*. Even though the last four transcendentals of *De Veritate* are
able to be integrated in a rigorous demonstrative sequence[105], these
passiones entis are distinguished only conceptually from the *esse* from
which they stem and from the *ens* in which they inhere, in a way that
differs, for example, from what happens with the powers that really
differ from the animate substance. This reduction of the demonstrative
to the *rationes* was already foreseen by Aquinas for the second and
third speculative sciences, and therefore does not invalidate the pro-
cess theorized by the Stagirite, but evidences that the epistemological
accent falls more, in metaphysics, on the understanding of the notions
and the enunciations than on the inference that combines them[106]: we

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[104] *QD De potentia*, q. 7 a. 2 ad 9.

[105] See the text of *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* quoted above in note 18.

[106] See also *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 6 a. 1 sol. 1 ad 3: "in omnibus scientiis
seruatur quantum ad hoc modus rationis, quod proceditur de uno in aliud secundum rationem,
non autem quod procedatur de una re in aliam ; set hoc est proprium naturalis scientie, ut
dictum est"; sol. 2 ad 4: "Potest tamen dici, quod sicut modus phisice sumitur a ratione

are not dealing so much with moving from one notion to another, as with reading conceptually – *intus legere* – the transcendental properties within the act of being that already really contains them.

The other difficulty we need to resolve concerns the relation between the antecedent and the consequent of the argument in question. Among the six characteristics that belong to the premises of an apodictic syllogism we find the being which is not only prior to the conclusion that they cause, but also is better known that the conclusion: "ex notioribus, et prioribus, et causis conclusionis"[107]. Now, the major of our demonstration enunciates that *esse* necessarily implies the transcendental that, each time, is examined. But the subject of this proposition, namely the act of being, is found at the limits of our intellectual capabilities: since "that which is able to be grasped by our intellect is what has a quiddity participating *esse*"[108], the *esse* considered distinctly from the quiddity cannot be objectified by our intellect. On the other hand, the thesis according to which, for example, *ens* is *unum*, confronts two notions, that of "*id quod habet esse*" and that of "*id quod est indivisum in se*", in such a way that it seems to be more known to us than the principle on which this is founded. Therefore, the discovery of the transcendentals appears more clearly than their resolution in *esse*, whose epistemological utility thus becomes problematic. To respond to this objection, one should recall the distinction between the better known for us and better known in itself[109]. Under the first as-

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secundum quod a sensu accipit, modus autem diuine scientie ab intellectu secundum quod nude aliquid considerat, ita etiam et modus mathematice potest sumi a ratione secundum quod accipit ab ymaginatione". Metaphysics (*divina scientia*), therefore, proceeds from one *ratio* to another, and does this without any support from perception or imagination.

[107] See *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* I, lc. 4 n. 10 l. 164-173: "necesse est quod demonstratiua sciencia, id est que per demonstrationem acquiritur, procedat ex propositionibus ueris et primis et immediatis, id est que non per aliquod medium demonstrantur, set per seipsas sunt manifeste (que quidem immediate dicuntur in quantum carent medio emonstrante, prime autem in ordine ad alias propositiones que per eas probantur); et iterum ex notioribus et prioribus, et causis conclusionis".

[108] *Super Librum De causis*, lc. 6 l. 15-17 (ed. H. D. Saffrey, p. 47): "illud solum est capabile ab intellectu nostro quod habet quidditatem participantem esse".

[109] On the distinction between *notius quoad nos* and *notius simpliciter*, see *Expositio Libri Posteriorum* I, lc. 4 n. 16 l. 292- where we find the difference between mathematical and physical demonstrations: "in omni demonstratione, oportet quod procedatur ex hiis, que sunt notiora quo ad nos, non tamen singularibus, set uniuersalibus: non enim aliquid potest fieri nobis notum nisi per id quod est magis notum nobis; quandoque autem id quod est magis notum quo ad nos, est etiam magis notum secundum naturam et simpliciter, sicut accidit in

pect, the conclusion that posits the property in *ens* is more known than its ultimate justification; but under the second aspect, the things are reversed: it is the being that explains the transcendental explications of *ens*. Metaphysics appears, at this point, like an eminently paradoxical science: every perfection – transcendental or predicamental, substantial or accidental – is resolved into the act of being, first in the participated act of being, then, beyond the limits of the finite, in the subsistent act of being; that which the act of being is, however, is not revealed to us, except through the transcendental, substantial and accidental perfections that we uncover in beings. Thus, everything converges toward a focal point, that of *esse*, which, on the one hand, constitutes and illuminates beings, and, on the other, constitutes and illuminates its transcendental properties; but the nature of this luminous source flees from us to the degree that we seek to get closer to it. The Philosopher already told us that, before the separated substances, our intellect is like the owl before the light of day:

> But even though these first principles are most evident in themselves, our intellect regards them as the eye of an owl does the light of the sun, as *Metaphysics* II says[110].

With this beautiful metaphor, we can now bring this study to a close. Once First Philosophy has discovered the transcendentals by means of the three series of *additiones* to the *ratio entis* that we have evidenced, it then resolves them in the *esse* that is the foundation of *ens*. In this way, reason follows two paths that are integrated with one another. The first, following the *via inventionis*, proceeds directly from *ens qua ens* to its content (*res*), then to its properties (the remaining four transcendentals), while the second, following the *via iudicii*, shows how all five transcendental notions belong to the *subiectum* of metaphysics due to its principles, namely, due to *esse*, which still re-

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mathematicis in quibus, propter abstractionem a materia, non fiunt demonstrationes nisi ex principiis formalibus, et in talibus fiunt demonstrationes ex hiis quae sunt notiora simpliciter; quandoque uero id quod est notius quo ad nos non est notius simpliciter, sicut accidit in naturalibus, in quibus essencie et uirtutes rerum propter hoc quod in materia <sunt>, sunt occulte, set innotescunt nobis per ea que exterius de ipsis apparent".

[110] *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, q. 5 a. 4c: "Quia autem huiusmodi prima principia quamuis sint in se maxime nota, tamen intellectus noster se habet ad ea ut oculus noctue ad lucem solis, ut dicitur in II Metaphisice".

mains for us enveloped in secrecy. With Oliver Boulnois, one could say that, at this point, the *resolutio* of metaphysics, understood as wisdom, urges us beyond metaphysics, understood as science[111].

Summary This study, on Thomas Aquinas' doctrine on the transcendentals, is both epistemological and metaphysical. From the epistemological point of view, we want to determine if and how the sequence *subiectum / principia subiecti / passiones subiecti* can be applied to *ens qua ens* and to the transcendentals. Our investigation concludes that the five transcendentals – *res, unum, aliquid, verum, bonum* – are effectively founded on the principles of *ens*, and that the last four are counted among the properties that are predicated *per se secundo* of *ens*, even though they do not add anything real to their subject, but rather only a negation or a relation of reason. From the metaphysical perspective, we want to clarify, in the most precise way possible, the *additio rationis* proper to each transcendental, and then explore the nexus that links each of them to the *esse* of *ens*. What results is that the transcendentals are ultimately founded on the act of being that is the terminus of the metaphysical *resolutio*, and that each transcendental explicates an aspect of *esse* considered as *perfectio omnium perfectionum*.

Key words: Thomas Aquinas, Jan Aertsen, Cornelio Fabro, metaphysics, epistemology, properties of being, *passiones entis*, transcendentals, act of being, *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum.*,

Sommario: Questo studio dedicato alla dottrina di Tommaso d'Aquino sui trascendentali ha un doppio taglio, epistemologico e metafisico. Sul versante epistemologico, abbiamo voluto determinare se e come la sequenza *subiectum / principia subiecti / passiones subiecti* può applicarsi all'ente in quanto ente e ai trascendentali. La nostra ricerca conclude che i cinque trascendentali *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum* si fondano in effetti sui principi dell'ente, e che i quattro ultimi sono delle proprietà che si predicano dell'ente *per se secundo*, sebbene non aggiungano nulla di reale al loro soggetto, ma soltanto una negazione o una relazione di ragione. Sul versante metafisico, abbiamo voluto chiarire nel modo più preciso possibile

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[111] See O. BOULNOIS, *Métaphysiques rebelles, Genèse et structures d'une science au Moyen Âge*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 2013, 225-226: "Thomas dépasse radicalement la métaphysique d'Avicenne : il remonte jusqu'aux causes communes de l'étant, premières et inengendrées, les plus parfaites et connues en dernier. Ainsi, Dieu est atteint, non pas à l'intérieur de la métaphysique, comme une de ses parties, mais dans sa transcendance, comme le principe de ce sujet. La métaphysique s'ouvre ainsi au-delà des limites de son sujet, et remonte jusqu'au principe qui le fonde. Elle peut le faire parce qu'en Dieu, la différence entre l'acte d'être et l'essence n'a pas lieu, et parce que l'*ipsum esse* ne se dit pas dans le même sens que l'être du fini (ce qui fonde l'analogie de l'être). Cette connaissance du Principe correspond à une dimension de sagesse qui va plus loin que la métaphysique".

l'*additio rationis* propria di ogni trascendentale, poi esplorare il nesso che lo collega all'*esse* dell'ente. Ne risulta che i trascendentali si fondano ultimamente sull'atto di essere che è il termine della *resolutio* metafisica, e che ognuno esplicita un aspetto dello *esse* considerato come *perfectio omnium perfectionum*.

Parole chiave: Tommaso d'Aquino, Jan Aertsen, Cornelio Fabro, metafisica, epistemologia, proprietà dell'ente, *passiones entis*, trascendentali, atto di essere, *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum*.