Aquinas on the Ontological and Theological Foundation of the Transcendentals

Jason A. Mitchell, L.C.

Metaphysics is defined as the science of being as being and its properties by its ultimate causes. The identity between metaphysics and philosophical theology[1] necessitates founding both ontologically (*per causas intrinsecas*) and theologically (*per causas extrinsecas*) the transcendental properties of being as being: *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, and *bonum*.

Unfortunately, with the separation of ontology from rational theology in modern rationalism, the requirement for the theological foundation was somewhat forgotten, namely the need to relate the transcendentals to God as to their cause. The rediscovery in Twentieth-century Thomism of *actus essendi* and the notion of participation has redimensioned Thomistic metaphysics by placing participated *actus essendi* as act of all acts and perfection of all perfections at the center of metaphysical inquiry. Consequently, we have the opportunity of investigating more deeply the speculative novelties that emerge from a study of the transcendentals with this new perspective, namely, a study of the transcendentals in the light of the real composition and the doctrine of participation.

For this reason, I would like to present in a systematic manner the ontological and theological foundation of the transcendentals, follow-

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[1] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4: "Sic ergo theologia sive scientia divina non tamquam subiectum scientiae, set tamquam principia subiecti, et talis est theologia quam philosophi prosequuntur, que alio nomine metaphysica dicitur".

ing the thought of Thomas Aquinas and the method of *resolutio*. In the first section, I will present the ontological foundation according to the method of *resolutio secundum rationem*. In the second, I will expound the theological foundation of each transcendental according to the method of *resolutio secundum rem*. For the moment, I leave aside in this article two other themes present in Aquinas' works: the foundation of *pulchrum*[2] and the Trinitarian foundation of the transcendentals[3].

1. Ontological foundation of the transcendentals

The proper method of the ontological foundation of the transcendentals is *resolutio secundum rationem*. This indication is found in Thomas' *Commentary on Boethius' De Trinitate*, where he explains that the ultimate terminus of the resolution *secundum rationem* is "the consideration of being and the things that are of being as such"[4].

In metaphysics, therefore, the *resolutio secundum rationem* has a twofold task: the resolution of *ens* to its *actus essendi*; and the resolution of the transcendentals, namely, the resolution of what is common to every *ens* as *ens*, to the intrinsic principles of *ens*.

The *resolutio secundum rationem* of *ens qua ens* moves from the real compositions of subject-accident and matter-form, which are first studied in the philosophy of nature, to those of essence-*esse* and of *suppositum-operari*[5]. In this passage, it is important to note how two things fall outside the domain of the *subiectum*: God (as extrinsic cause of the *subiectum*) and *ens rationis* (insofar as it is the *subiectum* of logic)[6]. Thus, the transcendental properties of being that are inves-

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[2] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 1: "Deus est causa omnis pulchritudinis inquantum est causa consonantiae et claritatis". *In IV De Divinis Nominibus*, lect. 5, n. 339: "Deus tradit pulchritudinem, inquantum est causa consonantiae et claritatis in omnibus".

[3] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1996, 408-415.

[4] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4: "Et ideo terminus resolutionis in hac via ultimus est consideratio entis et eorum quae sunt entis in quantum huiusmodi".

[5] See J. MITCHELL, "The Method of *Resolutio* and the Structure of the Five Ways", *Alpha Omega* 15 (2012), 339-380.

[6] See J. VILLAGRASA, *Metafisica II. La comunanza dell'essere*, APRA, Rome 2009, 253: "L'analogia dei concetti trascendentali è un'analogia di attribuzione intrinseca e di pro-

tigated by the metaphysician are those of *ens naturae*, that is, being by participation, divided by the categories[7].

1.1 Transcendental properties of *ens in se*

Hence, the metaphysical analysis of *ens qua ens* by intrinsic causes brings us to the demonstration *quia* of the real distinction of substantial essence and *actus essendi* in finite *ens*[8]. This distinction between the two constitutive principles gives rise to the first transcendental property of *ens per participationem*, namely, the aspect of its determination or measuring, expressed by the term "*res*". *Ens*, due to its essence or quiddity, is called *res*[9].

Aquinas clearly teaches that *res est de transcendentibus*[10], and, thus, as a transcendental, it should make explicit noetically something that is implicit in the notion of *ens*. The notional difference between *ens* and *res*, then, is founded, with regard to the creature, on the real distinction between essence and *esse*[11]. Hence, *ens* is convertible with *res*:

- on the one hand, *ens* means the *entitas rei*[12];
- on the other, *res* espresses the *quidditas entis*[13].

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porzionalità propria; entrambe convengono alla nozione di ente reale. L'ente di ragione si dice soltanto con un'analogia di proporzionalità metaforica".

[7] The different approaches of Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suárez are evident. Suárez studies being and the transcendentals before the division of *ens* into finite and infinite.

[8] See J. VILLAGRASA, "La *Gesalt* metafisica di Tommaso d'Aquino secondo Cornelio Fabro", *Alpha Omega* 14 (2011), 416: "La risoluzione *secundum rationem* di qualsiasi realtà termina nei principi costitutivi comuni dell'ente, cioè l'*esse* e l'essenza".

[9] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1: "nomen rei expimit quidditatem vel essentiam entis"; *In IV Metaph.*, lect. 2, 558: "Et ideo hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, significat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia".

[10] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 2, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 39, a. 3, ad 3.

[11] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 194: "Thomas bases the conceptual difference between *ens* and *res* on a real diversity in the structure of that which is. In every thing two aspects are to be considered, namely, its quiddity and its being (*esse*). The name *res* is derived from the first component, the name *ens* from the second".

[12] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 48, a. 2 ad 2.

[13] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

Aquinas often links the division of *ens* by the ten predicaments to the convertibility of *ens* with *res*[14]. In this way, one can resolve the difficult question of the *additio* of *res* to *ens per participationem*: namely, *res* makes explicit, by notional addition, the *determinatio* of the constrictive additions of the predicaments to participated *ens*. *Res*, as a transcendental, does not restrict *ens* to a category, but only evidences the determination proper to every finite *ens*, divided by the categories.

The metaphysics of participation, like that proposed by Cornelio Fabro (1911-1995), holds that the gradation of the *esse* of an *ens* refers to the essence not as a formal perfection separated from the existential perfection of *esse*, but rather as to the measure of the very perfection of *esse*. Thus, the *esse* of a creature, as actuating act, is determined or measured to a specific degree when it enters into composition with the essence. Following the theoretical principles of the *quarta via* of Aquinas, one demonstrates that the fundamental composition of *ens per participationem* demands the existence of a cause that is *Esse per essentiam* and not by participation[15]. Only *Esse per essentiam* is able to cause *ex nihilo* and measure what is *ens per participationem*. In this way, one comes to the existence of a divine being that, unlike the creature, remains undetermined *in se* and is not limited by its essence[16].

What results is that God and creatures are both called *res*, but in different ways and analogically. The creature is *res* due to the measuring of its being by its essence; God is *res* due to the identity between

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[14] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 48, a. 2 ad 2: "Ens dupliciter dicitur. Uno modo, secundum quod significat entitatem rei, prout dividitur per decem praedicamenta: et sic convertitur cum re". *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, ch. 8 e 9: "Ens enim dupliciter dicitur, […]. Uno modo, secundum quod significat essentiam rei, et dividitur per decem praedicamenta". *Quodlibet*, II, q. 2, a. 1: "Sed verum est quod hoc nomen ens, secundum quod importat rem cui competit huiusmodi ese, sic significat essentiam rei, et dividitur per decem genera". *In IX Metaph.*, lect. 1, n. 1769: "Ens dividitur uno modo secundum quod dicitur quid, scilicet substantia, aut quantitas, aut qualitas, quod est dividere ens per decem praedicamenta".

[15] See A. CONTAT, "La quarta via di san Tommaso d'Aquino e le prove di Dio di sant'Anselmo di Aosta secondo le tre configurazioni dell'ente tomistico", in *Sant'Anselmo d'Aosta 'Doctor magnificus'. A 900 anni della morte*, C. PANDOLFI and J. VILLAGRASA (eds)., IF Press, Roma 2011, 103-174.

[16] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 4: "[Deus est] maxime ens, inquantum est non habens aliquod esse determinatum per aliquam naturam cui adveniat, sed est ipsum esse subsistens, omnibus modis indeterminatum".

his being and his essence. The essence or quiddity, as *quod quid erat esse*, is that which makes a thing to be what it is[17]. What is common to both God and creatures, insofar as both are *res*, is that both are something (*esse quid*). Aquinas speaks of the relation of *esse* and *esse quid* in God as follows: "For it belongs to God not to be in something else insofar as he is subsistent; and to be something (*esse quid*), insofar as he is essence; and to be in act (*esse in actu*) by reason of his being"[18]. "*Esse quid*", Aquinas writes elsewhere, is the mode of entity of the substance[19].

The analogical predication of *res* recalls an important distinction in the interpretation of Aquinas' texts on *ens*: at times, *ens* refers to the creature and to God, according to an analogy of one to another, and does not signify a determinate mode of being[20]; other times, however, *ens* refers only to creatures, and, insofar as it is finite and "by participation"[21], requires both a measuring principle and an extrinsic cause of its act of being. Accordingly, the argument for the transcendentality of *res* is twofold:

[1] If *ens* is simple in an absolute way, namely *Esse per essentiam*, the essence does not limit being; being is undetermined *in se*, and, in this case, *res* expresses the essence of God insofar as it is identical to his being. Hence, in God, *esse quid* is marked by indetermination *in se* and subsistent being.

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[17] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, ch. 1: "Et quia illud, per quod res constituitur in proprio genere vel specie, est hoc quod significatur per diffinitionem indicantem quid est res, inde est quod nomen essentiae a philosophis in nomen quiditatis mutatur. Et hoc est quod Philosophus frequenter nominat quod quid erat esse, id est hoc per quod aliquid habet esse quid".

[18] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch. 11: "Et quamvis haec in Deo unum sint verissime, tamen in Deo est quicquid pertinet ad rationem vel subsistentis, vel essentiae, vel ipsius esse: convenit enim ei non esse in aliquo, inquantum est subsistens; esse quid, inquantum est essentia; et esse in actu, ratione ipsius esse".

[19] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In VII Metaph.*, lect. 4, n. 1334: "Propter hoc enim quod omnia alia praedicamenta habent rationem entis a substantia, ideo modus entitatis substantiae, scilicet esse quid, participatur secundum quamdam similitudinem proportionis in omnibus aliis praedicamentis".

[20] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 197: "*Ens* does not signify, however, any determinate mode of being".

[21] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Liber De Causis*, lect. 6: "Sed secundum rei veritatem causa prima est supra ens in quantum est ipsum esse infinitum, ens autem dicitur id quod finite participat esse".

[2] If *ens* is really composed, namely, *ens per participationem*, the essence determines, limits and specifies the *esse* of *ens*. *Res*, in this case, expresses the aspect of determination proper to every participated *ens*. Hence, in creatures, *esse quid* is marked by determination and participated being.

While the theological foundation of *ens per participationem* seeks the efficient and exemplar cause of its actuality and participated being, the theological foundation of the transcendental *res* has the task of arriving to the ultimate extrinsic cause of the substantial essence, insofar as the essence is an intrinsic measuring and specifying principle, and of determining the causal relation between the created essence and the divine essence.

This first sketch of *ens per participationem*, of its intrinsic principles, and of its transcendental property *res* reveals that every *ens* is either simple, insofar as there is real identity between its essence and *esse*, or composite, insofar as there is a real distinction between essence and *esse*. With this distinction between simple *ens* (*Esse per essentiam*) and composite *ens* (*ens per participationem*), one can approach the ontological foundation of the unity of being as being:

[1] If *ens* is simple, it is undivided in act and in potency (it is indivisible)[22]. That which is truly simple is "only that which does not participate in being and which does not inhere in another, but is subsistent"[23]. *Ens* that is simple in an absolute way (*simpliciter*), is maximally *unum* since it is not divisible according to any genus of division[24].

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[22] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 3: "Quod autem est simplex, est indivisum et actu et potentia".

[23] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De hebdomadibus*, lect. 2: "Id autem erit solum vere simplex, quod non participat esse, non quidem inhaerens, sed subsistens".

[24] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 3: "Cum unum sit ens indivisum, ad hoc quod aliquid sit maxime unum, oportet quod sit et maxime ens et maxime indivisum. Utrumque autem competit Deo. Est enim maxime ens, inquantum est non habens aliquod esse determinatum per aliquam naturam cui adveniat, sed est ipsum esse subsistens, omnibus modis indeterminatum. Est autem maxime indivisum, inquantum neque dividitur actu neque potentia, secundum quemcunque modum divisionis, cum sit omnibus modis simplex. Unde manifestum est quod Deus est maxime unus".

[2] If, on the other hand, *ens* is composite, it is undivided in act, but still is divisible in potency[25]. Every composite *ens* is not its being (*esse*), and thus "in every composite, being […] is other than the composite that is by participation in being itself"[26]. Everything, "insofar as it conserves its being, conserves its unity"[27].

Unum, then, adds a negation – that of indivision – to the notion of *ens*. In the light of the distinction between the unity proper to what is simple and the unity proper to what is composite, one can conclude that the degree of unity of an *ens* depends on the degree of its being[28].

The theological foundation of the transcendental *unum* needs to present the extrinsic cause of the indivision of *ens per participationem* and articulate the causal relation between the unity of the composite and the one that is maximally *unum* and simple.

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In synthesis, the theological foundation of *ens in se* and its properties, starts from the results of the ontological foundation and seeks to relate the actuality, determination and indivision of *ens per participationem* to their ultimate extrinsic foundation.

1.2 Transcendental properties of *ens in ordine ad aliud*

It is not easy to outline the ontological foundation of the transcendental properties of *ens in ordine ad aliud* since one often wants

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[25] See *Ibid.*, I, q. 11, a. 1: "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".

[26] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De hebdomadibus*, lect. 2: "Res ergo composita non est suum esse; et ideo dicit quod in omni composito aliud est esse [ens] et aliud ipsum compositum quod est participando ipsum esse". Both J. Wippel and L. Dewan agree that *ens* should not be included in the text. See especially J. WIPPEL, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, CUA Press, Washington DC 2000, 162, n. 80.

[27] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 1: "Et inde est quod unumquodque, sicut custodit suum esse, ita custodit suam unitatem".

[28] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 4 ad 1: "Secundum igitur quod aliquid est magis divisum vel divisibile, vel minus, vel nullo modo, secundum hoc aliquid dicitur magis et minus vel maxime unum".

to skip over the ontological foundation and immediately relate the truth and goodness of a finite *ens* to the divine intellect and divine goodness. In the ontological foundation, therefore, it is of utmost importance to stay on the intrinsic plane and found, in a first moment, the diversity (*aliquid*), intelligibility (*verum*), and appetibility (*bonum*) of a finite *ens* on the real composition of essence and *actus essendi*, and, then, in a second moment, relate these three properties to God.

In the list of the transcendentals from *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1, Aquinas first explains that *ens in ordine ad aliud* is called "*aliquid*" or "*diversum*" insofar as it is divided from others[29]. *Esse*, according to *De ente et essentia*, is not the same in diverse things, but is diverse in diverse things[30]. The argument for the diversity of *ens in ordine ad aliud*, like the arguments for the transcendental properties of *ens in se*, is also necessarily twofold:

[1] If *ens* is absolutely simple, it is diverse from all other beings through itself (*per seipsa*)[31] or by virtue of itself and not through the addition of something real. Divine Being is diverse from the participated being of creatures because it does not have additions and because it cannot receive additions. God, writes Aquinas, is "such a being that nothing can be added to it", and, therefore, "by its purity, it is a being that is distinct from all other beings"[32].

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[29] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1: "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".

[30] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, cap. 5: "omne quod est in genere oportet quod habeat quiditatem praeter esse suum, cum quiditas vel natura generis aut speciei non distinguatur secundum rationem naturae in illis, quorum est genus vel species, sed esse est diversum in diversis".

[31] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent*., d. 8, q. 1, a. 2 ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum, quod prima non sunt diversa nisi per seipsa: sed ea quae sunt ex primis, differunt per diversitatem primorum; sicut homo et asinus differunt istis differentiis diversis, rationale et irrationale, quae non diversificantur aliis differentiis, sed seipsis: ita etiam Deus et esse creatum non differunt aliquibus differentiis utrique superadditis, sed seipsis: unde nec proprie dicuntur differre, sed diversa esse: diversum enim est absolutum, sed differens est relatum, secundum Philosophum 10 *Metaph*. Omne enim differens, aliquo differt; sed non omne diversum, aliquo diversum est".

[32] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De ente et essentia*, cap. 4: "Hoc enim esse, quod Deus est, huius condicionis est, ut nulla sibi additio fieri possit; unde per ipsam suam puritatem est esse distinctum ab omni esse".

[2] If, however, *ens* is composite, its diversity (division from other beings) is accomplished intrinsically by the reception of its being by its essence: "*Esse* as *esse* cannot be diverse: it can be diversified, however, by something that is *praeter esse*; as the being of a stone is diverse from the being of a man"[33]. In other words, *esse commune* does not have additions, but can receive additions and be diversified *in diversis*.

Consequently, the ontological and intrinsic foundation of the diversity of beings is either in the identity of essence and *esse* or in the reception of *esse* by the essence. The degree of diversity of one being (*ens*) to another depends on its degree of being (*esse*). Between God and the creature, namely between *Ipsum Esse Per Se Subsistens* and *ens per participationem*, there is an infinite distance[34]: God is not similar to creatures, but yet creatures are similar to God.

In conclusion, the theological foundation of the transcendental *aliquid* should take into account this diversity between God and creatures in its approach to the extrinsic cause of the distinction and diversity of creatures from one another.

The additions of *verum* and *bonum* to *ens* are explained by Saint Thomas in different places throughout his works. A first text, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3, affirms that *verum* adds a relation to the exemplar cause to *ens* and *bonum* to the final cause[35]. In a second text, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1, it says that *verum* expresses the *convenientiam* of *ens* to the intellect and *bonum* expresses the *convenientiam* to the appetite[36]. A third text, *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 1, holds that *verum* and *bonum* add the relation of perfective (*respectum perfective*) to *ens*. The consideration of the *ratio speciei* of created *ens*, on the one hand,

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[33] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, ch. 52: "Esse autem, inquantum est esse, non potest esse diversum: potest autem diversificari per aliquid quod est praeter esse; sicut esse lapidis est aliud ab esse hominis". In this text, *praeter* should be interpreted according to *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 1: "Alio modo dicitur addere super alterum per modum contrahendi et determinandi".

[34] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 23, a. 7 ad 9.

[35] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3: "verum autem et bonum addunt relationem quamdam; sed bonum relattionem ad finem, verum relationem ad formam exemplarem".

[36] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1: "Convenientiam ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen bonum, […]. Convenientiam vero entis ad intellectum exprimit hoc nomen verum".

and its *esse*, on the other, allow for the distinction of two modes of being perfective:

> And thus an *ens* can be perfective in two ways: in one way according to the *ratio* of the species alone, and thus *ens* perfects the intellect that perceives the notion of *ens*, which, however, is not found in the intellect according to its natural being; and, therefore, this mode of perfecting adds *verum* to *ens*. In fact, *verum* is in the mind, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics*, VI, and every *ens* is called "true" to the degree that it is conformed or conformable to the intellect: such that everyone who correctly defines "true" places the intellect in its definition. In another way, an *ens* is perfective of another not only according to the *ratio* of the species, but also according to the being it has in reality, and, in this way, *bonum* is perfective. In fact, *bonum* is in things, as the Philosopher says in *Metaphysics*, VI. But insofar as an *ens* according to its being is perfective and consummative of another, it has the *ratio* of end with respect to the *ens* that it perfects: such that everyone who correctly defines *bonum* places something that is related to the end in its *ratio*, and the Philosopher says in *Ethics*, I, that "they define the good in the best way, those who said that the good is that to which all things tend" [37].

In these three texts there are two planes of foundation at work. On the plane of the ontological foundation, we find the emphasis on the composition of essence and *esse* and the aspects of intelligibility

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[37] *Ibid.*, q. 21, a. 1: "Oportet igitur quod verum et bonum super intellectum entis addant respectum perfectivi. In quolibet autem 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. Verum enim est in mente, ut philosophus dicit in *VI Metaphys.*; et unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum, in quantum est conformatum vel conformabile intellectui; et ideo omnes recte definientes verum, ponunt in eius definitione intellectum. 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. Bonum enim in rebus est, ut philosophus dicit in *VI Metaphys.*. In quantum autem unum ens secundum esse suum est perfectivum alterius et consummativum, habet rationem finis respectu illius quod ab eo perficitur; et inde est quod omnes recte definientes bonum ponunt in ratione eius aliquid quod pertinet ad habitudinem finis; unde philosophus dicit in *I Ethicorum*, quod bonum optime diffinierunt dicentes, quod bonum est quod omnia appetunt".

and appetibility; on the superior plane of the theological foundation, however, there is the conformity of an *ens* to the exemplars in the divine intellect and the ordering of *ens* to the *Summum Bonum* as to its ultimate end.

The ontological foundation of *verum* should first deal with the relation between truth in the mind and the truth of things[38]. Starting from the definition of truth as a relation of *adaequatio* between a subject (*intellectus*) and a terminus (*res*)[39], it becomes clear that the relation of truth, insofar as it implies a measuring[40], opens up to a twofold consideration of the terminus of the relation: the thing can be true either insofar as it is conformed to an intellect (and is measured by an intellect) or insofar as it is conformable to an intellect (and can measure another intellect)[41]. The distinction is ultimately that between the conformity of things to the divine intellect and the conformability of things to a created intellect. The ontological foundation of *verum* is focused above all on the second aspect and the intrinsic measure of the truth of the thing; the theological foundation concentrates on the first aspect and the extrinsic measure as adequation[42].

At times, Thomas says that the thing (*res*) is the cause and measure of the truth of our mind, and, other times, he says that the being of the thing (*esse rei*) is the cause of truth[43]. The metaphysics of *actus essendi* gives priority to the second expression, namely, to being insofar as the essence refers to *esse*: truth, therefore, is founded more on being than on essence[44].

From what we have said so far, it results that *ens* is intelligible, or conformable to our intellect, insofar as it is in act[45]. Being-in-act, in

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[38] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 253-274.

[39] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.,* d. 19, q. 5, a. 1.

[40] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 5: "Veritas adaequationem quandam et commensurationem importat".

[41] *Ibid.*, q. 21, a. 1: "Unumquodque ens in tantum dicitur verum in quantum est conformatum vel conformable intellectui".

[42] *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 6: "Aliquid denominatur verum veritate prima quasi mensura extrinseca, sed veritate inhaerente quasi mensura intrinseca".

[43] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1: "Unde dico, quod ipsum esse rei est causa veritatis, secundum quod est in cognitione intellectus".

[44] *Ibid.*: "Cum autem in re sit quidditas eius et suum esse, veritas fundatur in esse rei magis quam in quidditate".

[45] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 87, a. 1: "Unumquodque cognoscibile est secundum quod est in actu, et non secundum quod est in potentia, ut dicitur in IX *Metaph.*: sic enim aliquid est ens et verum, quod sub cognitione cadit, prout actu est".

this case, does not refer to the being-in-act of the intellect that knows, but to the being-in-act of the thing known. The degree of intelligibility of a thing depends on its degree of being, which, in turn, is measured intrinsically by the essence. Once again, the argument for the transcendentality of *verum* is twofold:

[1] If *ens* is simple, then its intelligibility is not limited and its essence does not need to conform to another measuring intellect. Furthermore, in this *ens* there is a perfect *aequalitas* between its substance and its intellect[46]. In this sense this *ens* is maximally true and is the principle of all that is contained in the genus of what is true. It is the source of truth and of the intelligibility of all other things.

[2] If, however, *ens* is composite or by participation, the degree of its intelligibility corresponds to its degree of being, measured by the species. The real composition between essence and the act of being implies, in intelligent beings, a non-identity between their substance and their intellect. The intellect, as a faculty, is a power with respect to its proper operation and is distinct from the essence of the spiritual soul.

The theological foundation of *verum* needs to go beyond the intrinsic foundation of the intelligibility of *ens* and explain the extrinsic measuring (adequation) of the thing; that is, it should explain the conformity of the essence and the separable accidents of *ens* to the exemplars of the divine intellect.

The ontological foundation of *bonum* is set out in a clear way in the *Summa theologiae* according to the method of *resolutio secundum rationem*:

> *Bonum* and *ens* are identical according to reality, and differ only *secundum rationem*. And this is clear. The *ratio boni* consists in this, that something is appetible. Now, it is clear that something is appetible insofar as it is perfect, since everything desires its per-

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[46] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 7: "Et quia intellectus divinus primo intelligit rem quae est essentia sua, per quam omnia alia intelligit, ideo et veritas in Deo principaliter importat aequalitatem intellectus divini et rei, quae est essentia eius, et consequenter intellectus divini ad res creatas".

fection. Now a thing is perfect to the degree it is in act: and, thus, it is evident that a thing is *bonum* insofar as it is *ens*; *esse*, in fact, is the actuality of every thing[47].

This passage is a resolution-reduction *secundum rationem* of *bonum* to appetibility, appetibility to perfection, and of perfection to the act of being. In the inverse passage of *compositio*, the *additio* of *bonum* to *ens* is that of *appetibile*, an addition of a relation to the appetite.

Once again, one should distinguish between divine goodness and created goodness in the argument for the transcendentality of *bonum*:

[1] The simplicity of *Esse per essentiam* implies that the perfection of its being is not limited in any way. It has the highest degree of appetibility and, insofar as it is fully perfect, is not ordered to another; it does not desires another as an end that it does not already possess. In synthesis, divine being, insofar as it is *Summum Bonum*, is not ordered to another as end.

[2] The appetibility of *ens per participationem* corresponds to the degree of its perfection. Insofar as it is not fully perfect, *ens per participationem* desires its end and is ordered to its end. This is achieved by means of its proper operation. One distinguishes, then, between the constitution of created *ens* in its first perfection (*bonum secundum quid*) and *ens* that achieves its second or ultimate perfection (*bonum simpliciter*).

The theological foundation of *bonum* goes beyond the aspect of the appetibility and perfection of created *ens* and seeks primarily to explain the ordering of *bonum per participationem* to God as to its ultimate final cause.

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[47] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1: "Bonum et ens sunt idem secundum rem, sed differunt secundum rationem tantum. Quod sic patet. Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetibile, […]. 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".

In synthesis, the theological foundation of *ens in ordine ad aliud* starts from the results of the ontological foundation and seeks to related the diversity, intelligibility and appetibility-perfection-ordering of *ens per participationem* to their ultimate, extrinsic foundation.

1.3 The correspondence between the two triads

Analyzing the order of the transcendentals in *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1, we see that the three relational transcendentals *aliquid-verum-bonum* correspond in a symmetric way to the triad *ens-res-unum*, yet in reverse order[48]. According to Aertsen: "The unfolding of the transcendentals transpires in a circular pattern" 49. This can be pictured as follows:

In se   *In ordine ad aliud*

Ens   *Bonum*
Res   *Verum*
Unum   *Aliquid*
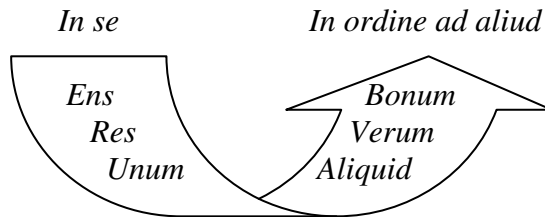
[1] *Aliquid* corresponds to *unum*: "As an *ens* is called 'one' insofar as it is undivided in itself, so is it called '*aliquid*' insofar as it is divided from others" [50].

[2] *Verum* corresponds to *res* insofar as truth is the adequation of thing (*res*) and intellect (*intellectus*).

[3] *Bonum* corresponds to *ens*: "because the conformity of being with the appetite is the ordering of the appetite to something in its own being" [51].

Each of these correspondences brings to light other problems.

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[48] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 261: "*De veritate* q. 1, a. 1 is Thomas's most complete exposition of the transcendentals. Their systematic arrangement is marked by a careful symmetrical construction. […] The relational transcendentals correspond to the triad 'being-thing-one'; but in reverse order".

[49] *Ibid.*, 261.

[50] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 1: "Sicut ens dicitur unum, in quantum est indivisum in se, ita dicitur aliquid, in quantum est ab aliis divisum".

[51] J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 261.

The tension between *unum* and the multiple is seen especially in the theme of the order of our first notions: Does *unum* come before or after multiplicity? Hence, the metaphysician should clarify in what sense the notion of *divisio* precedes the notion of *unum* (as *negation* of division) and in what sense multiplicity follows *unum*[52].

The tension between *verum* and *res*: on the one hand, we have seen that the true is founded more on being than on essence; and, on the other, that the definition of truth makes reference to *res* and not to *ens*. This tension can be resolve considering the essence not as a reality or perfection apart from *esse*, but as the measure of *esse*. In fact, Saint Thomas does not consider the conformity of the essence to the divine exemplar in an abstract fashion as do Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome, but rather in a concrete fashion, namely, insofar as exemplar causality is linked to efficient causality and insofar as the substantial essence of the subsistent *ens* is measure extrinsically by the divine idea as by its exemplar cause. On the formal plane, there is a relation of adequation between the created essence and the divine exemplar; however, there is also a relation of imitation between the created *ens* and the divine exemplar (the divine nature as imitable), according to the measuring of the created essence and the divine exemplar.

The tension between *ens* and *bonum* is seen in the distinction between *bonum simpliciter* and *bonum secundum quid*. Every subsistent substance in act, considered as an *ens simpliciter*, is a *bonum secundum quid*, namely, an *ens* that possesses a degree of goodness by the sole fact that it is in act. On the other hand, only the *ens* that has reached its ultimate perfection (therefore, considered as an *ens secundum quid*) is a *bonum simpliciter*.

2. Theological foundation according to *resolutio secundum rem*

The theme of the theological foundation of the transcendentals is present in the works of Aquinas from the beginning of his career. For example, he asks in *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 8: "Whether every other truth is from the first truth?" or in *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 4: "Whether all things are good from the first goodness?". The importance of relating

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[52] See *Ibid.*, 218-226.

in a causal way the transcendentals to God is evident in the following text:

> The creature is called good based on its relation to God, as Boethius writes in the book *De Hebdomadibus*; but God has, with regard to the creature, the relation of threefold causality, namely efficient, final and formal exemplar: therefore, also the creature is said to be good according to its relation to God by reason of the threefold causality[53].

The proper method of the theological foundation of the transcendentals is *resolutio secundum rem*, which arrives to the supreme cause[54]. This method should follow the demands of the *triplex via*[55]: 1) by means of the *via causalitatis*, one demonstrates the existence of the ultimate extrinsic cause of the creature and of its principles and properties; 2) with the *via remotionis* one denies something of God in an absolute way (composition, for example), or the creaturely mode of a perfection; 3) by means of the *via eminentiae*, one attributes to God the *res significata* (the perfection itself) and one denies the *modus significandi*[56].

The *via causalitatis* reveals the relation of dependence that exists between the effect and its cause. According to Aertsen, Aquinas expounds the causal relation between the transcendentals and God with the help of three models: "the Platonic model of participation, the model of the causality of the *maximum* that Aristotle advances in the second book of his *Metaphysics*, and the doctrine of analogy"[57].

With regard to the model of participation, from the fact that something is by participation it follows that this is caused by another

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[53] *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 6, *sed contra* 3: "Sed Deus habet ad creaturam habitudinem triplicis causae: scilicet efficientis, finalis et formalis exemplaris. Ergo et creatura dicitur esse bona secundum habitudinem ad Deum in ratione triplicis causae".

[54] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 6, a. 1: "ultimus ergo terminus resolutionis in hac via est cum pervenitur ad causas supremas maxime simplices, quae sunt substantiae separatae".

[55] See J. MITCHELL, "*Resolutio secundum rem*, the Dionysian *triplex via* and Thomistic Philosophical Theology", in *Proceedings Metaphysics 2009*, Dykinson, Madrid 2011, 398-406.

[56] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 4 ad 2.

[57] J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 431-432.

that is by essence[58]. Therefore, the fact that finite beings are good by participation means that they are caused by another that is good *per essentiam*. One should distinguish, according to the interpretation of Fabro, predicamental participation from transcendental participation. The sphere of predicamental participation is the sphere of univocity. In fact, the relations of participation of Peter to man (individual to species), man to animal (species to genus), Peter to white (subject to accident), prime matter to substantial form, all have in common univocal predication[59]. However, when one predicates perfections such as "*vivere*", "*esse*", "*sapientia*" and "*bonum*", of many things according to analogy, we are dealing with a transcendental participation[60]. There are three important aspects of transcendental participation:

[1] *Structural composition of participated perfection and measure of perfection*: being, as a participated perfection, is composed with the essence and is limited by the essence; the other participated perfections refer to this fundamental composition and, consequently, an *ens* has a perfection to the degree that it has *esse* (for example something is *vivens* to the degree it has *esse*)[61].

[2] *Dependence of the effect on the cause*: the transcendental composition gives points to dependence and the fact that both *esse* and *essentia* are produced by another. As Fabro explains: "To the transcendental structure of composition of *esse* and essence corresponds the transcendental causality of

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[58] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, a. 1 ad 1: "Ex hoc quod aliquid per participationem est ens, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio".

[59] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa conta Gentiles*, I, ch. 32: "Omne quod de pluribus praedicatur univoce, secundum participationem cuilibet eorum convenit de quo praedicatur: nam species participare dicitur genus, et individuum speciem". See C. FABRO, *Partecipazione e causalità*, EDIVI, Segni 2010, 640-642.

[60] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 3 ad 3: "Non dicitur esse similitudo creaturae ad Deum propter communicantiam in forma secundum eandem rationem generis et speciei, sed secundum analogiam tantum; prout scilicet Deus est ens per essentiam, et alia per participationem".

[61] *Ibid.*, I, q. 4, a. 3 ad 3: "Omnium autem perfectiones pertinent ad perfectionem essendi, secundum hoc enim aliqua perfecta sunt, quod aliquo modo esse habent". *Ibid.*, I, q. 4, a. 2 ad 3: "Ipsum esse sit perfectius quam vita, et ipsa vita quam ipsa sapientia, si considerentur secundum quod distinguuntur ratione, tamen vivens est perfectius quam ens tantum, quia vivens etiam est ens; et sapiens est ens et vivens".

the First Cause"[62]. Being, which *ens* possesses in a particular and partial way, is possessed by its cause in a universal and eminent way. The creature's essence is created as a potency that is actuated by the participated *esse* that it receives[63].

[3] *Likeness of the effect to the cause*: the likeness between the creature and God is not a commonness in a species, but stems rather from the fact that God is the efficient-exemplar cause. The likeness to God is posterior to the production of being and of that which receives being: "The assimilation of every created substance to God comes about by means of *esse*"[64].

Some transcendentals are readily predicated using the expression *per essentiam – per participationem*. God, for example, is being, true and good *per essentiam*; creatures are beings, true and good by participation. The commonness and gradation of the perfections are evident. In fact, these are the three transcendentals that Aquinas mentions explicitly in the Fourth Way of the *Summa theologiae*.

More difficult, however is the relationship between participation and *res*. We are not in the habit of saying God is *res per essentiam* and the creature is *res per participationem*, even though God is his essence and creatures participate in their species. It is only in relation to *esse* that it is possible to understand the gradation proper to *res*. As we said earlier, in the First *Ens*, *esse* is not determined *in se* by the essence; in other beings, *esse* is determined to a specific degree. In finite spiritual beings – men and angels – their essences are open to a participation in the divine nature by means of the gratuitous gift of grace. From brute animals to the most elementary things (an atom of helium), one sees more diversity in superior beings and less variety in inferior ones. Thus, while avoiding the pitfalls of onto-theologism, the scale of *res* seems to descend from the divine essence (indeterminate *in se*), through spiritual beings (determined *in se*, yet open to participation in the divine nature by means of operation), to material beings (deter-

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[62] C. FABRO, *Partecipazione e causalità*, 478.

[63] See *Ibid.*, 643.

[64] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa conta Gentiles*, II, ch. 53: "Assimilatio alicuius ad causam agentem fit per actum: agens enim agit sibi simile inquantum est actu. Assimilatio autem cuiuslibet substantiae creatae ad Deum est per ipsum esse, […]. Ipsum igitur esse comparatur ad omnes substantias creatas sicut actus earum. Ex quo relinquitur quod in qualibet substantia creata sit compositio actus et potentiae".

mined *in se* and not open to participating in another nature). The gradation of *res*, then, descends from indetermination *in se* to increasing degrees of intrinsic determination.

With regard to *unum* it should be noted, in the first place, that we are dealing with a negation, that of division, and both God and creatures are undivided. The gradation (*magis et minus*) of unity and the demand for a *maxime unum*, refer to divisibility more than indivision in act: God is not divisible and is unique; other beings are divisible in greater or lesser degrees.

Finally, *aliquid* also has a negative aspect that makes the predication of the expression *per essentiam – per participationem* difficult. We normally do not see that God is "diverse *per essentiam*" and other beings "diverse *per participationem*". Once again, referring to *esse* can help overcome this difficulty. God's being is diverse through itself; the being of creatures is diversified through a real addition of essence that contracts *esse* to a specific degree.

With regard to causality, we see that the *quarta via* of Saint Thomas refers to the principle taken from *Metaphysics*, II: "What is *maximum* in a genus is the cause of all that is in the genus"[65]. Aquinas' *Commentary on the Book of Causes* clarifies that the maximum in a genus is also the measure of the genus[66]. Hence, the causality of the maximum appears to be twofold: it is both efficient cause (that which produces) and exemplar cause (that which measures). To this, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 6, a. 2 ad 3 adds that God, as the maximum, is outside of every genus and is the principle of all genera[67]. The lack of a com-

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[65] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 3: "Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis, sicut ignis, qui est maxime calidus, est causa omnium calidorum, ut in [*II Metaph.*]".

[66] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Librum De causis*, lect. 16: "Primum in quolibet genere est mensura illius generis, in quantum, per accessum ad ipsum vel recessum ab ipso, cognoscitur aliquid esse perfectius vel minus perfectum in genere illo. Sed ipse exponit ens primum esse mensuram omnium entium, quia creavit omnia entia cum debita mensura quae convenit unicuique rei secundum modum suae naturae: quod enim aliqua magis vel minus accedant ad ipsum, est ex eius disposizione".

[67] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 3: "De Deo autem negatur esse in eodem genere cum aliis bonis, non quod ipse sit in quodam alio genere; sed quia ipse est extra genus, et principium omnis generis". *De potentia*, q. 2, a. 5 sed contra 4: "In quolibet genere est unum principium, ad quod omnia quae sunt illius generis, reducuntur". *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 7 ad 4: "Deus non comparatur creaturis in hoc quod dicitur melior, vel summum bonum, quasi participans naturam eiusdem generis cum creaturis, sicut species generis alicuius, sed quasi principium generis". *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 8 ad 2: "Nihilominus tamen quamvis Deus in eodem

mon genus or species between God and creatures, leaves only an analogical community. When predicating something of God and creatures, it is necessary to abide by the demands of the analogy *unum ad alterum*[68]. This means that God and creatures do not refer to the transcendental perfection as to a third notion that is superior to both of them. Rather, the attribution of the transcendental property of the creature to God is always done referring to its foundation in God. Therefore, one affirms the presence of the *res significata* in God, but denies the creaturely mode of this transcendental property in God. A summary chart of our argument to this point makes evident the analogical tension between likeness and difference.

	Creature	**God**
Ens	*Ens* due to its participated *esse*	Subsistent Being itself
Res	*Res* since its being is determined and measured by its essence	*Res*, yet he remains indeterminate *in se*, insofar as there is real identity between his essence and being
Unum	*Unum* since it is undivided in act due to its being, but yet is divisible in potency due to its composition	*Maxime unum* since that which is simple is undivided in act and in potency
Aliquid	*Aliquid* since its being is diversified by the real addition of a specifying essence	*Aliquid* through itself and not by real addition; infinite distance from all other beings

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genere non sit cum creatura sicut contentum sub genere, est tamen in omnibus generibus sicut principium generis: et ex hoc potest esse aliqua relatio inter creaturam et Deum sicut inter principiata et principium". *Ibid.*, q. 9, a. 3 ad 3: "Deus non sit in genere substantiae tamquam species, pertinet tamen ad genus substantiae sicut generis principium". *In Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 1 ad 4: "Deus autem, quamvis non sit in genere intelligibilium, quasi sub genere comprehensum, utpote generis naturam participans, pertinet tamen ad hoc genus ut principium".

[68] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 34; *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 7; *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 13, 6.

Verum	*Verum*, since the creature is intelligible insofar as it has being, measured by its essence, which, in turn, requires an extrinsic measuring principle	*Maxime verum* (intelligible) due to the actuality of its being, the identity between its being and intellect, and that it is not measured by another
Bonum	*Bonum*, since the creatures is appetible insofar as it has the perfection of being, measured by its essence, which, in turn, orders it to the operation by means of which it reaches its ultimate end and second perfection	*Summum bonum*: desirable due to the perfection of its being and the perfect possession of its end and because it is not ordered to another

2.1 Theological foundation of *ens in se*

2.1.1 Theological foundation of *ens per participationem*

In his *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas employs an important distinction between *ens* and *ens per participationem*. On the one hand, *ens* can be analogically predicated of creatures and God (*unum ad alterum*); on the other, *ens per participationem* is analogically predicated only of creatures. The distinction between *ens* and *ens per participationem* can be seen by confronting *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, ch. 52 and Aquinas' *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, VI, lect. 3, n. 1220. We read in the first text:

> Now, being caused by another does not belong to *ens qua ens*, otherwise every *ens* would be caused by another; and thus, it would be necessary to proceed to infinity in the causes, which is impossible […]. Thus, it is necessary that subsisting *esse* not be caused. Therefore, no caused *ens* is its being[69].

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[69] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, ch. 52: "Esse autem ab alio causatum non competit enti inquantum est ens: alias omne ens esset ab alio causatum; et sic oporteret procedere in infinitum in causis, quod est impossibile, ut […]. Illud igitur esse quod est subsistens, oportet quod sit non causatum. Nullum igitur ens causatum est suum esse".

In the second text, however, we read that *ens qua ens* has God as its cause[70]. In accordance with this second use of *ens*, *De potentia Dei* explains that the cause of *ens qua ens* is also the cause of all the differences in *ens*: only in God, the first principle, are quiddity and being really identical[71].

Thomas explains that "being caused" does not pertain to the nature of *ens*; rather "being caused" follows from *ens per participationem*[72]. In the theological foundation of *ens*, this causality is twofold: God is the efficient cause of participated *esse* and also its extrinsic formal cause[73]. On the one hand, *ens per participationem* has a limited act that refers to its efficient cause, which produces that act *ex nihilo*. On the other, the creature's being, insofar as it comes from God, is a likeness of the divine nature[74].

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[70] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In VI Metaph.*, lect. 3, n. 1220: "Sicut autem dictum est, ens inquantum ens est, habet causam ipsum Deum".

[71] Cf. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 16 ad 4: «Oportet autem illud quod est causa entis in quantum est ens, esse causam omnium differentiarum entis, et per consequens totius multitudinis entium. Sed aliud est quod quid est homo, et esse hominem: in solo enim primo essendi principio, quod est essentialiter ens, ipsum esse et quidditas eius est unum et idem; in omnibus autem aliis, quae sunt entia per participationem, oportet quod sit aliud esse et quidditas entis».

[72] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, a. 1 ad 1: "Licet habitudo ad causam non intret definitionem entis quod est causatum, tamen sequitur ad ea qua sunt de eius ratione, quia ex hoc quod aliquid per participationem est ens, sequitur quod sit causatum ab alio. Unde huiusmodi ens non potest esse, quin sit causatum; sicut nec homo, quin sit risibile. Sed quia esse causatum non est de ratione entis simpliciter, propter hoc invenitur aliquod ens non causatum".

[73] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, a. 1, a. 3: "[E]sse autem rationem causae exemplaris et effectivae tantum in Deo".

[74] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In II Sent.*, d. 37, q. 1, a. 2: "Ens invenitur in pluribus secundum prius et posterius. Illud tamen verissime et primo dicitur ens cujus esse est ipsum quod est, quia esse eius non est receptum, sed per se subsistens. In omnibus autem quae secundum prius et posterius dicuntur, primum eorum quae sunt, potest esse causa; et per se dictum, est causa ejus quod per participationem dicitur: et ideo oportet quod illud ens quod non per participationem alicujus esse quod sit aliud quam ipsum, dicitur ens (quod primum inter entia est), sit causa omnium aliorum entium. Alia autem entia dicuntur per posterius, inquantum aliquod esse participant quod non est idem quod ipsa sunt; et haec procedunt usque ad ultima entium; ita quod quamcumque rationem essendi aliquid habeat, non sit sibi nisi a Deo; sed defectus essendi sit ei a seipso".

2.1.2 Theological foundation of *res*

God, according to Saint Thomas, is the efficient cause of being and of that which receives being[75]. We have seen that *res* refers to the essence. Therefore, in the theological foundation of *res* we seek to understand how the essence is produced and how it is measured extrinsically. The task is not at all easy. L.-B. Geiger, for example, proposes a twofold participation and posits a line of participation by similitude to explain the limitation of the created essence. Fabro, on the other hand, speaks of only one transcendental participation and of a derivation of the essence according to a relation of exemplarity:

> The created essences are derived from the divine essence through the intermediary of the divine ideas, and therefore formally the derivation is according to the relation of exemplarity. Every essence, then, although it is act in the formal order, is created as a potency that is actuated by participated *esse* which *in se* it receives: its actuality is "mediated", therefore, by *esse*[76].

To understand the formal derivation of the essence, it is helpful to recall that Aquinas proposes two modes of divine exemplarity, one according to the ideas and another according to his nature:

> The exemplar of things is in God in two ways: either in relation to what is in his intellect, and thus according to the ideas, the divine intellect is the exemplar of all things that derive from it, as the intellect of the artisan, according to the form of art, is of all artifacts; or in relation to that which is in his nature, just as the *ratio* of his goodness, by which something is good, is the exemplar of all good; and likewise with regard to truth[77].

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[75] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 1 ad 17: "Deus simul dans esse, producit id quod esse recipit".

[76] C. FABRO, *Partecipazione e causalità*, 643.

[77] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2 ad 4: "Ad quartum dicendum, quod exemplar rerum est in Deo dupliciter. Vel quantum ad id quod est in intellectu suo, et sic secundum ideas est exemplar intellectus divinus omnium quae ab ipso sunt, sicut intellectus artificis per formam artis omnium artificiatorum. Vel quantum ad id quod est in natura sua, sicut ratione suae bonitatis qua est bonus, est exemplar omnis bonitatis; et similiter est de veritate".

In his book, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*, G. Doolan explains the twofold exemplarism as follows:

> Through the exemplarism of the divine nature, then, the finite be-
> ing receives its total entity *as* a being, both its essence and its *esse*,
> for in imitating that exemplar, the finite being imitates the abso-
> lute perfection that is being itself (*ipsum esse*). By contrast,
> through the exemplarism of the divine ideas, the finite being re-
> ceives only its essence; for in imitating *that* exemplar, the finite
> being imitates but one limited mode of being (*esse*)[78].

Unlike *verum*, which stresses the conformity or adequation of the thing with the exemplar, *res* refers to the measuring-determining role of the exemplar. The quiddity is concreated with being:

> By the very fact that being is attributed to the quiddity, it is said
> that not only being is created, but also the quiddity: since before it
> possesses being quiddity is nothing, unless perhaps in the creating
> intellect, where however, it is not a creature, but rather creative es-
> sence[79].

Saint Thomas explicitly affirms the twofold divine causality in *Summa contra Gentiles*, III: "the first measure of the essence and nature of anything is God, as the first *ens* that is the cause of being of all things"[80].

2.1.3 Theological foundation of *unum*

Unum adds to the notion of *ens* a negation, that of "indivision". *Ens* is undivided if it is simple or composed[81]. The theological founda-tion of *unum* concerns composite beings, since the *ens* that is absolute-ly simple does not have a cause. Every composite *ens*, however, pre-

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[78] G. DOOLAN, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*, 222.

[79] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 5 ad 2: «quod ex hoc ipso quod quidditati esse attribuitur, non solum esse, sed ipsa quidditas creari dicitur: quia antequam esse habeat, nihil est, nisi forte in intellectu creantis, ubi non est creatura, sed creatrix essentia».

[80] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, III, cap. 100: "Prima mensura essentiae et naturae cuiuslibet rei est Deus, sicut primum ens, quod est omnibus causa essendi".

[81] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Perihermeneias*, lect. 8, n. 107: "unum non dicitur aequivoce de simplici et composito, sed per prius et posterius".

supposes another *ens* as its composing efficient cause. In fact, the components of an *ens* are *by nature* anterior to the composite[82]. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 18, Thomas is very clear on this point:

> Every composition requires a composer: in fact, if there is a composition it is from a plurality; and things that are several in themselves would not combine together unless they were united by a composer. If then God were composite, he would have a composer: for he could not compose himself, since no thing is cause of itself, for it would precede itself, which is impossible. Now the composer is the efficient cause of the composite. Therefore God would have an efficient cause: and thus He would not be the first cause[83].

This first text, then, determines the causal relation between divine unity and the creature as a relation of efficient causality between the composer and the composite. In *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 1, Thomas writes: "Seeing that composition does not occur except *ex diversis*, these *diversa* require an agent to unite them together. For *diversa* as such are not united. Now every composite has being through the union of its components. Therefore every composite depends on a pre-existing agent: and consequently the first being which is God, from whom all things proceed, cannot be composite"[84]. God, in whom there is no composition of parts, is supremely and truly one. He is the efficient cause of the composite, and, therefore, "his unity is the principle of all unity and the measure of each thing"[85].

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[82] Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, I, cap. 9: "Omni composito necesse est esse aliquid prius: nam componentia naturaliter sunt composito priora".

[83] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, cap. 18: "Amplius. Omnis compositio indiget aliquo componente: si enim compositio est, ex pluribus est; quae autem secundum se sunt plura, in unum non convenirent nisi ab aliquo componente unirentur. Si igitur compositus esset Deus, haberet componentem: non enim ipse seipsum componere posset, quia nihil est causa sui ipsius; esset enim prius seipso, quod est impossibile. Componens autem est causa efficiens compositi. Ergo Deus haberet causam efficientem. Et sic non esset causa prima".

[84] Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 7, a. 1: "Cum compositio non sit nisi ex diversis, ipsa diversa indigent aliquo agente ad hoc quod uniantur. Non enim diversa, inquantum huiusmodi, unita sunt. Omne autem compositum habet esse, secundum quod ea, ex quibus componitur, uniuntur. Oportet ergo quod omne compositum dependeat ab aliquo priore agente. Primum ergo ens, quod Deus est, a quo sunt omnia, non potest esse compositum".

[85] Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 1: "Et inde est quod sua unitas est principium omnis unitatis et mensura omnis rei. Quia illud quod est maximum, est principium

Along with the relation between what is simple and what is composite, one should also consider, in the theological foundation, how a multiplicity can proceed from a unity. Here, it is good to consider Aquinas' *Commentary on the Divine Names*, XIII, where he explains the causality proper to divine unity. *Unum*, he writes, is attributed to God for two reasons:

[1] first, "because it is all things in a unitive manner, according to the excellence of its singular unity"[86] – effects are present in God not as many, but as one, according to the unique power of the cause;

[2] second, because God is the cause of all things without abandoning his unity; thus, from the One many different things are caused, without God abandoning his unity[87].

The unity of God does not enter into composition with the many, but rather precedes all multiplicity. In fact, "there is not a multiplicity that does not in some way participate in the one, since all that is multiple is also one under some aspect"[88].

In *lectio* 3, Aquinas summarizes what has been said up until now concerning *unum* in three points: the One is the cause of all; the One is something singular, simple and undivided; and the One pre-contains in itself all things. Unity, then, is attributed to individual creatures due to the super-eminent divine simplicity: in his simple unity, "all things are gathered and united in a super-eminent way, as in their cause, *singularly*, or indivisibly, and all things pre-exist in it not according to their own way, but rather according to the mode of God, namely, *super-substantially*"[89]. Creatures participate in the one, in that which is truly

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in quolibet genere, sicut maxime calidum omnis calidi, ut dicitur II metaphysic., et illud quod est simplicissimum, est mensura in quolibet genere, ut X *Metaph*.".

[86] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In De Divinis Nominibus*, XIII, lect. 2, n. 971: "quia ipse est omnia unitive secundum excessum suae singularis unitatis".

[87] See *Ibid.*: "Secundo, unum attribuitur Deo, quia unum, secundum suam intentionem consideratum, est omnium causa ingressibiliter: sic enim ex uno diversa causantur, quo tamen unum non egreditur a sua unitate".

[88] *Ibid.*, n. 975: "Nulla enim multitudo est quae non participet uno, quia omnia multa sunt unum secundum aliquid".

[89] *Ibid.*, n. 985: "Et sic attribuit singulis unitatem propter excellentem simplicitatem divinam. In qua quidem simplici unitate omnia, sicut in causa, sunt aggregata et

one, God himself[90]. To the causality of *Unum* belongs the characteristic of priority with respect to multiplicity: God is the One "that precedes every created one and all multitude and every part and whole, of which it was said earlier that they participate in the one; and furthermore, he precedes every definition and infinity that opposes him and the terminus that is opposed to interminability"[91].

The reference to the limitation of creatures opens up to a third aspect of the theological foundation of *unum*. For, as Aquinas says in the *Commentary on the Divine Names*, the unity of God intellectually determines the nature of creatures:

> In fact, each thing, insofar as it is finite and terminate, from this perspective, has unity in act. But the One that God is precedes every limit and terminus and their opposites and is the cause of the termination of all and not only of things that exist, but also of their *esse*. For created *esse* is not finite if it is compared to creatures, because it extends to all; nevertheless, if it is compared to uncreated *esse*, it is found to be deficient, and have the determination of their *ratio* from the pre-cognitions of the divine mind[92].

The unity of the universe stems from the unity of the divine mind[93]. Divine unity, as super-substantial One, determines the substantial unity of creatures, assigning to them the termination of their natures[94].

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supereminenter unita singulariter, idest indivisibiliter et omnia praeexistunt in ea, non per modum proprium, sed per modum ipsius Dei, scilicet supersubstantialiter".

[90] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, IV, ch. 1: "Oportet igitur processum emanationis a Deo uniri quidem in ipso principio, multiplicari autem secundum res infimas, ad quas terminatur. Et ita, secundum diversitatem rerum, apparet viarum diversitas, quasi ab uno principio inchoatarum, et terminatarum ad diversa".

[91] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In De Divinis Nominibus*, XIII, lect. 3, n. 989: "Unum, quod est ante omne unum creatum et ante omnem multitudinem et ante omnem partem et totum, de quibus supra dictum est quod participant unum; et iterum est ante omnem diffinitionem et infinitatem oppositam et terminum oppositum ad interminabilitatem".

[92] *Ibid.*: "Unumquodque enim inquantum est finitum et terminatum, secundum hoc habet unitatem in actu. Sed unum quod est Deus est ante omnem finem et terminum et opposita eorum et est causa terminationis omnium et non solum existentium, sed etiam ipsius esse. Nam ipsum esse creatum non est finitum si comparetur ad creaturas, quia ad omnia se extendit; si tamen comparetur ad esse increatum, invenitur deficiens et ex praecogitatione divinae mentis, propriae rationis determinationem habens".

[93] *Ibid.*, n. 979: "Ipsa enim unitas universi procedit ab unitate divinae mentis".

[94] *Ibid.*, n. 990: "Et ipsum unum divinum est causa omnium et non solum particularium entium, sed etiam omnium totorum, idest entium universalium et est simul cum omnibus et ante omnia, quia scilicet sua aeternitate continet omnium durationes et excedit; et est super

This relationship can be considered at various levels. The first concerns the substantial unity of the individual, which is measure by a practical divine exemplar. Next, one can consider the extrinsic foundation of the specific and generic unity of diverse creatures in the speculative divine ideas. Finally, there is the analogical unity of creatures with respect to *esse commune*, itself dependent on God, or with respect to divine being itself.

In synthesis, the argument for the theological foundation of *unum* moves first from the composition and substantial unity of creatures to divine simplicity and unity[95]. Then, it was argued that the multiplicity of creatures derives from unity insofar as the divine mind intellectually and exemplarily pre-contains in itself all composed beings. Thirdly, the substantial unity of creatures depends on the divine intellect insofar as it assigns, in the creative act, the termination of their natures. Creatures maintain this substantial unity while they conserve their *actus essendi*, which is intrinsically measured by their specifying essence.

2.2 Theological foundation of *ens in ordine ad aliud*

2.2.1 Theological foundation of *aliquid*

The ontological foundation of *aliquid* revealed the fundamental difference between the diversity of God, who is diverse from others not through the real addition of something, but rather through himself, and the diversity proper to creatures, whose *esse* is diversified by means of the intrinsic measure of their essence.

In his book, *Differenza e contraddizione*, G. Ventimiglia expounds the Thomistic critique of the Platonic thesis "*idem in alio*": for Thomas, the *esse* that is participated to creatures by God does not re-

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omnia sublimitate suae naturae et singulariter sua celsitudine ab omnibus separatum existens; et cum sit unum supersubstantiale, ipse est super ipsum unum existens, idest super unum creatum, quod in existentibus creatis invenitur; et ipsum unum existens terminat, idest dat terminationem propriae rationis uni creato, quod non est superexistens, sed existens, quasi intra genus existentium contentum".

[95] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 18: "Ante omnem multitudinem oportet invenire unitatem. In omni autem composito est multitudo. Igitur oportet id quod est ante omnia, scilicet Deum, omni compositione carere".

main the same (*idem*) in others, but rather is diverse in other things. Commenting on *In VII Phys.*, lect. 8, Ventimiglia writes:

> Either *idem* is at the same time originally *aliud*, or there is no way to differentiate it by way of an *aliud* external to it. In other words, either *idem* is differentiated not by something else, but rather through itself, or, in the end, it cannot be differentiated[96].

The Platonic expression *idem in alio* is valid when we are dealing with a differentiation based on a commonness in a species or genus. However, "the things that differ according to the formula *aliud in alio* correspond to diverse things insofar as '*in nullo modo conveniunt*' and '*non differunt aliquo modo, sed seipsis*'"[97]. In other words, one needs to avoid dealing with *esse* like a univocal genus.

Following the exposition of Ventimiglia, we see that Aquinas clearly lists *diversum* among the *passiones entis*: "Like one and many, so identical and diverse are not proper to only one genus, but are in a certain sense the *passiones* of *ens qua ens*" [98.] *Diversum*, like *ens* and *unum*, is said to be divided according to the ten predicaments, an evident sign of its transcendentality[99]. *Multitudo* is also listed among the transcendentals: formal division by opposition (and not quantitative division) causes multiplicity and this multiplicity is among the transcendentals[100]. For Thomas, *multitudo* cannot come from non-being,

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[96] G. VENTIMIGLIA, *Differenza e contraddizione. Il problema dell'essere in Tommaso d'Aquino: esse, diversum, contradictio*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1997, 149: "O l'*idem* è nello stesso tempo originariamente *aliud*, oppure non c'è modo di differenziarlo in forza di un *aliud* esterno ad esso. In altre parole, o l'*idem* si differenzia non per qualcos'altro ma per se stesso, ovvero, alla fine, non potrà differenziarsi".

[97] *Ibid.*, 150.

[98] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3: "Sicut unum et multa, ita idem et diversum non sunt propria unius generis, sed sunt quasi passiones entis, in quantum est ens".

[99] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In V Metaph.*, lect. 12, n. 930: "Quia enim unum et ens dicuntur multipliciter, oportet quod ea quae dicuntur secundum ea, multipliciter dicantur; sicut idem et diversum, quae consequuntur unum et multa, et contrarium, quod sub diverso continetur. Et ita oportet, quod diversum dividatur secundum decem praedicamenta, sicut ens et unum".

[100] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In III Phys.*, lect. 12: "Circa quod sciendum est quod divisio […] multitudinem causat. Est autem duplex divisio: una formalis, quae est per opposita; et alia secundum quantitatem. Prima autem divisio causat multitudinem, quae est de transcendentibus, secundum quod ens dividitur per unum et multa". Cf. *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 30, a. 3: "Alia est divisio formalis, quae fit per oppositas vel diversas formas, et hanc

but needs to come from being itself: "*multitudo* is caused by *ens*"[101]. Saint Thomas clarifies that when one speaks of multiplicity as a transcendental, we are dealing with a *multitudinem extrinsecam* (that is *in ordinem ad aliud*) and not a *multitudinem intrinsecam* (that is opposed to the unity of *ens*)[102]. Between *unum* as a transcendental (*indiviso in se*) and *aliquid* as a transcendental (*diviso ab alio*) there is identity *secundum rem* (as they are predicated of the same *ens*) and distinction *secundum rationem* (as they are said in different ways); between one, as principle of numbers, and multiplicity, however, there is an opposition of privation[103].

Aquinas clearly distinguishes between the cause of the plurality in the first and simple realities and the cause of the plurality in the composite and subsequent realities[104]: "In posterior and composite realities, the cause of division in a *quasi*-formal sense (namely, that by reason of which the division occurs) is the diversity of the simple and first realities" [105]. The first and simple realities, on the other hand, are divided by virtue of themselves[106]. The first created *ens* introduces a plurality with respect to its cause, the first uncreated *ens*, precisely because it does not coincide with it.

The first uncreated *ens* is imitated by diverse creatures under diverse aspects. The aspect by which one effect imitates the first cause can be that by which another effect distances itself from the cause, and vice versa. This diversity of imitation requires the intervention of di-

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divisionem sequitur multitudo quae non est in aliquo genere, sed est de transcendentibus, secundum quod ens dividitur per unum et multa".

[101] THOMAS AQUINAS, *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 16 ad 3: "multitudo autem causatur ex ente".

[102] *Ibid.*: "Sciendum autem, quod duplex est unum; quoddam scilicet quod convertitur cum ente, quod nihil addit supra ens nisi indivisionem; et hoc unum privat multitudinem, in quantum multitudo ex divisione causatur; non quidem multitudinem extrinsecam quam unum constituit sicut pars; sed multitudinem intrinsecam quae unitati opponitur. Non enim ex hoc quod aliquid dicitur esse unum, negatur quin aliquid sit extra ipsum quod cum eo constituat multitudinem; sed negatur divisio ipsius in multa".

[103] *Ibid.*: "Aliud vero unum est quod est principium numeri, quod supra rationem entis addit mensurationem; et huius unius multitudo est privatio, quia numerus fit per divisionem continui. Nec tamen multitudo privat unitatem totaliter, cum diviso toto adhuc remaneat pars indivisa; sed removet unitatem totius".

[104] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De Trinitate*, q. 4, a. 1: "Causa autem divisionis aliter est accipienda in posterioribus et compositis et in primis et simplicibus".

[105] *Ibid.*: "In posterioribus namque et compositis causa divisionis quasi formalis, id est ratione cuius fit divisio, est diversi simplicium et priorum".

[106] See *Ibid.*: "Et ideo pluralitatis vel divisionis primorum et simplicium oportet alio modo causam assignare. Sunt enim huiusmodi secundum se ipsa divisa".

vine knowledge, which is able to measure beings, determining their essences. Consequently, the theological foundation gives the extrinsic cause of the distinction and multiplicity of things in divine wisdom:

> The distinction and multiplicity of things derive from the first agent which is God. In fact, he has produces things in being to communicate his goodness to creatures, and to represent this goodness through them. […] The cause of the distinction of things is from divine wisdom[107].

Along with *distinction and multiplicity*, Thomas also teaches that divine wisdom is the cause of the *diversity* and *inequality* of things[108].

The *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, prop. 24 shows the need to explain the diversity of things in two ways: extrinsically by means of the sapiential action of the first cause and intrinsically through the diverse recipients, namely, through the essences that receive *esse*[109].

The diversity of created effects, then, cannot be reduced entirely to the diversity of the receiving essences, otherwise it could be said that the recipients do not have their origin in the first cause[110]. Therefore, one should affirm that the first diversity of things, namely that relative to the diverse natures that these possess, "does not derive from some diversity of the recipients, but from the first cause; and not because in him there is some diversity, but insofar as he knows the di-

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[107] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 47, a. 1: "Unde dicendum est quod distinctio rerum et multitudo est ex intentione primi agentis, quod est Deus. Produxit enim res in esse propter suam bonitatem communicandam creaturis, et per eas repraesentandam. […] Et quia ex divina sapientia est causa distinctionis rerum".

[108] *Ibid.*, I, q. 47, a. 2: "Et ideo dicendum est quod, sicut sapientia Dei est causa distinctionis rerum, ita et inaequalitatis". See *Ibid.*, I, q. 65, a. 3 ad 2: "Et ideo etiam est, secundum diversa cognita, diversorum productorum causa per suam sapientiam, sicut et artifex, apprehendendo diversas formas, producit diversa artificiata".

[109] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Librum De Causis*, lect. 24: "Diversitas enim receptionis ex duobus potest contingere: quandoque quidem ex agente sive influente, quandoque autem ex recipiente".

[110] *Ibid.*: "Est autem attendendum quod duplex est actio causae primae: una quidem secundum quam instituit res, quae dicitur creatio, alia vero secundum quam res iam institutas regit. In prima igitur actione non habet locum quod hic dicitur, quia, si oportet omnem diversitatem effectuum reducere in diversitatem recipientium, oportebit dicere quod sint aliqua recipientia quae non sint a causa prima, quod est contra id quod dictum est supra, 18 propositione: res omnes habent essentiam per causam primam".

versity"[111]. God, as first cause, acts according to his wisdom and creates the diverse degrees of beings for the perfection of the whole universe.

The divine essence embraces within itself the perfection of all creatures, not by way of composition, but by way of perfection[112]. The divine intellect can embrace in its essence what is proper to each being, knowing how this being can imitate the divine essence and at the same time is distant from the perfection of the divine essence[113]. Thus, there is a certain distinction and plurality of intellective forms in the divine intellect insofar as it has in itself the *ratio* of each thing: the *ratio* of one thing is distinct from the *ratio* of another. This diversification occurs "insofar as God knows the relation of likeness that every creature has to him; the *rationes* of things are not multiple and distinct in the divine intellect, if not insofar as God knows that things can assimilate to him in different ways"[114].

2.2.2 Theological foundation of *verum*

In his explanation of divine truth, Jan A. Aertsen draws out two arguments from Saint Thomas[115]. The first starts from the fact that there is the same disposition, or causal order, in *ens* and in truth, and from the fact that God is the first *ens* and cause of being. From these

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[111] *Ibid.*: "Unde oportet dicere quod prima diversitas rerum secundum quam habent diversas naturas et virtutes, non sit ex aliqua diversitate recipientium sed ex causa prima, non quia in ea sit aliqua diversitas sed quia est diversitatem cognoscens, est enim agens secundum suam scientiam; et ideo diversos rerum gradus producit ad complementum universi".

[112] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 54: "Divina autem essentia in se nobilitates omnium entium comprehendit, non quidem per modum compositionis, sed per modum perfectionis".

[113] *Ibid.*: "Intellectus igitur divinus id quod est proprium unicuique in essentia sua comprehendere potest, intelligendo in quo eius essentiam imitetur, et in quo ab eius perfectione deficit unumquodque".

[114] *Ibid.*: "Quia vero propria ratio unius distinguitur a propria ratione alterius; distinctio autem est pluralitatis principium: oportet in intellectu divino distinctionem quandam et pluralitatem rationum intellectarum considerare, secundum quod id quod est in intellectu divino est propria ratio diversorum. Unde, cum hoc sit secundum quod Deus intelligit proprium respectum assimilationis quam habet unaquaeque creatura ad ipsum, relinquitur quod rationes rerum in intellectu divino non sint plures vel distinctae nisi secundum quod Deus cognoscit res pluribus et diversis modis esse assimilabiles sibi".

[115] See J. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals*, 370.

two premises, one concludes that God, as the cause of being, is also the first truth and the cause of the truth of other things[116].

The other argument is founded on the notion of measure. The notion of truth presupposes a measure for the adequation of the thing and intellect. The measure of the truth of things can only be a productive intellect, that of the Creator. Here, Aquinas invokes the principle "what is the measure is a genus is the most perfect of that genus"[117]. From the fact that the truth of a thing is measured by the divine intellect, one concludes that God is the most perfect and highest truth:

> Divine truth is the measure of all truth. For, the truth of our intellect is measured by the thing that is outside the soul: in fact, our intellect is called "true" by the fact that it adequates to things; in turn, however, the truth of things is measured in relation to the divine intellect, which is their cause, […]. Furthermore, since God is the first intellect and first intelligible, it is necessary that the truth of any intellect is measured by his truth, if it is true, as the Philosopher teaches in *Metaphysics*, X, that "every thing is measured by the first in its genus". Thus, the divine truth is the first, highest and most perfect truth[118].

Another aspect of this relation is that of the *order* of truth to the intellect: the truth of the thing known is ordered *per se* to the divine intellect, insofar as it is created by God and insofar as it is known by him; in reference to any other intellect it is only ordered *per accidens*[119].

In another text, Aquinas combines two problems we have examined: the diversification of being by divine being as efficient-exemplar

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[116] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1; *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 62.

[117] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 62: "Illud quod est mensura in unoquoque genere, est perfectissimum illius generis".

[118] *Ibid.*: "Sed divina veritas est mensura omnis veritatis. Veritas enim nostri intellectus mensuratur a re quae est extra animam, ex hoc enim intellectus noster verus dicitur quod consonat rei: veritas autem rei mensuratur ad intellectum divinum, qui est causa rerum, […]. Cum etiam Deus sit primus intellectus et primum intelligibile, oportet quod veritas intellectus cuiuslibet eius veritate mensuretur: si unumquodque mensuratur primo sui generis, ut Philosophus tradit, in X *Metaphysicae*. Divina igitur veritas est prima, summa et perfectissima veritas".

[119] FRANCISCO FERNÁNDEZ LABASTIDA, "Il fondamento *teo-logico* della verità. Il rapporto fra essere, verità e *logos* alla luce del *Perì Hermeneías* di Aristotele e del commento di san Tommaso d'Aquino", *Acta philosophica* 18 (2009), 23-24.

cause (problem of *aliquid*); and the multiplication of created truth from divine truth:

> As there is one divine being by means of which all things are as from an efficient-exemplar principle, and nevertheless in diverse things there is diverse being, by which the thing formally is, so also there is one truth, divine truth, by means of which all things are true as by an efficient-exemplar principle; and nevertheless there is a plurality of truths in created things, by means of which these are formally said to be true[120].

Each *ens* has the truth proper to its nature inasmuch as it imitates divine knowledge[121]. From God comes both being and the form[122], by which created *ens* conforms to the divine intellect: "Consequently, a thing is called 'true' insofar as it has its proper form according to which divine act is imitated. […] And in this way *ens* and true are convertible, since every natural thing, by the form, is conformed to divine art"[123].

Having established that God is the first truth and cause of the truth of creatures insofar as he is the cause of being and that God is the measuring cause insofar as the truth of the creature is measure by the divine intellect, we can now understand the nature of this causality. According to Aquinas, the true adds to *ens* "a relation to the exemplar form; in fact, a thing is called true insofar as it imitates the divine exemplar, or has a relation to the cognitive faculty"[124]. This imitation

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[120] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2: "Unde dico, quod sicut est unum esse divinum quo omnia sunt, sicut a principio effectivo exemplari, nihilominus tamen in rebus diversis est diversum esse, quo formaliter res est; ita etiam est una veritas, scilicet divina, qua omnia vera sunt, sicut principio effectivo exemplari; nihilominus sunt plures veritates in rebus creatis, quibus dicuntur verae formaliter".

[121] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 14, a. 12 ad 3: "Unumquodque enim intantum habet de veritate suae naturae, inquantum imitatur Dei scientiam".

[122] See THOMAS AQUINAS, *De veritate*, q. 1, a. 8.

[123] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Perih.*, lect. 3, 30: "Et quia omnia etiam naturalia comparantur ad intellectum divinum, sicut artificiata ad artem, consequens est ut quaelibet res dicatur esse vera secundum quod habet propriam formam, secundum quam imitatur artem divinam. Nam falsum aurum est verum aurichalcum. Et hoc modo ens et verum convertuntur, quia quaelibet res naturalis per suam formam arti divinae conformatur".

[124] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 3: "verum relationem ad formam exemplarem; ex hoc enim unumquodque verum dicitur quod imitatur exemplar divinum, vel relationem ad virtutem cognoscitivam".

and exemplarity is explained as an adequation: "The thing itself, thanks to the species that it has, adequates to the divine intellect as the artifact to art, and thanks to the same species it is able to adequate itself to our intellect"[125].

2.2.3 Theological foundation of *bonum*[126]

Of utmost importance in the ontological and theological foundation of *bonum* is the distinction between the substantial goodness of an *ens* (*bonum secundum quid*) and the goodness that is consequent upon its operation (*bonum simpliciter*)[127]. A being is good to the degree in which it has being: that which is good is desirable insofar as it is perfect and is perfect insofar as it is in act, and is in act to the degree in which it has being. Now, when a being is not its own goodness, this implies that it has received its goodness from another that is good *per essentiam*:

> That which is good, but is not its goodness is said to be good *per participationem*. But that which is said by participation presupposes another from which it receives goodness. Now, in this one cannot go to infinity: since in the series of final causes one cannot proceed to infinity, since the infinite is incompatible with the end; while the good has the notion of end. Thus, one needs to arrive to a first good, that is not a good *per participationem* and ordered to something else, but rather *per essentiam*. But this is God. Therefore, God is his goodness[128].

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125 THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2: "Res enim ipsa ex specie quam habet, divino intellectui adaequatur, sicut artificiatum arti; et ex virtute eiusdem speciei nata est sibi intellectum nostrum adaequare".

126 A complete exposition of the theological foundation of *bonum* surpasses the limits of this article. Therefore, I will only consider the essential points.

127 Cf. A. CONTAT, "*Esse, essentia, ordo…*", 10: "Infatti, l'ente sostanziale, per il suo atto di essere, è ente in senso assoluto (*simpliciter*), perché è ciò che ha l'essere, mentre l'accidente e quindi l'operazione vengono detti ente in senso relativo (*secundum quid*), perché non hanno l'essere, ma piuttosto qualcosa è tramite loro. A rovescio, invece, l'ente non può essere considerato buono in senso pieno, finché non abbia raggiunto l'ultima perfezione di cui è capace e che non gli viene dato dalla sua sostanza. Ci sono pertanto due gradi di bontà in ogni creatura, quello primario e relativo (*secundum quid*) consecutivo allo *esse* in quanto sostanziale, e quello ultimo e assoluto (*simpliciter*) consecutivo all'operazione, che è un essere in atto di tipo accidentale".

128 THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 38: "Unumquodque bonum quod non est sua bonitas, participative dicitur bonum. Quod autem per participationem dicitur,

In the *Summa contra Gentiles* (I, ch. 37), Aquinas demonstrates the existence of goodness of God by means of four arguments: from his perfection, from his immobility insofar as the first unmoved mover is the first desired; from his being-in-act; and from his diffusive action inasmuch as the good tends to diffuse itself and being. In general, Aquinas' reflections on *bonum* always concern the notions of appetibility, perfection, likeness-imitation, finality and order. This fact is evident in the various arguments from *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 40. In the first argument, Aquinas affirms that "the good of each thing is its perfection". And in the third, he adds:

> Since every thing is not desirable except by the end, and since goodness consists in appetibility, every thing should be called good, either because it is the end, or because it is ordered to the end. Therefore, the ultimate end is that from which all things receive the *ratio* of good. But the ultimate end is God as we will see later [III, ch. 17]. Therefore, God is the good of every good[129].

That by which a thing is ordered to the end is its operation[130]. One can say also that "the end of each thing is its proper operation, since this is its second perfection" [131]. Things are not ordered to divine goodness only insofar as they act, but also insofar as they are; this is because insofar as they are they have a likeness of divine goodness, which is the end of things[132].

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aliquid ante se praesupponit, a quo rationem suscipit bonitatis. Hoc autem in infinitum non est possibile abire: quia in causis finalibus non proceditur in infinitum, infinitum enim repugnat fini; bonum autem rationem finis habet. Oportet igitur devenire ad aliquod bonum primum, quod non participative sit bonum per ordinem ad aliquid aliud, sed sit per essentiam suam bonum. Hoc autem Deus est. Est igitur Deus sua bonitas".

[129] *Ibid.*, I, ch. 40: "Cum unumquodque appetibile sit propter finem; boni autem ratio consistat in hoc quod est appetibile: oportet quod unumquodque dicatur bonum vel quia est finis, vel quia ordinatur ad finem. Finis igitur ultimus est a quo omnia rationem boni accipiunt. Hoc autem Deus est, ut infra probabitur. Est igitur Deus omnis boni bonum".

[130] *Ibid.*, III, ch. 22: "Quod ultimum per quod res unaquaeque ordinatur ad finem, est eius operatio: diversimode tamen, secundum diversitatem operationis".

[131] *Ibid.*, III, ch. 25: "Propria operatio cuiuslibet rei est finis eius: est enim secunda perfectio ipsius".

[132] See *Ibid.*, III, ch. 65: "In finem autem ultimum quem Deus intendit, scilicet bonitatem divinam, ordinantur res non solum per hoc quod operantur, sed etiam per hoc quod sunt: quia inquantum sunt, divinae bonitatis similitudinem gerunt, quod est finis rerum".

Creatures are good, but they are on the path toward a superior goodness and perfection:

> Since the good ha the *ratio* of perfection and end, according to the twofold perfection and twofold end of the creature, one can consider a twofold goodness. In fact, the perfection of a creature can be considered insofar as it is constituted in its nature, and this is the end of its generation or production; the other perfection, however, is that which the creature reaches by means of its motion or operation, and this is the end of its motion or its operation[133].

Aquinas also presents the twofold good of the creature in his *Commentary on Boethius' De Hebdomadibus*. The first goodness is that by which creatures are called good in virtue of the relation to the first good: being and all that which is in the creature is caused by the first good. The other goodness is considered in creatures *simpliciter*, to the degree in which they are perfect in being and in operation: "and such perfection does not belong to created goods according to their essential being, but rather according to something added, which is indicated as their virtue"[134].

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[133] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Compendium theologiae*, I, ch. 109: "Cum enim bonum habeat rationem perfectionis et finis, secundum duplicem perfectionem et finem creaturae attenditur duplex eius bonitas. Attenditur enim quaedam creaturae perfectio secundum quod in sua natura persistit, et haec est finis generationis aut factionis ipsius. Alia vero perfectio ipsius attenditur, quam consequitur per suum motum vel operationem, et haec est finis motus vel operationis ipsius".

[134] THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Boethii De Hebdomadibus*, lect. 4: "Est enim considerandum secundum praemissa, quod in bonis creatis est duplex bonitas. Una quidem secundum quod dicuntur bona per relationem ad primum bonum; et secundum hoc esse eorum, et quidquid in eis a primo bono, est bonum. Alia vero bonitas consideratur in eis absolute, prout scilicet unumquodque dicitur bonum, inquantum est perfectum in esse et in operari. Et haec quidem perfectio non competit creatis bonis secundum ipsum esse essentiae eorum, sed secundum aliquid superadditum, quod dicitur virtus eorum". With the distinction between goodness in a relative sense (*secundum quid*: substantial goodness) and goodness in an absolute sense (*simpliciter*: accidental goodnesses), Aquinas considers in *De veritate*, q. 21, a. 5, the three opinions of Augustine, *De causis* and Boethius on the participated goodness of the creature. Thomas interprets the first two according to substantial goodness: in God there is an identity between essence and goodness, while in the creature perfection is added (*superaddita*) to the essence, second, the degree of goodness depends on the degree of being, and therefore God is goodness *per essentiam* and the creature has goodness by participation. To these two opinions he adds the ordering of the creature to God as final cause.

The theoretical framework for the twofold goodness is that of *exitus a principio – reditus in finem*. The *ordo ad bonum* of the creature is the ulterior inclination to perfection that is caused by the substance constituted by *esse* and the essence[135]: "Proceeding from the Creator by means of the gift of the act of being measure by its correlative essence, the created substance is therefore ordered to an ulterior perfection, which it obtains through action"[136]. The operation of the created substance makes it pass from the goodness *secundum quid* of the substantial essence in act to the goodness *simpliciter* of perfective accidental operation. By means of its operation the spiritual creature seeks to rest in its end and possess in a partial and participated way its end.

In synthesis, the causal relation between divine goodness and the creature is threefold: "every thing is called good by divine goodness as by the first exemplar, efficient and final cause of all goodness"[137]. As efficient cause, God produces the being and the correlative essence of the creature, to which a degree of goodness corresponds; from the fact that God is the efficient cause, it follows that the creature has in itself a likeness of divine goodness; finally, God orders the creature to himself as to its end and second perfection.

Conclusion

In conclusion, by means of a systematization of Aquinas' texts, we have come to a knowledge (wisdom) of the causal lines that run between the creatures's *passiones entis* and the divine.

In the ontological foundation of the transcendentals, each transcendental property of the creature was seen to refer in some way to the real composition and reveal fundamental aspects of being itself. It is by means of the method of *resolutio secundum rationem* that one arrives to the real composition of essence and *esse* in *ens per participationem*. This composed *ens* is *unum* due to its *esse* and diversified by means of the real addition of its essence. It is intelligible and

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[135] See A. CONTAT, "*Esse, essentia, ordo…*", 24.

[136] *Ibid.*, 29: "Uscita dal creatore tramite il dono del proprio atto di essere misurato dalla sua essenza correlativa, la sostanza creata è quindi ordinata ad una perfezione ulteriore, che proverrà dall'operare".

[137] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 6, a. 4: "Sic ergo unumquodque dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari, effectivo et finali totius bonitatis".

appetible insofar as it is in act, yet is ordered, due to the real composition, to an ultimate perfection, attainable by means of its proper operation.

In the theological foundation, the limitation of the transcendentals in created *ens* demands the existence of a supreme cause that produces the created perfection, measures the perfection and orders and governs it to an ultimate perfection. We have seen that the method of *resolutio secundum rem* is able to identify these different relations between the transcendental in creation and the transcendental in the divine.

It is interested to note how often exemplar causality intervenes: created *ens* imitates the divine nature and possesses a likeness of the divine nature; the essence is determined by the corresponding divine exemplar idea; divine unity pre-contains in an exemplary fashion the multiplicity of creation; the diversity of creatures is the work of divine wisdom; creatures are conformed to their divine exemplar ideas; and by means of divine providence (*ratio ordinis rerum ad finem*) creatures are ordered to their end.

A concluding chart summarizes some of the more important points about the theological foundation of the transcendentals.

Theological foundation of the transcendentals	
ENS	God, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, is the efficient cause (production) and exemplar cause (nature that is imitated) of the creature's participated *esse*.
RES	The divine idea is the formal, extrinsic cause that measures and determines the created essence.
UNUM	The unity of God is the principle of every unity insofar as it is the efficient cause of the composite and the measure of every creature insofar as it assigns the termination of their nature.
ALIQUID	Divine wisdom is the formal extrinsic cause of the distinction, diversity and multiplicity of creatures.
VERUM	The First Truth is the cause of the truth of things insofar as the essence of the created substance is adequated to its divine idea, namely, to the divine essence known by God as imitable and participable.

| **BONUM** | The created substance, constituted in its first perfection, desires Divine Goodness and is ordered, by means of divine providence, to this goodness as to its ultimate end (its second perfection), which it attains by means of the highest operation of which it is capable. |

Summary: The metaphysical study of ens qua ens and its transcendental properties requires an ontological foundation according to intrinsic causes and a theological foundation according to extrinsic causes. Following the method of resolutio secundum rationem, Aquinas founds the transcendental properties of ens in se (res, unum) and the transcendental properties of ens in ordine ad aliud (aliquid, verum, bonum) on the real composition of essence and actus essendi in creatures. The theological foundation follows the method of resolutio secundum rem and involves the notions of transcendental participation and analogical causality. The analogical predication of the transcendentals of God and creatures is based on the extrinsic relations of causality (efficient, exemplar and final). Each transcendental is seen to involve a predominate causal line: for example, unum and efficient causality, verum and exemplar causality, bonum and final causality. Res and aliquid are also provided with theological foundations: a creature is res due to the exemplary determination of its essence and is aliquid due to the distinction and diversity effected in creatures by the divine ideas.

Sommario: Lo studio metafisico dell'ente in quanto ente e delle sue proprietà trascendentali richiede una fondazione ontologica secondo le cause intrinseche e una fondazione teologica secondo le cause estrinseche. Seguendo il metodo della risoluzione secundum rationem, l'Aquinate fonda le proprietà trascendentali dell'ens in se (res, unum) e le proprietà trascendentali dell'ens in ordine ad aliud (aliquid, verum, bonum) sulla composzione reale dell'essenza e dell'actus essendi nelle creature. La fondazione teologica segue il metodo della resolutio secundum rem e coinvolge le nozioni di partecipazione trascendentale e causalità analogica. La predicazione analogica dei trascendentali di Dio e delle creature è fondata sui rapporti di causalità estrinseca (efficiente, esemplare e finale). Si vede che ogni trascendentali coinvolge una linea causale predominante: ad esempio, l'unum e la causalità efficiente, il verum e la causalità esemplare, il bonum e la causalità finale. Res e aliquid anche hanno fondazioni teologiche: una creatura è res a causa della determinazione esemplare della sua essenza ed è aliquid a causa della distinzione e della diversità effettuata nelle creature per le idee divine.