THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES
FROM THOMAS AQUINAS TO DUNS SCOTUS

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the perennial problem in philosophy and theology of
reconciling divine simplicity with the plurality of divine attributes. Simplicity is a
negative doctrine, according to which God lacks parts of any kind, whether physical or
metaphysical. But philosophers and theologians of all three Western monotheistic
religions have upheld the truth and applicability of statements that ascribe to God various
perfections, such as “God is wise,” “God is just,” and “God is good.” These statements
appear to violate divine simplicity, because taken individually they introduce a distinction
between an attribute or property of God and the divine essence itself (for example,
between God and God’s goodness), and taken together they posit a plurality of attributes
in God.

My dissertation is a close examination of the Scholastic controversy concerning the
divine attributes and the philosophical attempts to reconcile a plurality of divine attributes
with the simplicity of God. After motivating the discussion by referring to early Islamic
thought and contemporary philosophy of religion, I reconstruct and analyze the debate at the universities during the period 1100-1300.

My thesis is that three families of solutions emerge in the medieval debate: (1) what I call the “semantic” solution. According to its proponents, statements such as “God is just” have a double signification. The primary signification is the divine essence. According to their secondary signification, they signify the plurality of God’s actions in creation. So, on this solution, even if “justice” or “wisdom” are predicated of God, both signify only the one, simple, divine essence. (2) The Thomist solution, which claims that the plurality of attributes is not in reality but the result of an intellectual activity. The proponents of this view were split between defenders of Thomas, who maintained that the intellect in question is the human intellect, and defenders of Henry of Ghent, who argued that the divine intellect generated the attributes. (3) The realist solution, which holds that the plurality of the attributes is in reality independently of any intellect, even the divine intellect. Both God and human beings “discover” the divine attributes already present in the divine essence.
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

This dissertation examines the conflict between divine simplicity and the divine attributes. Divine simplicity is the doctrine that God has no parts, material or immaterial. God is not the kind of being that is composed of other entities or admits of internal division. Divine simplicity has strong motivations. If one were to deny it and postulate that God does have parts, then God would depend on his parts for his existence and would also require an external cause to unite the parts. Also, the presence of parts could permit change; God might then eventually be corrupted or otherwise cease to be God. These consequences are all contrary to the idea that God is a perfect being who transcends and is completely different from the created world.

Divine attributes are properties predicated of God. Examples of divine attributes are entities such as ‘divine justice’, ‘divine wisdom’, and ‘divine goodness’. It is difficult to say anything at all about God without recourse to divine attributes, so they appear to be as fundamental to our concept of God as divine simplicity.

The problem, then, is in holding both divine simplicity and that there are divine attributes. On the surface it appears that it is a bald contradiction: divine simplicity rules out the presence of parts or a plurality of entities in God, while divine attributes posit such a plurality. Divine attributes appear to do this in two ways: (1) they introduce
composition between a subject, the divine essence, and what modifies the subject, the attribute (2) they introduce distinction because the attributes will differ in some way from each other.¹

Any attempt to solve this problem will either (1) deny divine simplicity, (2) deny divine attributes, or (3) make an attempt to reconcile divine simplicity with the divine attributes.

1.2 The Significance of the Problem

This problem is one of the central problems of philosophical theology. The position that one adopts on the issue will influence all subsequent discussion of the divine nature, such as divine eternality, knowledge, immutability, and so on. The debate on this topic runs through the histories of both philosophy and of theology. As evidence of this we shall briefly examine two examples, the early Islamic controversy and the debate over divine simplicity in contemporary philosophy of religion.

The first example is of the debate that occurred during the formative years of Islam.² One school, the Ash’arites, were in favor of a plurality of divine attributes and


held that the attributes exist in the divine essence. But they refused to specify the relation between the attributes and the divine essence. They denied both that the attributes were identical to the essence and that they were other than it.

The second school, the Mu’tazilites, denied the reality of the attributes. The Mu’tazilites were motivated by the fear that allowing a real plurality in God, even one in which the attributes were inseparably united, compromised the divine unity and resulted in polytheism. This is somewhat surprising, for simplicity seems to be distinct from unity: everything that exists has a certain kind of unity, even non-simple beings like lakes and rocks. It is simplicity that God alone enjoys and which accounts for the degree of divine unity. Be this as it may, the Mu’tazilites thought that a plurality of divine attributes conflicted with divine unity and resulted in polytheism. This is because of their view that everything eternal must be a god. Since the Ash’arites refused to specify the relation between the attributes and the divine essence, it appeared to the Mu’tazilites that there was a real plurality in God and so many gods. The Mu’tazilite solution to the problem was to deny all reality to the divine attributes and to hold instead that they were mere names or modes of God.

The second example is the ongoing debate over divine simplicity in contemporary philosophy of religion. This debate intensified in 1980 with the publication of Alvin Plantinga’s attack on divine simplicity in Does God have a Nature? Part of this work contained a criticism of Thomas Aquinas’ treatment of divine simplicity in Summa

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3 For the bibliographic information see note 1 above. For a recent overview of the modern debate, see Dolezal, God without Parts, 11-30, 125-163.
For example, Plantinga criticizes Aquinas view that God is identical with his nature and the divine attributes by arguing that “…if God is identical with each of his properties, then each of his properties is identical with each of his properties, so that God has but one property.” But this conflicts, according to Plantinga, with the obvious fact that God has many properties. Another argument that Plantinga offers is that “…if God is identical with each of his properties, then, since each of his properties is a property, he is a property—a self-exemplifying property. Accordingly God has just one property: himself.” Plantinga goes on to state that this conclusion is unacceptable for theists, because a property, which is an abstract entity, cannot create or have knowledge or be a person.

There are roughly four strategies that have been taken in response to Plantinga. One operates within the contemporary analytic theories of properties presupposed by Plantinga and other critics and seeks to construct a theory that harmonizes such a property account with divine simplicity. The second strategy to abandon discussing divine simplicity in terms of the identity of God with the divine attributes in favor of the weaker claim that there is a harmony or a unity between God and his attributes. According to this group of thinkers, the point of divine simplicity is to show that there are

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5 Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?*, 47.
7 Cf. Dolezal, *God Without Parts*, 11, 126. Dolezal lists Eleonore Stump, Norman Kretzmann, William Mann, and William Vallicella as following this strategy.
8 Cf. Dolezal, *God Without Parts*, 126. The adherents of this approach are Richard Swinburne, Robert Burns, Gerrit Immink, and John Frame.
no internal contradictions or disagreements between different divine attributes (for example, between divine mercy and divine justice). A third strategy involves applying recent theories of truthmakers to the problem. The idea here is that God is the “truthmaker” for each of the divine attributes. According to Brower, a leading exponent of this position, a truthmaker, despite its name, should not be thought of in terms of efficient causality but rather entailment. This means that instead of there being diverse entities in God that make statements such as ‘God is wise’ and ‘God is just’ true, there is just one truthmaker, the simple, undifferentiated divine nature that accounts for such statements. Finally, there is a fourth strategy which consists largely of defending the views of Thomas Aquinas against the criticisms of Plantinga and other contemporary philosophers of religion in terms of the analogy of being, the identity of essence and esse in God, and considerations of Thomistic hylomorphism.

These examples from Islamic theology and contemporary philosophy of religion are illustrative of the importance of the problem of the divine attributes. Historically, the debate in early Islamic thought had more than philosophical consequences; the Mu’tazilites briefly gained political power and used it to persecute their philosophical

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opponents. Eventually the Ash’arites also gained power and suppressed Mu’tazilites, thereby becoming the dominant theological school in Sunni Islam. More recently, the debate in contemporary philosophy of religion exercised many of the top thinkers in the field, though there has been little agreement on the issue. The debate is also clearly of systematic interest, for it concerns the basic picture of the divine nature upon which all subsequent theologizing and philosophizing is based. Additionally, the debate has also been linked to diverse other areas of research, such as discussions of properties, truthmakers, and predication in contemporary thought, as well as unity and polytheism in Islamic thought.

1.3 The Contribution of this Study

My dissertation will examine the medieval Scholastic debate on the problem of divine simplicity and the divine attributes, which mirrors the contemporary debate in its sheer liveliness. To date no one has devoted a study to the medieval debate on the attributes; Harry Wolfson exhaustively treated the earlier Jewish, Islamic, and early

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12} In addition to the contributions of Plantinga, Stump, and Kretzmann, see James F. Ross, }\]
Christian debates, but, though he did comment on Thomas Aquinas’ views on divine
names, he made only passing remarks on other Scholastic thinkers.\(^\text{13}\)

The chief result of my investigation of the medieval debate is that I have
identified three families of solutions, which I call the ‘semantic’, the ‘Thomist’, and the
‘realist’. We can classify these solutions by the degree of reality that they ascribe to the
divine attributes. The solutions are then located on a continuum, from the semantic
solution, which grants the least degree of reality to the divine attributes, to the realist,
which, with some qualifications, is prepared to admit their reality.

The first is the semantic solution. This was the common opinion among the
medieval Scholastics in the Latin West. The solution is the theory of *connotatio* or
*consignificatio*.\(^\text{14}\) The origin of the theory lies as far back as Aristotle, who in his *De
interpretatione* had declared that a verb signifies both its own proper meaning and “co-
signifies” time.\(^\text{15}\) Towards the end of the eleventh century, co-signification had been
added to the remaining parts of the verb (person, mood, number) and even to other parts

\(^{13}\) See for example, Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*; “St. Thomas on Divine

\(^{14}\) For the background in medieval grammar and semantics, see M.-D. Chenu, “Grammaire et
théologie aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles,” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 11-12
philosophique J. Vrin, 1976), 100-107; Irène Rosier, “*Res significata et modus significandi*: Les
implications d’une distinction médiévale,” in *Sprachtheorien in Spätantike und Mittelalter*, ed. Sten
Ebbesen (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1995), 135-168; Idem, “Deux exemples d’interactions entre
grammaire et théologie au XIIIe siècle: noms divins et formules sacramentaires,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte
der Sprachwissenschaft* 3 (1993), 61-74; Luisa Valente, “*Iustus et Misericors*: l’usage théologique des
notions de Consignificatio et Connotatio dans la seconde moitié du XIIe siècle,” in *Vestigia, Imagines,
Verba. Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts (XIIth-XIVth Century)*, ed. Costantino Marmo
(Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 37-50.

\(^{15}\) Cf. Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, ch. 3 (16b).
of speech. Applied to the created order, propositions such as ‘Peter is white’ indicated a quality, ‘whiteness’, inhering in the subject, Peter. But in the case of the divine nature, the predicate of a proposition such as ‘God is just’ simply signifies the divine essence. The divine names or attributes have a primary signification that is the divine essence; but they also have a secondary signification, known as the connotatio or consignificatio. The referents of the secondary signification are the effects of God in creation. So the terms ‘just’ and ‘merciful’ as applied to God signify primarily the divine essence, but secondarily refer to distinct effects of divine actions in creation. This theory then preserves divine simplicity by ascribing the plurality of divine attributes to the plurality of divine effects in the created world.

As I noted above, this theory was highly influential. In the twelfth century its adherents included Stephen Langton, Alan of Lille, William of Auxerre, and Peter

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16 In this there is some similarity to Maimonides’ attributes of action, concerning which see Dux seu director dubitantium aut perplexorum I c. 52 (ed. Paris 1520, f. 19v-20r): “...ideoque omnes nominationes quae inveniuntur in libris attributae creatori, nominabunt opera, non substantia ipsius... sic ergo probatur tibi quod istae dispositiones non conveniunt ei cum intendimus in substantiam eius, sed cum intendimus in creata ipsius.” Maimonides’ Guide was not translated into Latin until the 1230’s-40’s, however, so it is unlikely that there was a direct influence. For a summary of the literature on the Latin translation of the Guide, see Mercedes Rubio, Aquinas and Maimonides on the Possibility of the Knowledge of God (Springer: Dordrecht, 2006), 266-273. On Maimonides’ attributes of action see Joseph A. Buijs, “Attributes of Action in Maimonides,” Vivarium 27 (1989), 85-102.


Lombard. In the thirteenth century such notables as Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Odo Rigaldi, William de la Mare, Roger Marston, and various other minor figures adopted the theory. Peter Auriol, William of Ockham, and Gregory of Rimini defended the view in the fourteenth century. Under the influence of the latter two thinkers it became one of the standard positions in the controversy of the viae in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, acting as a rival to the Thomistic and Scotistic solutions. I shall not discuss this solution further in this dissertation, because prior to Peter Auriol and William Ockham (who lie beyond the scope of this study) the treatment


21 See below, chapter 2.


23 See below, chapter 6.


of the view is generally very brief, a statement no longer than what I have just
summarized.

The second solution is the Thomist solution, so named because Thomas Aquinas
was the most famous defender of the view, and it was also generally attributed to him
during the middle ages. The basic position is that some intellect causes the plurality of the
attributes. Thomas Aquinas held that the human mind caused the plurality, though there
was also a second version that held that the divine intellect distinguished the attributes.

Thomas Aquinas held that the human mind was responsible for the plurality of the
divine attributes. In contemporary Thomistic scholarship, Aquinas’ doctrines of the
primacy of esse and its identity with God as well as the analogy of being have held
primacy of place in responding to Plantinga’s attacks on the Summa theologiae’s account
of divine simplicity. But this is not how Aquinas himself attempted to solve the problem
at hand. His definitive, most detailed response is in a dispute, titled the Quaestio de
attributis, which currently forms part of Aquinas’ commentary on the Sentences of Peter
Lombard. This question, when it is cited in contemporary scholarship, is used only for
information on the relation between concepts, signification, and the rationes,28 or to
justify the later Baroque Thomist distinctio rationis ratiocinatae.29 But this question is the
most comprehensive treatment of the problem of the divine attributes in the works of
Aquinas, and he himself stated that the truth of everything he wrote in his commentary on

28 For example, Peter Weigel, Aquinas on Simplicity (Peter Lang: Bern, 2008), 202-203.

29 See for example, Dolezal, God without Parts, 128, 133. Dolezal does not cite the Quaestio at
all, but rather Richard Muller, Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from
Protestant Scholastic Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985). The phrase fundamentum in re on which this
distinction is based is derived from the Quaestio de attributis.
the first book of the *Sentences* depended on this question. In this *Quaestio* Aquinas explains his basic terminology, details how the human intellect corresponds to reality, situates his position with respect to earlier thinkers such as Anselm and Maimonides, and develops a theory in which the plurality of the divine attributes is a by-product of the human mind’s attempt to cognize God. Because the human intellect cannot comprehend the divine essence all at once, but only partially, it requires a multiplicity of concepts, concepts which correspond to the divine attributes. Human concepts are not vain or false, however, for they do correspond to the divine essence, even though the essence exists in a more sublime manner than can be understood, namely, as entirely simple and infinite. So while God does make a contribution to the plurality of the divine attributes, the plurality itself is a result of the finite and limited nature of the human mind. Aquinas treats these issues in various other works as well, but these passages all reaffirm the human origin of the plurality of divine attributes.

The second version of the broadly-conceived Thomist solution is that the divine attributes are distinct prior to any cognition the human intellect might have of them. This position is midway between that of Thomas Aquinas and his followers who held that the human mind caused the plurality of attributes, and the realist solution which held that the attributes are distinct prior to any cognition. The primary exponent of this second, Thomistic view was Henry of Ghent. According to Henry, there is a logical instant in which God is purely undifferentiated and the divine attributes exist in a state of quasi-potency. In a second logical instant the divine intellect cognizes the divine essence and is moved to act. By its activity of knowing the divine essence the divine intellect generates the divine attributes. However, it does not generate all of them. Once the divine intellect
supplies an object for the divine will, the will also begins to act and generates the various attributes associated with it. The significance of these stages in the divine cognition is that the attributes are in God from eternity, prior to any human cognition of God.

The third and final solution to the problem of the divine attributes is the realist. This solution is the logical next step in the development of the debate: first, Aquinas claimed that the human intellect causes the plurality of attributes, then Henry of Ghent claimed that it is the divine intellect. The realist position maintained that attributes are distinct even prior to the operation of the divine intellect. So the attributes are “real” in the sense that they are not mind-dependent. The initial proponent of this view was William of Ware, who claimed, no doubt influenced by Henry of Ghent, that the intellect and will were distinct in God prior to their operations because the objects of these powers, being and the good, are distinct prior to the operations of the powers and thus do not depend on them. Duns Scotus also defended the realist solution. He was sensitive to the concern that the realist solution could not be reconciled with divine simplicity and took great care to prove otherwise. One way in which he did this was to distinguish between real and formal identity. According to Scotus, divine simplicity only requires real identity, that all the various divine elements are inseparably united in God; it does not require formal identity, that the divine elements share a common definition. Thus, the divine attributes are really identical but formally distinct.

As I stated above, the three solutions to the problem of divine attributes are distinguished by the degree of reality that they assign to the divine attributes. The semantic solution assigns no reality at all to the divine attributes, at least according to their primary signification, for terms such as ‘divine wisdom’ and ‘divine justice’ both
signify the divine essence and are in no way distinct from each other. According to the broadly-conceived Thomist solution, however, such terms do have a certain degree of distinction, because they represent distinct concepts in the human intellect that are applied to God. Finally, according to the realist solution, such terms enjoy their own meanings or definitions apart from any cognitive activity whether human or divine, and thus are real.

There is an interesting corollary here in respect of the degree of correspondence these theories posit between the human mind and the divine essence. The semantic theory posits no correspondence at all between the human mind and the divine essence as far as the primary signification is concerned, and the co-signification simply connotes perfections found in the created world. The Thomist theory attempts to posit a correspondence: on the side of God there is infinite perfection, on the human there is a plurality. Obviously, in light of divine simplicity there cannot be a corresponding plurality on the side of God, so in order to save the veracity of human cognition, plurality is disarmed by claiming that it is the result of the weakness of the human intellect. On the realist theory, however, there is a full correspondence between the human mind and the divine essence, and this correspondence includes the plurality of divine attributes. As we shall see, the issue of correspondence drives the medieval debate forward, and there is a progressive development towards the full correspondence of the realist solution.

The primary contribution of this study is the organization of the material according to the reality that the thinkers ascribe to the divine attributes, that is, the identification of the three solutions. This involves the study of numerous figures that have to date received little attention, as well as a focus on some new texts of better-known
thinkers that have not yet been brought to bear on the question, such as the *Quaestio de attributis* of Thomas Aquinas and the *Logica Scoti* of Duns Scotus. Finally, I have included an appendix in which I have edited William of Ware’s question on the attributes, which is a veritable history of the Scholastic debate prior to Duns Scotus.

1.4 Outline

There are five chapters following this introduction. In the first of these (chapter 2), I treat Bonaventure, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Bonaventure’s writings contain both an endorsement of the semantic solution to the problem as well as the view that the human intellect is responsible for the apparent plurality of divine attributes. Albert also held that the intellect plays a role in solving the problem, but his primary contribution was to apply the *rationes* to the problem, so that each divine attribute has a corresponding *ratio* or essential character. Thomas’ views were stable over the course of his career, save for some modification in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Initially, he advocated a view in which there was a correspondence between the plurality of human concepts of God and the divine attributes. This correspondence was grounded in the *rationes*, which Thomas explained were definitions. He also

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30 The term *ratio* has a variety of meanings, as was well known in the middle ages. Some of the thinkers that I examine in this study specify the sense in which it applies to the attributes, while others do not. For a definition from a widely-used logical handbook, see Petrus Hispanus, *Tractatus*, tr. V in *Tractatus Called Afterwards Summule Logicales*, ed. L. M. De Rijk (Assen: Van Gorcum and Co., 1972), 55: ‘*Ratio* multipliciter dicitur. Uno enim modo idem est quod diffinitio vel descriptio, ut hic: ‘univoca sunt quorum nomen est commune et ratio substantie secundum illud nomen est eadem.’ Alio autem modo idem est quod quedam virtus anime. Alio autem modo idem est quod oratio ostendens aliquid, sicut rationes disputantium. Alio autem modo ratio idem est quod forma materie... Alio autem modo ratio eidem est quod essentia communis predicabilis de pluribus, ut essentia generis vel speciei vel differentie. Alio autem modo ratio idem est quod medium inferens conclusionem.’
suggested that the plurality of the rationes was in some sense a feature of the divine
nature. Aquinas was aware that this was controversial, so he held a special dispute on the
topic and directed that the literary product which resulted from it be inserted into his
commentary on the Sentences. Modern scholars have designated this dispute as the
Quaestio de attributis. In this work Thomas argued that the rationes are the means by
which the human intellect understands natures or definitions, that is, they are concepts.
These concepts are then not in God but rather in the human mind. They are in God only
in the sense that what they are concepts of or what they signify is in God. For example,
the ratio of wisdom signifies the concept that the human mind forms of divine wisdom.
Although there is a plurality of concepts of the divine attributes in the human mind, there
is no corresponding plurality in God. Instead, the infinite divine perfection acts as the
foundation for the plurality of human concepts. According to Aquinas, the plurality of the
divine attributes comes about because the human intellect, which is finite, is unable to
form a single concept which accurately represents the divine essence, which is infinite
and so surpasses the human mind. Together with Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas
originated one of the three medieval positions on the divine attributes.

Chapter three examines various responses to the views of Thomas Aquinas. The
two most prominent are Giles of Rome and William de la Mare. Giles took Thomas
Aquinas’ Quaestio de attributis as Thomas’ definitive treatment of the problem of the
divine attributes and also to the general problem of human cognition of God. Though he
agrees with the basic outlines of Aquinas’ position, namely, that the plurality of the
divine attributes is a result of the human intellect’s inability to fully grasp the divine
essence, and he also adopts Aquinas’ terminology, Giles nevertheless advances some
critical observations. These observations are largely directed against the phrasing of certain passages of the *Quaestio de attributis*. Giles’ was in turn criticized by several Dominican theologians who wrote polemical treatises directed against his commentary on the first book of the *Sentences*. After a brief examination of these thinkers, I turn to William de la Mare, a Franciscan who played a prominent role in the controversies over the views of Aquinas following his death. William also singles out the *Quaestio de attributis* for criticism, but unlike Giles of Rome, he rejects the Thomistic solution to the problem of the divine attributes in favor of the semantic one.

The fourth chapter treats Henry of Ghent, who provided the most extensive analysis of the divine attributes. Henry shifted the locus of the debate from the cognitive activities and capabilities of the human intellect, as was common among Thomas Aquinas and his followers, to those of the divine intellect. Henry also considered in detail the distinction between the divine attributes and the divine essence, which he concluded was rational, rather than real. So Henry’s views, though a departure from Aquinas on some points, in general conform to the Thomistic model for explaining the multiplicity of the divine attributes: some mind is responsible for their plurality. Henry moved beyond Aquinas by advocating the divine mind as the mind in question, and thus introduced a split within this particular model. According to Henry the attributes are distinct by reason, but it is the divine intellect that does the distinguishing, prior to human cognitive activity.

Chapter five examines some of the responses to Henry’s views, primarily those of Godfrey of Fontaines and William of Ware. Godfrey is representative of the response by the adherents of the earlier Thomistic view to the novelties of Henry of Ghent. These
thinkers were generally united in their response to Henry, for example that Henry’s view of various instants in which the divine intellect distinguished the divine attributes was incorrect. They held instead that the divine knowledge of the attributes is indirect. God knows that the divine essence can be imitated in a variety of ways and that these different ways will cause a plurality of concepts in the human mind. According to these thinkers, God only knows distinct divine attributes by knowing the contents of the human mind. William of Ware is an example of another kind of response to Henry, for he is one of the first to advocate the realist solution to the problem of the attributes. William exploited Henry’s idea that the attributes were in quasi-potency in the first logical instant. He argued, based on the Aristotelian distinction between powers and their objects that the objects of the divine intellect and will are prior to their operation and not dependent upon them. But the objects of these powers are the true and the good, so these entities must be distinct in God prior to the operation of the divine powers of intellect and will.

The final chapter treats the views of Duns Scotus, who developed the most robust version of the realist solution. Scotus held that prior to the operation of even the divine intellect, there was a formal distinction between the divine attributes. This formal distinction is compatible with real identity, which is the kind of identity required for divine simplicity. Associated with the formal distinction is his doctrine of unitive containment, according to which the plurality of divine attributes and the perfections of the created realm are contained in a super-eminent mode, in the way effects are contained in a cause. In the case of the divine attributes, this means that the divine essence, which Scotus, following Gregory of Nyssa and John Damascene, describes with the metaphor of the ocean, contains the various features of the divine nature and gives them real identity.
while allowing them to retain their formal *rationes*. To remove any lingering doubts about this solution, Scotus also relied on his view of infinity. Divine infinity helps preserve divine simplicity, for the essence and every divine attribute possesses infinity as its intrinsic mode and there is only one divine infinity.
2.1 Introduction

As we have just seen above, there are three Scholastic solutions to the problem of reconciling the plurality of the divine attributes with divine simplicity: the semantic, the Thomist, and the realist. Albert the Great and Bonaventure were the first to develop the Thomist position. This view held that some mind is the cause of the plurality of the divine attributes. In the case of Albert, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas, the mind that is responsible for this is the human mind. Thomas gave the most thorough account of the position, and his views historically were taken to be the classic example of this position. Consequently, after brief remarks on Bonaventure and Albert the Great, most of our discussion will focus on Thomas Aquinas.

2.2 Two Precursors

2.2.1 Bonaventure

Bonaventure did not devote any special questions to discussing the problem of the plurality of divine attributes or the degree to which they can be distinct. Thus, his views on the matter must be gathered from discussions of the trinitarian Persons, divine names, and the divine will. In light of this and the inherent difficulty of the problem, it is not
surprising that he did not have a single theory on the matter. Indeed, he has three: one based on terms (the twelfth-century semantic solution), and two based on the operation of the human intellect. These theories are not necessarily contradictory; since they are scattered throughout Bonaventure’s work, they may only represent different approaches to the problem.

Most of Bonaventure’s scattered remarks concerning the divine attributes are contained in his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. He began this work in 1248, and it was probably complete when he was made Master of Theology in 1257. Relevant material can also be found in his disputed questions *De mysterio Trinitatis* and *De scientia Christi*, dated 1253-1257, and the theological manual titled *Breviloquium*, which was written after the disputed questions and can be firmly dated to around 1257. Bonaventure does not use the term *attributum* to describe the divine attributes, preferring instead *nomina*, *proprietas essentialis* or *conditio nobilitatis*. Bonaventure does use the terms *attributio* and *attribuere*, and even *attributis*, but when discussing various trinitarian issues and not the divine attributes.

One view of Bonaventure is the common twelfth-century semantic solution to the problem. According to this theory, the terms predicated of God, for example, ‘wisdom’ and ‘justice’, signify God primarily, but co-signify God’s created effects secondarily.  

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33 On this solution see chapter 1 above.
Any distinction or plurality is attributed to the secondary and created sense of the term rather than to God or the divine essence.\(^{34}\) It is not surprising to find Bonaventure espousing this theory; it had already been defended by influential members of the Franciscan order such as Alexander of Hales and Odo Rigaldi.\(^{35}\)

Bonaventure’s second view is that the distinction of divine attributes is solely a product of the human intellect. God is perfect unity and simplicity, and this unity corresponds to the plurality found in creatures. Little explanation of this is given, save that God truly is the various attributes by which humans understand and name him. The difference of attributes amounts to the means by which humans understand God, the \textit{rationes intelligendi}.\(^{36}\) These are entities in the human intellect and so must be concepts;

\(^{34}\) Cf. \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis}, q. 2 a. 2 ad 9 (Opera Omnia V, 63):

“...summa sapientia et potencia et bonitas, licet sint unum, quia tamen non sufficienter manifestantur per unum effectum; ideo diversitatem inferunt in effectibus causatis ab ipsa”; q. 6 a. 1 (Opera Omnia V, 99):

“Ad intelligentiam autem obiectorum notandum, quod illa quae dicuntur de Deo respectu creaturae significant divinam essentiam et aliiquid connotant in creatura...”

\(^{35}\) For the texts of these thinkers see notes 20 and 22 above.

\(^{36}\) In \textit{Sent.} I d. 22 a. un. q. 2 ad 3 (Opera Omnia I, 394): “Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod si venit a parte intelligendi solum, ergo talia nomina sunt vana; dicendum, quod non venit ab hoc solum, quoniam illi rationi innotescendi respondet pluralitas in creaturis, et in Deo respondet vera unitas complectens illam totam pluralitatem. Unde quia intelligimus Dei potentiam et sapientiam per diversa, diversimodē nominamus; et quia in Deo est vere sapientia et potentia, ideo non est ibi vanitas.” In \textit{Sent.} I d. 22 a. un. q. 4 (Opera Omnia I, 398): “Alio modo dici diversimode est secundum diversum modum intelligendi, qui quidem attenditur secundum aliam et aliam rationem sive medium cognoscendi; et sic non tantum est dici diversimodē in nominibus divinis, immo omnimodē, quia Deus non tantum cognoscitur per diversa, immo per omnia rerum genera; et sic nomina dicta de Deo, quaedam dicuntur per modum substantiae, ut Deus; quaedam per modum quantitatis, ut magnus; quaedam per modum qualitatis, ut bonus; et sic de aliis omnibus.” In \textit{Sent.} I d. 26 a. un. q. 1 ad 2 (Opera Omnia I, 453): “…dicendum, quod diffère ratione est tripliciter. Uno modo a parte nostrae apprehensionis, sicut differunt in Deo bonitas et magnitudo... Et prima quidem differentia secundum rationem est minima, quia nihil ei respondet a parte rei...” \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis} q. 3 a. 2 (Opera Omnia V, 76): “Differentia vero quantum ad rationes intelligendi est in proprietatibus essentialibus, quae omnino idem sunt, sicut veritas et bonitas; tamen noster intellectus intelligit per diversa et sub alia ratione et alia, et ideo alter nominat; et haec est minima differentia, quae possit inveniri circa divina, quia magis est ex parte nostri quam Dei.” \textit{Breviloquium} I c. 4 (Opera Omnia V, 213): “Et propter eura sunt ibi tantum tres modi differendi, scilicet... secundum modos etiam intelligendi, sicut differt una proprietas substantialis ab altera, ut bonitas et sapientia... ex tertio [modo
unlike Aquinas, Bonaventure did not provide a definition for the term ratio.\textsuperscript{37} He does not seem to have connected them with definitions, as did Aquinas. What is clear, however, is that they are part of the human cognitive apparatus. Because of this, Bonaventure thinks that it is permissible to state that the divine attributes differ by reason (ratione). This distinction of reason or between diverse rationes posits the least (minima) degree of distinction between the entities that are distinguished.\textsuperscript{38}

Elsewhere in his commentary Bonaventure provides a fuller explanation of his solution. In a discussion of the divine will he supplements his position that the human intellect alone is responsible for the plurality of divine attributes with a discussion of how the divine nature contributes to the plurality. This theory, after Thomas Aquinas adopted it in his Quaestio de attributis, would become highly influential in the universities until Henry of Ghent changed the intellect in question from the human to the divine intellect.\textsuperscript{39}

Given the importance of this theory, its first appearance is worth quoting in full:

> ...although the divine essence is one most simple nature, nevertheless it is “an infinite sea of substance.” And therefore all things which are found to be diverse in us—all things, I say—are

\textsuperscript{37} Philip Reynolds translates the term as “concept” and notes the ambiguity of the term. See Philip L. Reynolds, “Analogy of Names in Bonaventure,” Mediaeval Studies 65 (2003), 117-162, at 120 n. 8.


\textsuperscript{39} The influence exercised by Bonaventure over Aquinas on this point has been noted by Hans Kraml; see “William de la Mare,” in Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, vol. 2, edited by Philipp Rosemann (Boston: Brill, 2010), 251-255; Sandra Edwards, Medieval Theories of Distinction, 101: “Like Aquinas, Bonaventure bases this distinction of attributes in God on both the deficiency of the created intellect and the infinity of God’s nature.”
found more nobly in God, identical in every way, though also according to every manner of perfection and truth. Whence just as wisdom, power, and the will in us is truly a being and a cause of the things which are from us, so also are they in God; nevertheless in God they are one. And although they are one, because our intellect cannot comprehend the infinity of that substance, nor is it able to express it by only one [conceptual] “word,” therefore we understand God in many ways and express [the nature of God] with many names. And according as we understand through those ways we form many statements, so that we attribute something to God according to one mode and not according to another, and indeed truly, for they all have true existence in God.40

This view consists of the following features: God is one and simple, an infinite being in which are contained all the perfections that are found distinct in creatures, though they are contained in a superior manner whereby they are entirely identical. The divine infinity makes a complete understanding of the divine essence impossible for human beings, for, being finite, human beings cannot grasp the divine essence by means of only one concept, but instead they require a plurality of concepts.41 While it is clear that the plurality of divine attributes is be reduced to the plurality of human concepts, there remains a certain amount of tension in Bonaventure’s position, for the attributes are contained in God in a more noble or super-eminent manner, which remains unexplained.

40 In Sent. I d. 45 a. 2 q. 1 in corp. (Opera Omnia I, 804): “...quod quamvis divina essentia sit unum quid simplicissimum, tamen ‘est pelagus substantiae infinitum.’ Et ideo omnia quae in nobis reperiuntur per diversitatem, omnia, inquam, in Deo nobilius per omnimodam reperiuntur identitatem, nihilominus tamen secundum omnimodam omnimodam perfectionem et veritatem. Unde sicut in nobis sapientia, potestia et voluntas est vere ens et causa rerum, quae a nobis sunt; sic et in Deo sunt, sed tamen unum sunt. Et quamvis unum sint, quia intellectus noster non potest infinitatem illius substantiae comprehendere nec per unum verbum exprimere; ideo multis modis intelligimus Deus et diversis nomenibus exprimimus; et secundum quod per illos modos intelligimus, plura enuntiatus, ita quod Deus aliud attribuimus secundum unum modum, quod non secundum alium, et vere quidem, quia omnia in Deo habent veram existentiam.”

41 Bonaventure reprises this view in Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis q. 3 a. 1. The main difference there is that immensity replaces infinity. In q. 4 a. 1-2, the terms are used synonymously. Note that immensity normally refers to God’s ubiquity or omnipresence; see Bonaventura, In Sent. I d. 37 a. 1 q. 2 corp. (Opera Omnia I, 654): “Deus... nec per se , nec per accidens mutatur, et hoc est propter summam immensitatem, qua adest omnibus et nulli abest.”
The qualification “nobility” is supposed to ensure that the attributes are the same as each other and the divine essence and so are one, but at the same time the attributes are also distinct in some sense because they are present in the divine essence according to their true existence. This tension was to become a problem for many of those following the tradition of Thomas and Bonaventure.

These scattered remarks constitute the entirety of Bonaventure’s reflection on the plurality of attributes; as we have seen, his works contain two rough theories reconciling the plurality of divine attributes with divine simplicity. He holds the semantic solution of the twelfth-century theologians and grammarians as well as a form of the Thomist theory in which human cognition is responsible for the plurality of divine attributes. It is this second theory that is Bonaventure’s primary contribution to the problem of the divine attributes, for it is one of the first appearances of the second of the three Scholastic solutions to the problem of the divine attributes.

2.2.2 Albert the Great

The Dominican theologian Albert the Great was born ca. 1200. He joined the Dominican order in 1223 or 1229 while studying law at Padua, and he later taught in various Dominican Studia. He was sent to study theology at Paris in the early 1240’s, where he lectured on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. He left Paris in 1248, the year Bonaventure began lecturing on the Sentences. After leaving Paris, the Dominican order
sent Albert to Cologne, where he was given charge of setting up a new Dominican

*Studium generale.* One of his students at this *studiwm* was Thomas Aquinas.42

Albert may be the first thinker to develop the Thomist solution to the problem of the divine attributes; we have treated him after Bonaventure because of his connection to Thomas Aquinas. Interestingly, the title of the question containing the most relevant material to our study is identical to a common one of Aquinas, namely, whether the divine attributes or names are synonymous.43

The longest section of this question is devoted to a refutation of the semantic solution to the problem of the divine attributes. Albert provides a brief statement of the theory as well as a reformulation prior to attacking it.44 He proposes several arguments against the view, one being that what is connoted is an effect; but an effect is from a cause, insofar as it is a cause; therefore the divine names must be said of God as of a cause, which is false because a name such as “wisdom” does not signify a cause *qua*
cause. The view is then insufficient because the divine attributes do not express a cause-effect relationship or pick out a causal feature in God. Another argument is that if we were to posit hypothetically that there are no effects being co-signified in creatures, would God still be wise or good? Clearly he is, so the semantic solution must be false.\textsuperscript{45}

Albert solves the problem of the attributes by drawing a distinction between two ways in which a name signifies. It can be taken either with respect to what it names (\textit{quid nominant}) or with respect to that in which the entity signified is found (\textit{in quo significatur poni quod nominant}).\textsuperscript{46} When this distinction is applied to the divine attributes, if we take the attributes according to the first sense, then there is a plurality. This is a plurality of reason (\textit{rationis}), for each name possesses its own \textit{ratio}, a term Albert does not define. There is a \textit{per se ratio} for wisdom, one for justice, and one for the essence.\textsuperscript{47} If we take the names of the attributes in the second sense, however, divine simplicity enters into consideration. This is because divine simplicity requires that the being (\textit{esse}) of God and that which he is (\textit{id quod est}) are the same. So in the second sense of a name, all divine attributes are one in God because they are present in

\textsuperscript{45} Cf. (\textit{ibid.}): “Connotatum est effectus in creatura: sed effectus non est nisi a causa ut causa: ergo ista nomina non dicerentur de Deo nisi sicut de causa ut causa: quod plane falsum est, quia sapientia vel sapiens nullam nominat causam ut causam. Praeterea, ponamus per intellectum non esse connotat in creatura, quaero si adhuc Deus sit sapiens, bonus, ens, et huiusmodi? Constat quod sic: ergo illa solutio nulla est.”

\textsuperscript{46} Cf. (\textit{ibid.}): “…in omnibus talibus nominibus duo sunt attendenda, scilicet quid nominant, et in quo significatur poni quod nominant: cum enim ego dico ‘sensus’, hoc nomen ‘sensus’ accipio secundum hoc quod nominat tantum: et ideo accipio in ratione una communi. Si autem dico ‘sensus hominis’, et ‘sensus bruti’: jam et in alia et alia ratione accipio, secundum quod accipio ipsum in eo in quo notatur poni significatum ipsius.”

\textsuperscript{47} Cf. (\textit{ibid.}): “Ita dico de huiusmodi nominibus divinis. Si enim attendantur secundum ea quae nominant tantum, tunc omnia illa nomina diversitatem rationis habent de se: alia est enim per se ratio essentia, et alia ratio sapientia per se, et sic de aliis.”

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something that is simple. The first sense accounts for the plurality of attributes, while the second accounts for their identity. Albert concludes that the attributes are thus not synonymous, even when the divine intellect understands them from eternity.48

Finally, in the following question Albert argues that both senses of the name are in fact distinct acts of the intellect. He also adds a third act, in which the human intellect forms propositions about God, for example ‘God is wise’.49 Thus Albert is the first to solve the problem of the divine attributes by a theory that relies on the activity of the human intellect. Note, however, that this is different from Bonaventure’s view that divine infinity renders the human intellect unable to grasp the divine essence.

Albert’s importance for understanding Thomas’ views is primarily in his theory that the human intellect is responsible for the plurality of the divine attributes. But Albert also influenced Thomas by his liberal use of the *rationes* of the attributes, which caused Thomas difficulties in his *Scriptum super Sententias* and required the further development evident in his *Quaestio de attributis*.

48 Cf. *ibid.* (ed. Borgnet XXV, 224-225): “Si autem attendo ea secundum id in quo ponitur significatum eorum, hoc est tale quod habet indifferentiam ‘quod est’ et esse et aliquid esse... Si igitur quaeratur, Quare sapientia est bonitas, et haec duo essentia ipsa? unde enim est? non dicetur, quod hoc sit a sapientia inquantum sapientia est, vel ab essentia in eo quod essentia est: sed dicetur, quod hoc est propter id, quia in quo sunt ista, tantae simplicitatis est, quod ipsum id quod est suum esse, et suum esse est id quod est. Ex primo igitur est diversitas attributorum, ex secundo autem identitas rerum: et sic patet plana solutione quod ista non sunt synonyma etiam ab aeterno intellecta a Deo...”

49 Cf. *In Sent.* I d. 8 A a. 4 (ed. Borgnet XXV, 226): “Unde intellectus noster in hujusmodi compositione est in tripli actu: si enim accipiatur unumquodque istorum nominum secundum id a quo imponitur, vel secundum id quod significat, quod idem est, erit alius intellectus substantiae, et alius sapientiae, et ita de alius, ut ante dictum est. Si autem accipientur ista ab intellectu nostro, non ut ab eo quod significant, sed in ipso in quo sunt, accipientur omnia ut unum et idem propter duplicem simplicitatem ipsius, scilicet indifferentiam ‘quod est’ et esse et aliquid esse, sive habentis et habiti. Tertius actus intellectus oritur ex collatione unius modi intelligendi cum alio, sicut conferimus id quod assequitur naturam in ratione assequentis, non in ratione identitatis, ad naturam quam assequitur: et sic oritur intellectus componens unum cum altero, et formans compositiones... nota autem compositionis media est ab intellectu nostro, qui non conjungit ea quae secundum se habent diversas rationes sine nota compositiones mediae: ex parte autem rei non notabit ista compositio nisi identitatem.”
2.3 Thomas Aquinas

2.3.1 Introduction

As I noted above, Thomas’ basic solution to the problem is that the plurality of divine attributes is an effect of the human intellect. This is not to say, however, that God contributes nothing and our concepts of God are ultimately vain. Rather, Aquinas holds that the created intellect knows God by knowing the perfections found in creation (perfections which are analogically common to God and creatures). God possesses these perfections in a super-eminent and united manner. Because human beings are unable to grasp the divine nature by only one cognitive act or one concept, they employ several acts, thus causing the multiplicity of attributes.

2.3.2 Chronology

In my examination of the views of Thomas Aquinas I discuss several of his works and defend the position that his so-called *Quaestio de attributis* should be regarded as his most authoritative treatment of the problem of the divine attributes. Consequently, before I begin I will provide a chronological overview of Aquinas’ works that treat the problem of the divine attributes; they are listed first according to Jean-Pierre Torrell (the most recent and authoritative) and second according to James Weisheipl.50

1. Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (Torrell: Paris 1252-54; Weisheipl: Paris 1252-56)

From this list we see that Aquinas focused on the divine attributes during his first Parisian regency and period of teaching at the Dominican studium at Rome. Because his most extensive treatment is in the Scriptum (which includes the Quaestio de attributis) we shall focus on this work in what follows.


52 For Oliva's views, see below.
2.3.3 The *Scriptum super Sententias*

2.3.3.1 The First Draft: *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2

There are two articles in modern editions of Thomas Aquinas’ *Scriptum* on Book I of the *Sentences* that discuss the issue of the plurality of attributes in God. They are found at distinction 2 question 1 articles 2 and 3. Article 2 is the result of Thomas’ bachelor lectures on the *Sentences* held during 1252-1254, as was noted above. During the twentieth century it was commonly thought that after Thomas left Paris and was teaching in Rome (ca. 1265-67), he disputed a question on the topic of the divine attributes. He then directed that this dispute should be inserted as a replacement for article 2. This new article is the present article 3. Although this new question was inserted into the *Scriptum*, the text in article 2 that it was supposed to replace was not successfully suppressed, with the result that today both articles can be found side-by-side in the various editions of Thomas’ *Scriptum*. This insertion, and the historical and textual circumstances surrounding it, will be discussed below.\(^5\)

Article 2 is titled “Whether in God there are many attributes.”\(^4\) Here Thomas tries to solve the problem at issue by admitting that a plurality of attributes are indeed found in

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\(^4\) Cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Scriptum super Sententias* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 61-63). This article is summarized by Rubio, *Aquinas and Maimonides*, 30-34; Thierry-Dominique Humbrecht,
God but under the qualification that they are present in a more excellent and noble manner, without any imperfection. By this qualification he relies on the idea of causal pre-eminence drawn from pseudo-Dionysius, namely, that effects are found in a higher manner in their cause than when they exist as effects. The attributes that are many and diverse in creatures owing to the imperfections of creatures are all one in God because of his simplicity. Each of the divine attributes is the divine essence itself, and the divine essence and the attributes are all one thing in reality (re). Thomas does allow for some degree of distinction, however, for the attributes are diverse in reason (ratione) and each attribute is present in God according to its “truest ratio” (verissimam rationem). As was the case with Albert the Great, different attributes do not have the same ratio. For example, the ratio of wisdom is not the ratio of goodness. The reason for this is that Thomas is trying to avoid the conclusion that the divine attributes are synonymous; for example, that the divine intellect is the divine will (this is problematic because if this were true, God would will everything he knows, including evil). In this early text, Aquinas holds that the distinction of rationes is the result not only of an intellect reasoning about the attributes (ex parte ipsius ratiocinantis) but also a feature of God himself (ex proprietate ipsius rei).55 The notion that there is some kind of plurality, a

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55 Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 62): “Respondeo dicendum, quod quidquid est entitatis et bonitatis in creaturis, totum est a Creatore: imperfectio autem non est ab ipso, sed accidit ex parte creaturarum, inquantum sunt ex nihilo. Quod autem est causa alicuius, habet illud excellentius et nobilius. Unde oportet quod omnes nobilitates omnium creaturarum inveniantur in Deo nobilissimo modo et sine aliqua imperfectione: et ideo quae in creaturis sunt diversa, in Deo propter summam simplicitatem sunt unum. Sic ergo dicendum est, quod in Deo est sapientia, bonitas, et huiusmodi, quorum quodlibet est ipsa divina essentia, et ita omnia sunt unum re. Et quia unumquodque eorum est in Deo secundum sui
plurality of *rationes*, on the side of God that corresponds to the multiplicity of human concepts marks this, Aquinas’ first examination of the problem of the divine attributes. If we recall our three solutions from the introduction of this study, this early treatment of Aquinas is close to the realist; a feature (*proprietate*) of God would be eternal and prior to human cognition of the divine.

Similar remarks implying a diversity of *rationes* in God are scattered throughout the first book of the *Scriptum*. Aquinas relies on the *rationes* to solve various problems in trinitarian theology, naming God, and the distinction between the divine will and the divine essence. Aquinas later modified this view, for he was concerned that a plurality of *rationes* in God was a violation of divine simplicity. Consequently, he cancelled and attempted to suppress the second half of the solution of this question (*Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2) when he inserted the *Quaestio de attributis* into the *Scriptum super Sententias*.

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56 Cf. *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 61): “Unde primum principium licet sit unum et simplex re, sunt tamen in eo plures rationes perfectionum, ut sapientia, vita et huiusmodi, secundum quas diversae perfectiones re differentes in creaturis causantur.” I d. 22 q. 1 a. 3 in corp. (ed. Mandonnet I, 538): “...est etiam in Deo invenire distinctionem rationum, quae realiter et vere in ipso sunt, sicut ratio sapientiae et bonitatis et hujusmodi, quae quidem omnia sunt unum re, et differunt ratione, quae salvatur in proprietate et veritate, prout dicimus Deum vere esse sapientem et bonum, et non tantum in intellectu ratiocinantis; et inde veniunt diversa nomina attributorum.” I d. 22 q. 1 a. 3 ad 4 (ed. Mandonnet I, 539): “...differunt nomina attributorum secundum rationem, non tamen quae sit solum in ratiocinante, sed quae salvatur in ipsa re secundum veritatem et proprietatem rei.” I d. 35 q. 1 a. 1 ad 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 811-812): “Unde cum Deus nominatur ens, non exprimitur nisi aliquid quod pertinet ad perfectionem ejus et non tota perfectio ipsius; et similiter cum dicitur sciens et volens, et hujusmodi; et ita patet quod omnia haec unum sunt in Deo secundum rem, sed ratione differunt, quae non tantum est in intellectu, sed fundatur in veritate et perfectione rei: et sicut proprius Deus dicitur ens, ita proprie dicitur sciens et volens, et hujusmodi: nec est ibi aliqua pluralitas, vel additio vel ordo in re, sed in ratione tantum.” I d. 42 q. 1 a. 2 ad 4 (ed. Mandonnet I, 987): “...quod attributa in Deo sunt unum re, et distinguuntur tantum ratione...” I d. 43 q. 2 a. 1 ad 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 1009): “...voluntas et essentia et sapientia in Deo idem sunt re, sed ratione distinguuntur...”

Not surprisingly, considering that such strong statements suggesting the presence of distinct rationes in God might be taken to contradict divine simplicity, Thomas attempted to clarify just what a ratio is and how it is in God. This passage, still part of the original draft of the Scriptum, is found in distinction 33 of Book I, a discussion of the distinction between the personal properties of the trinitarian Persons and the divine essence. Here he claims that rationes can only be found in the human intellect. Aquinas defines the term ratio as follows:

*Ratio* is understood in two senses: for sometimes that which is in the one reasoning is called ratio, namely, the act itself of reason or the power which is reason. Sometimes, however, ratio is a term of intention, either according as it signifies the definition of a thing, inasmuch as ratio is a definition, or inasmuch as ratio means argumentation.⁵⁸

According to this, there is a twofold division of the term between “reason” as the power of the soul by which a rational being reasons, and the products of this reasoning power, whether a definition or an argument. Both senses of the second division of the term ratio fall under the general heading of intentio, meaning that they are primarily a feature of

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⁵⁸ *Scriptum* I d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 767): “Sciendum est autem, quo dicitur dupliciter: quandoque enim ratio dicitur id quod est in ratiocinante, scilicet ipse actus rationis, vel potentia quae est ratio; quandoque autem ratio est nomen intentionis, sive secundum quod significat definitionem rei, prout ratio est definitio, sive prout ratio dicitur argumentatio.”
concepts, though they correspond to a nature outside the soul. With respect to the Trinity, Aquinas states that when the personal property of paternity is referred to as one *ratio* and the divine essence as another, the term *ratio* is being used in the second sense and indicates the definition of a thing. This is problematic, however, because we cannot define God. This is because Aquinas holds that a definition entails the assignment of genus and difference; defining God would then entail composition and thus be a violation of divine simplicity. Aquinas’ solution to this difficulty is the cryptic remark that we can still treat diverse *rationes* as diverse definitions if we understand that some object is there to be defined. Though it is not entirely clear what this means, it may mean that even though God is one, simple, and indistinct, we can still single out aspects in God and treat them as if they were capable of definition, even if in reality they are not. In any case, based on this usage Aquinas feels justified to treat the personal property of the Father and the divine essence as if they had distinct definitions. In this question of his *Scriptum* Aquinas identifies *rationes* as *intentiones* and claims that they are in the soul of the one understanding alone, although they are based on the nature of the thing outside the soul. Different *rationes* will differ from each other, but they will not differ in reality outside the soul. By this Thomas means that there is a correspondence between the intellect and the nature of the thing it is cognizing. Aquinas does not explain the nature of this correspondence in this passage beyond noting that it is the “truth” of the thing,59 nor does

59 For the correspondence of the intellect to things and the role of truth in the original draft of the *Scriptum*, see *Scriptum* I d. 19 q. 5 a. 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 486); *Scriptum* I d. 30 q. 1 a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 706-709); and Battista Mondin, *St. Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy in the Commentary to the Sentences* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 7-9. I omit treatment of these passages here as Aquinas returns to the issue in the *Quaestio de attributis*.34
he explain how the plurality of *rationes* in the intellect can correspond to a simple object.\(^{60}\)

Thomas continues his discussion of the Persons of the Trinity and the *rationes* by invoking the Augustinian rule that God is what he has.\(^{61}\) He claims both that there are *rationes* in the divine essence and that the divine essence is each one of its attributes. He denies, however, that the divine essence is each one of the *rationes* of the attributes, since one cannot say that God is the *rationes* but rather only that he has them. This is because the Augustinian formula stating that “God is what he has” applies only to those items considered according to the manner of things, not intentions. This formula, motivated by divine simplicity, dictates that in God what is had and what does the having are identical. Basically, *rationes* are not things, and so one can only say that God has them, not that he is them. God is goodness but has names and *rationes*. Interestingly, the claim that God has the *rationes* suggests that it may be the divine intellect after all that is the principal

\(^{60}\) Cf. *Scriptum*, I d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 767): “Dico igitur, quod cum dicitur quod est alia ratio paternitatis et essentiae in divinis, non accipitur ratio secundum quod est in ratiocinante tantum, sed secundum quod est nomen intentionis, et significat definitionem rei: quamvis enim in divinis non possit esse definitio, nec genus nec differentia nec compositio; tamen si intelligatur ibi aliquid definiri, alia erit definitio paternitatis, et alia definitio essentiae. In omnibus autem intentionibus hoc communiter verum est, quod intentiones ipsae non sunt in rebus sed in anima tantum, sed habent aliquid in re respondens, scilicet naturam, cui intellectus huiusmodi intentiones attribuit... et ita etiam ipsa ratio quam dicimus aliam et aliam in divinis, non est in re; sed in ratione est aliquid respondens ei, et est in re quo fundatur, scilicet veritas illius rei cui talis intentio attribuitur: est enim in Deo unde possunt rationes diversae ibi convenire.”

\(^{61}\) On Augustine’s use of this rule in his account of divine simplicity see Brian Leftow, “Divine Simplicity,” *Faith and Philosophy* 23 (2006), 365-380. Albert also invoked this rule; see *In Sent.* I d. 8 A a. 4 (ed. Borgnet XXV, 225).
knower under consideration, for if they were purely a feature of the human intellect, it would be unnecessary to state that God has them.  

To conclude our discussion of the primitive text of Thomas’ *Scriptum*, we should note that in the original question on the attributes Aquinas seems to hold a realist position in which there is a correspondence of *rationes* between God and the human intellect. When we turn to other passages in the *Scriptum* we find that a *ratio* is a term of intention and is a feature of an intellect. However, this does not completely resolve the issue, for an intention corresponds with a nature outside of the mind. So it would seem that a plurality of *rationes* of attributes in the human mind could correspond to a plurality of attributes in God.

2.3.3.2 The Revised Position of the *Quaestio de attributis*

Clearly dissatisfied with the original version of his *Scriptum*, Thomas returned to the issue of the divine attributes and disputed a special question on the topic, the so-called *Quaestio de attributis*. He then incorporated the question into his *Scriptum*, where today it is present as Book I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3. Aquinas also revisited two other articles in the first

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62 Cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Scriptum* I d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 767): “…unde possunt rationes diversae ibi convenire: et ideo non sequitur quod Deus sit rationes illae, sed quod sit tantum habens eas; hoc enim quod dicitur, quod in Deo est idem habens et quod habetur, intelligitur de illis quae habentur per modum rerum, non autem de illis quae habentur per modum intentionum; sicut non possimus dicere quod Deus sit nomen, quamvis nomen habeat; sed quod Deus est bonitas, quia bonitatem habet; similiter etiam paternitas, quia paternitatem habet; sed non sequitur quod sit ratio, quamvis rationem habeat.”

63 This is not a medieval title, but one from modern scholarship which I adopt for the sake of convenience. There is a parallel passage to the *Quaestio de attributis* in what is known as the “Lectura romana” of Aquinas, but as the Leonine Commission has not yet passed judgment regarding its authenticity I omit treatment of it here. Cf. *Lectura romana in primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, ed. Leonard Boyle and John Boyle (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2006), 93-94.
Book of the *Sentences*: a. 3 of the prologue on the subalternation of theology and the response of distinction 27 q. 2 a. 2 on the use of the term *verbum*.\(^{64}\)

2.3.3.2.1 The Dating and Circumstances of Composition

The circumstances of the composition of the *Quaestio de attributis*, its date, and its contents have been a topic of debate among modern scholars for some time.\(^{65}\) The date and place of the question is currently under dispute. There is no modern critical edition of the text. In the view of the modern consensus, the question was disputed at Rome and therefore dates to 1265-1266/67. This is based on a note in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. lat. 784. On f. 248vb we read: “hanc questionem disputavit Thomas et determinavit Rome, et debet collocari in suo loco, scilicet distinctione secunda primi libri Sententiarum, ut sit questio tertia secunde distinctionis.”\(^{66}\)

The picture of Thomas’ literary activities that has emerged is that when Aquinas left Paris at the end of his first Parisian regency, he left a copy of his *Scriptum* at the stationers for dissemination. While he was in Italy, the *Scriptum* was copied and diffused at Paris.


Thomas took the autograph of the *Scriptum* with him to Italy in 1259-1260, and, while he was at Rome, disputed the *Quaestio de attributis* nearly a decade later. When he returned to Paris for his second regency in 1268, he directed that the *Quaestio* be inserted into the copy of the *Scriptum* at the stationers.\(^67\)

Scholars have speculated that the motivation for the dispute is the same as that for another work from Aquinas’ Roman period, the *Responsio ad magistrum Ioannem de Vercellis de 108 articulis*.\(^68\) Dondaine, followed by Lemaigre and Rubio, suggests that the origins of the *Quaestio de attributis* lie in an internal Dominican investigation of the work of Peter of Tarantasia, the future Pope Innocent V. Peter lectured on the *Sentences* at Paris around 1257-1259 and followed Aquinas closely in his written commentary.\(^69\) Someone singled out 108 articles from his commentary and criticized them, though this initial attack does not survive. Jean de Verceil, the Master General of the Dominicans, asked Thomas to respond to them. The Leonine editors date this response to between June 1264 and 1268.\(^70\) The first 90 propositions pertain to Book I of the *Sentences*, and the first three, along with an introductory statement that parallels in its content the *Quaestio de attributis*, concern the problem of the divine attributes. The relation to the *Quaestio de attributis* is then this parallel content about the divine attributes. The


\(^{70}\) *Responsio ad 108 articulos* (*Opera Omnia* 42, 265). Note that for the *terminus ante quem* the editors accept previous scholarship claiming that this investigation provoked Aquinas to dispute the *Quaestio de attributis* and that this latter work dates to Aquinas’ Roman period. The *terminus post quem* is provided by the election of Jean de Verceil to the post of Master General.
speculation is that Peter of Tarantaise was subjected to an internal doctrinal investigation by the Dominicans. Because Peter followed Thomas, this made Thomas’ teaching suspect as well, so in order to vindicate or clarify his position on the divine attributes he then held a public dispute on the issue.

Adriano Oliva has challenged the consensus on the *Quaestio de attributis*, arguing that instead of being a relatively late work, it is an early revision to the *Scriptum super Sententias* that Thomas undertook during his first Parisian regency and prior to the *Quaestiones de veritate*.⁷¹ This would mean that it dates to 1253-54 instead of 1265-67. Oliva advances codicological, stylistic, and doctrinal arguments for his position.

The codicological evidence is this: of the 76 surviving manuscripts of Book I of the *Scriptum*, only 9 do not have d. 2 a. 3/Quaestio de attributis as part of the original text. Of these 9, 7 rectify the situation by adding the text.⁷² The conclusion then is that the *Quaestio* must have been inserted quite early, for the majority of the manuscripts carry it.

In terms of style, there are three features of the text that suggest an early composition. First, in the *Quaestio de attributis* Thomas cites a text of John Chrysostom. The text of the quotation, however, does not correspond with the actual text of Chrysostom but rather to Albertus Magnus’ citation of the same text in his commentary on the *De divinis nominibus* of pseudo-Dionysius. But in *De veritate* q. 8 and throughout Thomas’ subsequent career he quotes the text correctly according to the translation of


Burgundio of Pisa. Second, there is the formula by which Aquinas begins the question: “circa tertium...”. This formula is common to Books I and II of Aquinas’ commentary, but was abandoned in Book III, which survives in an autograph manuscript. This suggests the *Quaestio de attributis* was inserted prior to the writing of book III of the *Scriptum*, dating it to before Christmas 1253 or Christmas 1254. Finally, there are two cross-references to Thomas’ commentary on the *Sentences*. One is a reference to the preceding article (“sicut supra dictum est”), while the other refers to the entire book (“... ut diligenter explicetur, quia ex hoc pendet totus intellectus eorum que in I libro dicuntur”). These cross-references are also found in Vat. lat. 784 and almost all of the surviving manuscripts of Thomas’ commentary, suggesting that the work was designed from the beginning to be part of the commentary and was not the result of an independent dispute.

The doctrinal evidence is this: in the response to the sixth objection, which concerns an authoritative text of John Damascene, Aquinas states that “… in Deo omnia sunt unum re, praeter ingenerationem, generationem, et processionem, quae constituant personas re distinctas.” According to this, the Person of the Father is constituted by the personal property of ingenerateness or innascibility. This contradicts Thomas’ doctrine in

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76 Oliva, *Les débuts de l’enseignement de Thomas d’Aquin*, 137-139. Note that the quotations are taken from Oliva, who does not standardize the latin.

77 Cf. I Sent. d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 72).
Scriptum I d. 26 and 28, where he explicitly rejects the view that innascibility is the Father’s personal property. Oliva’s explanation for this contradiction is that the Quaestio de attributis was written before these distinctions of Scriptum I, rather than the alternative, that Aquinas simply forgot what he had earlier claimed in distinctions 26 and 28. Consequently, Aquinas’ intervention in the form of the Quaestio de attributis must have been written prior to the construction of the exemplar or apograph of the Scriptum for the stationer, and was simply omitted by mistake and corrected in the exemplar at the stationers some time later.78

Finally, Oliva also addresses the evidence from Vat. lat. 784, which, as we noted above, states that the Quaestio de attributis was disputed and determined at Rome and is the primary evidence on which the consensus prior to Oliva’s study was based.79 This manuscript is part of a collection given to John XXII during Thomas’ canonization process and does not contain his commentary on Book I of the Sentences, just the Quaestio de attributis with various other works of his. It dates to around 1317. Oliva disarms the testimony of this manuscript by pointing to another manuscript of this period with a similar note, Durham, Cathedral Library, Ms. B.I.5, which contains this note on f. 7v: “Ista questio non est de scripto,80 set fuit disputata ab actore in curia.”81 So from this

78 Oliva, Les débuts de l’enseignement de Thomas d’AquIn, 135-136.

79 For Oliva’s treatment of Vat. lat. 784 see Les débuts de l’enseignement de Thomas d’AquIn, 160-161.

80 The manuscript reads “descripta” but Oliva amended this to “de scripto”.

81 For descriptions of this manuscript, see Oliva, Les débuts de l’enseignement de Thomas d’AquIn, 29; H. F. Dondaine and H. V. Shooner, Codices Manuscripti Operum Thomae de Aquino, vol. 1 (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1967), 252.
Durham manuscript we learn that Thomas disputed a question in a court, while the Vatican manuscript states that the dispute was at Rome. As Oliva points out, however, the two popes that reigned during Thomas’ Roman period, Urban IV (1261-1264) and Clement IV (1265-1268), did not reside at Rome; consequently, neither did the papal court. So the tradition that the *Quaestio de attributis* was a later dispute that these two manuscripts report is somewhat confused and contains inaccurate elements. Either the dispute was at Rome, and therefore not at the papal court, or it was at the papal court and not at Rome. Oliva suggests that the curia in question could have been at Paris, in which case it would have been that of either the king of France or the bishop of Paris. If it was at the papal court, it would have been at Avignon. Given the codicological and other types of evidence above, it seems more likely that the Durham codex is reporting information closer to the truth of the matter.\textsuperscript{82}

In conclusion, though taken individually the evidence that Oliva presents is not compelling beyond a shadow of a doubt, nevertheless the variety of the evidence taken jointly is hard to dismiss and so I concur with Oliva’s conclusion that the *Quaestio* is an early Parisian intervention to the text of the *Scriptum super primum Sententiarum*, possibly written as early as 1253-54.

Although Oliva’s evidence effectively undermines the consensus view of the investigation of Peter of Tarantasia as being the motivation for the *Quaestio de attributis*, he did not supply an alternative motivation. But this should be clear enough from the text of article 2 that Aquinas cancelled, for he is dangerously close to violating divine

\textsuperscript{82} Interestingly, this implies that the dispute was a public one and the surviving literary product under discussion must have been tailored for the *Scriptum*.
simplicity by positing a plurality of rationes in God. He has adopted this terminology from Albert the Great, who used the rationes extensively in his own solution to the problem of the attributes, as we have seen above, and under whom Aquinas studied at Paris from 1245-48.  

The early date of the Quaestio de attributis does not allow us to dismiss the doctrinal contents, however, for this Thomas’ most extensive treatment of the problem of the divine attributes. Nor is the doctrine it contains contradicted by statements in his later works. It should therefore be regarded as the primary locus for Aquinas’ treatment of the issue. One could object, following modern scholars, that Thomas’ solution is the distinction between res significata and the modus significandi and so because the Quaestio de attributis does not make use of this distinction the emphasis should be on the account in the Summa theologiae. But a careful examination of the various works that treat the divine attributes reveals that Thomas uses the res/modus distinction when discussing whether a name signifies the divine essence or not, while he prefers to use the rationes when explaining how a multiplicity of divine attributes is consonant with divine simplicity and how human cognition of God is not false. Indeed, both approaches are often found within the same work, and in De veritate Thomas even identifies modi significandi or intelligendi with the rationes.


84 Cf. Summa theologiae I q. 13 a.3-4 (ed. Leon. IV, 143-145); Scriptum I d. 22 q. 1 a. 1-2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 531-536).

85 Cf. De veritate q. 2 a. 1 in corp. (ed. Leon. XXII.1, 40): “Et quia nomina non significant res nisi mediante intellectu... ideo imponit plura nomina uni rei secundum diversos modos intelligendi vel secundum diversas rationes, quod idem est...” For a discussion of the distinction between modus significandi and res significata, see Irene Rosier, “Res significata et modus significandi,” passim; Peter
2.3.3.2.2 The Doctrine of the *Quaestio de attributis*

The question that Aquinas treats in the *Quaestio de attributis* is “whether the diversity of *rationes*, by which the attributes differ, is only in the intellect or also in God.” As we have seen, this matter was ambiguous in the original version of his commentary on the *Sentences*. The principal arguments at the beginning of the text lay out the dialectical extremes of the problem as being between denying the presence of any *rationes* in God, and denying divine simplicity by positing that the *rationes* are really in God.86 What is ultimately at stake is how to maintain divine simplicity while at the same time admitting that the plurality of human concepts of divine attributes has some foundation in God and is not just a figment of human reason.

Thomas begins his solution to the problem with a clear summary of his position, dividing the question into four parts:

I answer saying that, as it has been said in the preceding article, wisdom, goodness, and all suchlike are absolutely one and the same thing in God but differ according to their ratio, and this ratio is not only on the part of the one apprehending but also due to the quality of the thing itself. To make this clear and so that it will be carefully explained, since the whole understanding of what is said in the First Book depends on this, it is necessary to examine four [questions]. First, what this ratio is according to which we say that attributes differ. Second, in which sense it is said that the ratio is or is not in something. Third, whether the diverse *rationes* of the attributes are in God or not. Fourth, whether the multiplicity of

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86 Cf. *Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/Quaestio de attributis* (ed. Mandonnet I, 63-65).
these rationes is only on the part of our intellect or is in some way also on the part of the thing [God himself].

The importance of this question for the interpretation of Aquinas’ position is clear; Aquinas himself views this as essential to understanding everything he has said in Book I of his commentary on the Sentences, which covers the entirety of his doctrine concerning the divine unity and Trinity. This reference to Book I suggests that the Quaestio is meant to explain the numerous comments stating that the rationes are a property of the thing (God) and not only a feature of human thought, which, as was noted above, are scattered throughout the text of Book I. From this passage alone his general solution to the problem is clear, namely, that the attributes are one and the same in God but differ in reason, that is, by their rationes. This difference arises not only from the human intellect considering the divine attributes but also as result of some quality of the thing being thought about.

Thomas devotes the first of the four sub-questions to determining the meaning of the term ratio in the phrase “differ according to their ratione.” In a manner similar to what we have seen above, Thomas defines ratio as “nothing other than that which the intellect apprehends about the signification of some name and, in those things that have a definition, it is the definition itself, as the Philosopher says in Book IV of the Metaphysics: ‘Ratio which the name signifies is the definition.’”

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87 Translated by Mercedes Rubio, Aquinas and Maimonides, 254. Note that this passage contains the two cross-references that interested Oliva: a reference to the preceding article of d. 2 q. 1 and a reference to the first book of the Sentences.

88 Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 66): “Quantum ad primum pertinet, sciendum est, quod ratio prout hic sumitur, nihil aliud est quam id quod apprehendit intellectus de significatone alicuius nominis: et hoc in his quae habent definitionem, est ipsa rei definitio, secundum quod Philosophus dicit, IV Metaph., text. 11: ‘Ratio quam significat nomen est definitio.’”
definition is then Aristotelian, stemming from *Metaphysics* IV.8. In Aquinas’ late (ca. 1270-71) commentary on this work of Aristotle he repeats this definition of *ratio* nearly verbatim. Thus we see that Aquinas’ usage of this term remained stable throughout his career.

The definition, though short, requires explanation. It consists of several elements: an intellect, a relation of signification, a name, and a definition. When the intellect cognizes or understands a name, there is a relation of signification between the name and the definition of the name. A definition expresses the essence of the name by assigning it a genus and a specific difference and thereby locating it within the Aristotelian categories. Consequently, when the intellect cognizes a name it is cognizing the essence or nature of what the name signifies. How the name is related to entities outside the soul is the topic of the following sub-question of Thomas’ question on the attributes. In the later (ca. 1268) *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, it is clear that names signify extramental entities by means of concepts. The human intellect forms a concept of an

89 Cf. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 231-233. The dating of Aquinas’ commentary is highly complex; Thomas seems to have used five translations of Aristotle’s text.


91 For a synthesis of various texts of Aquinas on the relation of names, concepts, and *rationes* see Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 292-295.
extramental object and can then attribute a name to it. According to the *Summa*, a *ratio* is a concept of the entity signified by the name.⁹²

Aquinas is left with the same problem he faced in the original draft of the *Scriptum* when he tried to define *ratio*, however, for God cannot be defined. This is because to assign a genus and a specific difference to God would introduce complexity and violate divine simplicity. Aquinas evades the difficulty by noting that there are certain things that have a *ratio* although they are not defined, such as the categories. They cannot be defined because they are the highest genera and do not themselves fall under a genus. Despite the lack of a definition, however, each one of the categories still has a *ratio*, and the *ratio* of each is that which is signified by its name. For example, the *ratio* of quality is that which is signified by the term ‘quality’. Even if quality does not admit of a definition, there is still an essence, some intrinsic nature or intelligible character that makes quality quality and not quantity or relation and this intrinsic essence is what is signified by the name ‘quality’.

Applying this modified sense of *ratio* to the divine attributes, Aquinas argues that in the case of the divine wisdom, although it cannot be defined it still has a *ratio*. The *ratio* of divine wisdom is what the term signifies, namely, the underlying essential character.⁹³ He adds that the term *ratio* does not signify the concept or content of the attribute (that is, it does not signify ‘divine wisdom’), which is signified by its name, but

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⁹² Cf. *Summa theologiae* Ia q. 13 a. 4 (ed. Leon. IV, 144-45 ): “Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen... nomen non significat rem, nisi mediante conceptione intellectus...”.

⁹³ *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 66): “Et sic patet quod ratio sapientiae quae de Deo dicitur, est id quod concipitur de significatione huius nominis, quamvis ipsa sapientia divina definiri non possit.”
rather the intention (*intentio*) of the concept. *Intentio*, like *ratio* and *definitio*, is a term of second imposition (a notion parallel to that of second intentions), which means that they are not said of things themselves outside the mind but of mental entities existing in the mind.94

The second sub-question of the *Quaestio de attributis* treats how a *ratio* can be said to be or not to be in a thing. First, Aquinas denies that either the intention or the conception are in the thing outside the soul, since they are both in the soul as in a subject. Instead, a *ratio* is said to be in a thing if there is a relation of correspondence between the concept in the soul and the extramental object outside the soul, in the way there is a correspondence between a sign and what it signifies.95

Thomas argues that there are three ways in which a concept is related to the object outside the soul.96 Each of these evokes the language of relations, in that Aquinas describes the extramental term as a “foundation” (*fundamentum*). In the first way, the intellect conceives the likeness (*similitudo*) of the thing existing outside the soul. This

94 *Ibid.*: “Nec tamen hoc nomen ‘ratio’ significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatur per nomen rei; sed significat intentionem huius conceptionis sicut et hoc nomen ‘definitio’, et alia nomina secundi impositionis.” On imposition see Christian Knudsen, “Intentions and Impositions,” in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 479-495, at 484, where he states that the distinction between first and second imposition “…is based on the observation that whereas some signs have been imposed in order to signify non-signs, others are signs of signs. Accordingly, words of first imposition are (conventional) signs of extralinguistic entities, and words of second imposition are (conventional) signs of linguistic entities.” Albert had also used this language in his treatment of the divine attributes; see the text quoted above in n. 49.

95 *Ibid.* (ed. Mandonnet I, 66-67): “Et ex hoc patet secundum, scilicet qualiter ratio dicatur esse in re. Non enim hoc dicitur, quasi ipsa intentio quam significat nomen rationis, sit in re; aut etiam ipsa conceptio, cui convenit talis intentio, sit in re extra animam, cum sit in anima sicut in subjecto: sed dicitur esse in re, inquantum in re extra animam est aliquid quod respondet conceptioni animae, sicut significatum signo.”

96 For a parallel passage, see *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6 (ed. Marietti, 201).
concept has an immediate foundation in the thing (*fundamentum in re immediate*) because the thing is in conformity with the intellect, rendering the concept true, and the name signifying the thing is said of it correctly.\(^7\)

In the second way, the proximate foundation is in the intellect, while the remote foundation is the thing. In this relation, that which is signified by the name is not the likeness (*similitudo*) of the thing outside the soul, but something subsequent or secondary (*aliquid quod consequitur*) in the mode of understanding the thing. These are entities in the soul devised by the intellect, although they are not beings of reason, that is, beings generated solely by the intellect without reference to any external object. The example Aquinas gives is that of a genus. The term ‘genus’ does not signify a likeness (*similitudo*) of something outside the soul, but the intellect, by understanding the genus found in several species, attributes the intention of a genus to the object outside the soul. In this case, the proximate foundation is not the thing but the intellect, while the thing acts as a remote foundation (*remotum fundamentum*), thereby safeguarding the intellect so that its intentions are not rendered false.\(^8\)

The third and final relation between the mind and a *ratio* is when what the name signifies has neither an immediate, proximate, nor remote foundation in the thing. In this case there is no likeness (*similitudo*) of a thing outside the soul, nor anything dependent on the likeness. In this mode of conceiving, the conception of the intellect is entirely

\(^7\) *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/*Quaestio de attributis* (ed. Mandonnet I, 66-67).

\(^8\) *Ibid.* (ed. Mandonnet I, 67): “Aliquando autem hoc quod significat nomen non est similitudo rei existentis extra animam, sed est aliquid quod consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem quae est extra animam... sed ex hoc quod intellectus intelligit animal ut in pluribus speciebus, attribuit ei intentionem generis et huiusmodi intentionis licet proximum fundamentum non sit in re, sed in intellectu, tamen remotum fundamentum est res ipsa. Unde intellectus non est falsus, qui has intentiones adinvenit.”
false. The example Aquinas utilizes here is that of a chimera, which has no existence save in the mind that conceives it.\textsuperscript{99}

From these considerations Aquinas draws out the solution to the second article of the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}. A ratio is said to be in a thing when the essence or character signified by the name is in the thing. This occurs when the concept is the likeness of the thing. This is, then, the first of the three ways in which the intellect corresponds with its objects, in which the concept has an immediate foundation in the thing (\textit{fundamentum in re immediate}).\textsuperscript{100} At first this solution appears problematic, because the examples Aquinas adduces concern concepts formed from the cognition of things in the material world to which the human mind has access; obviously, human beings do not in their present state of life have direct cognitive access to the divine essence and the divine attributes. The salient feature of the first way that Aquinas has in mind, however, is probably just that there is something on the side of God that corresponds to the human intellect’s concept of God rendering it true, rather than that the divine essence is an object for the human intellect in the same way in which an object outside the mind in the material world is related to the mind. Thomas thinks that as long as there is some foundation in God that corresponds to the ratio of the attribute he is justified in labeling this an immediate foundation.

\textsuperscript{99} \textit{Ibid.}: “Aliquando vero id quod significatur per nomen, non habet fundamentum in re, neque proximum, neque remotum, sicut conceptio chimerae: quia neque est similitudo alicuius rei extra animam, neque consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem aliquam vere: et ideo ista conceptio est falsa.”

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid.}: “Unde patet secundum, scilicet quod ratio dicitur esse in re, inquantum significatum nominis, cui accidit esse rationem, est in re: et hoc contingit proprie quando conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei.”
In the third section of the *Quaestio* Aquinas examines whether the *rationes* of the attributes are in God. Here he contrasts the views of Avicenna and Maimonides with those of pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm. According to Avicenna and Maimonides, God is *esse subsistens*, lacking even an essence, for he is pure *esse*. Consequently, when an attribute is said of God, it is only correctly said according to the ways of negation and causality. Negations can be used to indicate that a perfection is not lacking in God, for example, ‘God is wise’ really means that God is not lacking a perfection, or they can be used to signify aspects that depend on the negation, for example, to say ‘God is one’ means that he is undivided, to say that God is immaterial means that he is intelligent. Thomas’ terse summary of the way of negation indicates that Avicenna and Maimonides are reinterpreting positive affirmations of God as negations. The way of causality is clearer: God is called wise because he causes wisdom in creation, or has some characteristic that seems to account for his actions in the world such as a will, anger, or piety. In light of these views, Thomas interprets these thinkers as holding that ultimately the attributes are predicated of God only equivocally; there is no similarity on the part of the creature that corresponds to something in God. On this view, the *rationes* of the attributes are in the human intellect and have God only as a remote foundation, according to Aquinas’ elaboration of the three foundations in the preceding section of the *Quaestio de attributis*.  

Pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm follow the *via eminentiae*, which is the idea that whatever is found in creatures in an imperfect, limited manner is also present in God but

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in a higher, nobler manner. There are three aspects of pre-eminence: universality, plenitude, and unity. Universality is an aspect of pre-eminence in that God contains all possible perfections joined together. Plenitude pertains to eminence because God contains the attributes without any of the defects that characterize their presence in the created realm. Finally, unity pertains to eminence in that the perfections that are present in creatures are all one in God. The via eminentiae then establishes that the perfections found in creation are also found in God, which is the basis for our knowledge of God. In light of God’s pre-eminent possession of the perfections, they serve as a bridge to God, for even if as found in creatures the perfections are deficient, they still resemble the single perfection of the divine being, and this resemblance is a relation of analogy.  

This is important to note, because this is the only appearance that the doctrine of analogy makes in this discussion of the divine attributes. Now, because of the similarity between the perfections of God and creatures, Thomas holds that according to this view, namely, that of pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm, the rationes of the attributes are not to be found solely on the side of the human intellect, but also in God. In fact, they have a proximate foundation in God. So while Maimonides and Avicenna held that the rationes have a remote foundation in God, Anselm and pseudo-Dionysius held that they have a proximate foundation. Though Thomas does not explicitly classify them according to the three ways a ratio is related to its foundation, the language suggests that he is doing so. Since neither position holds that human concepts are vain and false, both of these positions fall under

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102 Ibid. (ed. Mandonnet I, 68-69): “Et quia in illo uno praehabet omnia, ideo secundum illud unum causat omnia, cognoscit omnia, et omnia sibi per analogiam similantur.”
the second way. But if this is correct, Aquinas needs to introduce a sub-division to account for these positions.103

The two positions do not really disagree, according to Aquinas, if we look at their motivations. Avicenna and Maimonides both emphasize the created aspects of things, such as how in creatures wisdom is a quality (and thus accidental) or that essences are not subsistent. But pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm focus on the aspect of perfection; because God is simple and perfect in every way, we can indeed attribute certain aspects of created perfections to God, namely, those that do not include imperfection. Avicenna and Maimonides do not claim that God lacks perfection, nor do pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm posit that the imperfections of the created world are in God.104 This discussion allows Thomas to solve the third section of his question on the divine attributes. He briefly states that the *rationes* of the attributes are truly in God, and that this is so because the *ratio* of a name depends more on that from which it is said or imposed (*imponitur*) than that on which it is imposed.105 The created intellect is what imposes here, and so the *ratio* of the name attributed to God depends more on the created intellect than on God.

In the fourth and longest section of the *Quaestio*, Thomas examines whether the plurality of *rationes* arises only from the side of the human intellect or from some feature of the divine nature (*ex parte rei*). His basic answer is that plurality arises because God surpasses the human intellect. Because of this, everything that is one and simple in God

103 Cf. *ibid*.


105 Cf. *ibid*.: “Sic ergo patet tertium, scilicet quod rationes attributorum sunt vere in Deo, quia ratio nominis magis se tenet ex parte eius a quo imponitur nomen, quam ex parte eius cui imponitur.”
becomes a plurality in human cognition. As we have seen, God possesses every perfection eminently; but the human intellect cannot grasp the divine perfection by means of one concept, requiring instead many concepts. So while the plurality is on the side of the human intellect and arises in the course of its cognition of God, this does not mean that our knowledge of God is vain because of the disparity between the many on the side of creation and the one on the side of God.

There are two reasons why human beings require multiple concepts in their cognition of God. One is that in the normal course of human cognition in the wayfaring state humans primarily know God through the perfections of creatures, which are found divided according to various forms. That is, the perfections of creatures, such as goodness, justice, and wisdom, are found in various degrees and as separate forms in creatures. The second reason we require multiple concepts to know God is that what in God is one and simple is rendered as a plurality in human cognition. This is not only a feature of the wayfaring state, but would also be true if God were to give an immediate cognition of himself to a created intellect. Thomas does not give an underlying reason for this, it just seems obvious to him that an object that in reality is perfect in every way cannot in principle be grasped either in this life or the next. The consequence of this is that what cannot be grasped by one concept cannot be given only one name, giving us an explanation for the plurality of the divine names. The divine names are not synonymous, however, because of their relation to the rationes, which indeed are multiple on the side

106 Cf. ibid.: “...sciemendum est, quod ista pluralitas contingit ex hoc quod res quae Deus est, superat intellectum nostrum. Intellectus enim noster non potest una conceptione diversos modos perfectionis accipere: tum quia ex creaturis cognitionem accipit, in quibus sunt diversi modi perfectionum secundum diversas formas...”
of the human intellect. In this way human knowledge of God is not vain, and so a created
mind does not know God other than he is (even despite his conclusion in the previous
section of the Quaestio de attributis that the imposition of a ratio depends more on the
one imposing it). 107

Thomas illustrates his position further with a discussion of human cognition in the
beatific vision of the divine essence. According to Thomas, the human intellect, in the
midst of the beatific vision, could impose a single name to what it sees. This name,
apparently imposed without a concept on the side of the human intellect, will not signify
a single divine attribute alone, such as divine wisdom, but will signify them all
simultaneously. But if the human intellect were to form a conception of what it sees and
would impose a name based on this conception, then a multiplicity of names would
result. The reason for this is that a created intellect, and this includes the angelic intellect,
cannot form a concept that represents the totality of the divine perfection; the only such
conception is the mental word of the divine being, the second Person of the Trinity. 108

107 Cf. ibid. (ed. Mandonnet I, 69-70): “...tum quia hoc quod in Deo est unum et simplex,
plurificatur in intellectu nostro, etiam si immediate a Deo recipieret, sicut multiplicatur processio suae
bonitatis in alis creaturis. Unde, cum Deus secundum unam et eamdem rem sit omnibus modis perfectus,
una conceptione non potest integre perfectionem eius apprehendere, et per consequens nec nominare; et
ideo oportet quod diversas conceptiones de eo habeat, quae sunt diversae rationes, et quod diversa nomina
imponat significantia rationes illas.”

108 Cf. ibid. (ed. Mandonnet I, 70): “si autem intellectus noster Deum per seipsum videret, illi rei
posset imponere nomen unum: quod erit in patria... Illud autem nomen unum non significaret bonitatem
tantum, nec sapientiam tantum, aut aliquid hujusmodi, sed significata omnium istorum includeret. Sed
tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam videret, et nominaret mediante
conceptione quam de ea habet, oporteret adhuc quod imponeret plura nomina: quia impossibile est quod
conceptio intellectus creati repraesentet totam perfectionem divinae essentiae... quod angeli laudant Deum,
quidam ut majestatem, quidam ut bonitatem, et sic de alius, in signum quod ipsum non vident visione
comprehendente; sed conceptio perfecte repraesentans eum est verbum increatum; et ideo est unum
tantum.”
Thomas also explains why it is that God exceeds the capacities of the human intellect. The reason is that on the side of God there is an ungraspable fullness of perfection (plena perfectio) while on the side of the creature there is a deficient intellect incapable of complete apprehension of the divine essence. This allows Aquinas to preserve both divine simplicity and human cognition of God, for it enables him to posit a correspondence between the divine essence and the human intellect. This is not to say that the plurality of rationes is in God, but rather that on the human side there is a weakness that results in plurality, while on the divine side there is a single, undifferentiated super-eminent perfection.109

Aquinas closes the fourth section of the Quaestio de attributis by restating his position. Again, his view is that the plurality of divine names has its origin in both the created and uncreated realms. On the side of the creature, plurality is the result of the intellect forming diverse concepts based on diverse rationes. On the side of God there is a feature of the divine nature, the fullness of perfection, which corresponds to all of the names or attributes said of God. The correspondence of the divine perfection to the human intellect ensures that the attributes are truly said of God and that they do not posit any multiplicity in him.110

109 Cf. ibid.: “Unde patet quod pluralitas istorum rationum non tantum est ex parte intellectus nostri, sed etiam ex parte ipsius Dei, inquantum sua perfectio superat unamquamque conceptionem nostri intellectus. Et ideo pluralitati istorum rationum respondet aliquid in re quae Deus est: non quidem pluralitas rei, sed plena perfectio, ex qua contingit ut omnes istae conceptiones ei aptentur.”

110 Cf. ibid. (ed. Mandonnet I, 71): “Et sic patet quartum, quod pluralitas istorum nominum non tantum est ex parte intellectus nostri formantis diversas conceptiones de Deo, quae dicuntur diversae ratione, ut ex dictis patet, sed ex parte ipsius Dei, inquantum scilicet est aliquid in Deo correspondens omnibus istis conceptionibus, scilicet plena et omnimoda ipsius perfectio, secundum quam contingit quod quodlibet nominum significantium istas conceptiones, de Deo vere et proprie dicitur; non autem ita quod aliqua diversitas vel multiplicitas ponatur in re, quae Deus est, ratione istorum attributorum.”
In his replies to the initial objections Thomas clarifies some issues that were not entirely apparent in the body of the Quaestio. The fifth principal objection argues that the divine essence, since it is simple, can in no way serve as a foundation or root (radix) of multiplicity. The conclusion of this argument states that the multiplicity of attributes must be entirely on the side of the intellect. Thomas responds to this by explaining how the metaphorical term radix relates to the discussion and the rationes. Metaphorically speaking, something is said be founded or rooted in that from which it draws its stability (firmitatem). Rationes, insofar as they are understood, have a double stability. The first is a stability of being (esse), which they have from their subject, the intellect, in the way that accidents normally have being from their subjects. The second is stability of truth, which they have from their conformity to the thing understood; the intellect is true or false depending on whether the thing it is cognizing is or is not. The rationes of the divine attributes then have a double root: in the created intellect with respect to their stability of being, and in the divine essence according to stability of truth. This allows Aquinas to answer the objection, for the stability of truth is a correspondence relation between the knower and the known. In the case of the rationes, there is a correspondence between the rationes in the intellect and the divine perfection. It should be noted that

111 Cf. Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 arg. princ. 5 (ed. Mandonnet I, 64).

112 Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 ad arg. princ. 5 (ed. Mandonnet I, 72): “…quod aliquid dicitur fundari vel radicari in aliquo metaphorice, ex quo firmitatem habet.”

113 Cf. ibid.: “Ad quintum dicendum, quod aliquid dicitur fundari vel radicari in aliquo metaphorice, ex quo firmitatem habet. Rationes autem intellectae habent duplicem firmitatem: scilicet firmitatem sui esse, et hanc habent ab intellectu, sicut alia accidentia suis subjectis; et firmitatem suae veritatis, et hanc habent ex re cui conformantur. Ex eo enim quod res est vel non est, locutio et intellectus veritatem vel falsitatem habet. Rationes ergo attributorum fundantur vel radicantur in intellectu quantum ad firmitatem sui esse, quia, ut dictum est, intellectus est earum subjectum; in essentia autem divina quantum
this metaphor of the divine attributes being ‘rooted’ in the divine essence is used more than once by Aquinas, and it occurs also in Henry of Ghent.\footnote{114}

2.3.4 The Divine Attributes in the Later Works of Aquinas

Thomas treats the divine attributes in several of his other works, from the *Quaestiones de veritate*, contemporaneous with the *Quaestio de attributis*, through the late *Compendium theologiae*.\footnote{115} The doctrine contained in them, however, is largely the same as that of the question on the attributes in the *Scriptum super Sententias*.

The differences between Thomas’ earlier and later treatments of the divine attributes are primarily a matter of emphasis and terminology.\footnote{116} In the *Scriptum* and *Quaestiones de veritate*, for example, Thomas holds that only the divine *Verbum* is a perfect conception or representation of God and that consequently any human cognitive activity in the glorified state will result in a multiplicity of concepts.\footnote{117} In other works,
such as the *Compendium theologiae*, *Summa contra gentiles*, and *De potentia Dei*, it seems that the created intellect in the beatific vision would possess simple knowledge of the essence (simple knowledge here is contrasted with judgment and reasoning), which would amount to only one name.\(^{118}\) The reason for this is that in the first set of texts, Aquinas holds that the human intellect by its very nature is deficient, while in the second set of texts it appears to be the case that only the perfections that the intellect knows which are drawn from the created world are deficient, not the intellect. Therefore once the intellect cognizes God directly, it can form a single concept and attribute a single name to God.

Maarten Hoenen holds that there is a development in Aquinas’ thought from the *Scriptum* to the *Summa theologiae* on the issue of the *rationes*: in the *Scriptum*, Thomas holds that there is a correspondence between a rational distinction in the human intellect and a rational distinction in God, while in the latter he denies that there is a rational distinction in God.\(^{119}\) By “rational distinction” Hoenen means the difference between *rationes*. Interestingly, however, the text Hoenen cites in the *Scriptum* contains part of the text that was cancelled by Aquinas and replaced by the so-called *Quaestio de attributis*.\(^ {120}\)

\(^{118}\) Cf. *Compendium theologiae* I c. 24 (ed. Leon. XLII, 90); *Summa contra gentiles* I c. 31 (ed. Leon. XIII, 95); *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6 (ed. Marietti, 202).


Thus, there are not two positions on the divine attributes in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

2.3.5 Aquinas and the Semantic Solution

As was noted above, there was another Scholastic theory reconciling the divine attributes with divine simplicity that predated the solution of Aquinas. I have designated this theory the semantic solution. Many thinkers of the twelfth century maintained this view, as did some contemporaries of Thomas, such as Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure.

As we saw in the introduction to this study, the semantic solution holds that propositions such as ‘God is wise’ or ‘God is just’ have a double signification. The primary signification is the divine essence, which is simple and unified. The plurality of the two predicates ‘wise’ and ‘just’ is accounted for by the secondary signification, which signifies God’s actions or attitudes towards the created world.

Thomas treats the solution or a similar view in several passages, such as in the original draft of *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2 (it is part of the cancelled text), the *Quaestio de attributis*, *De veritate*, *De potentia Dei*, and the *Summa theologiae*.\(^\text{121}\) In most of these texts, the position he describes is one which interprets statements such as ‘God is wise’ as meaning that God is the cause of wisdom, so that it is not so much that such terms co-signify created effects as that such effects are described as divine actions. Obviously, then, Thomas seems rather to be attacking the position of Maimonides, which, as we saw

\(^{121}\) Cf. *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 62-63); *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/Quaestio de attributis (ed. Mandonnet I, 70-71); *De veritate* q. 2 a. 1 (ed. Leon. XXII.1, 39); *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6 (ed. Marietti, 201-202); *Summa theologiae* I q. 13 a. 2 (ed. Leon. IV, 141)
in the introduction to this study, is similar to the semantic solution. But in *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6, Aquinas formulates the position differently, giving indeed a basic statement of the semantic solution before attacking it. However, the counter-arguments are largely the same as in the anti-Maimonidean texts.\(^\text{122}\)

Aquinas lodges four objections to the semantic solution in *De potentia*. None of these arguments attack the theory as such by denying, for example, that such terms have a double signification. Instead, he singles out the notion that divine attributes are divine actions in the created realm and tries to show that this view has unpalatable consequences.

One argument is based on the causal connection between a cause and its effect. Thomas argues that since an effect proceeds from its cause as a likeness of the cause, one must first understand a cause before one understands its effect. Therefore, God is not said to be wise because he causes wisdom, but he causes wisdom because he is wise.\(^\text{123}\) In another argument he states that if ‘God is good’ is interpreted as ‘God exists and is the cause of goodness’, then any divine effect can be attributed to God, which of course is

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\(^{\text{122}}\) Cf. *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6 (ed. Marietti, 201): “Et ideo dicunt quidam, quod istis diversis rationibus nominum respondent diversa connotata, quae sunt diversi Dei effectus: volunt enim quod cum dicitur, *Deus est bonus*, significetur eius essentia cum aliquo effectu connotato, ut sit sensus, Deus est et bonitatem causat: sicut diversitas harum rationum causatur ex diversitate effectuum.” Wippel notes that Aquinas does not always attribute the position to Maimonides in “Quidditative Knowledge of God,” 236.

\(^{\text{123}}\) *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 6 (ed. Marietti, 201-202): “Sed hoc non videtur conveniens: quia cum effectus a causa secundum similitudinem procedat, prius oportet intelligere causam qualem quam effectus tales. Non ergo sapiens dicitur Deus quoniam sapientiam causet, sed quia est sapiens, ideo sapientiam causat.”
absurd, for we would then have to admit propositions such as ‘God is the heavens’ because he caused the heavens.\textsuperscript{124}

Joseph Buijs and Seymour Feldman have denied the applicability of these arguments to Maimonides.\textsuperscript{125} Buijs argues that the arguments do not apply because Maimonides denies the causal connection between cause and effect in the divine case, namely that created effects are or have likenesses to the divine being. Instead of this Aristotelian model of causality, Maimonides held a Platonic emanationist theory, according to which divine causal agency has nothing in common with natural or human (voluntary) causation. Another problem is that Aquinas does not account for Maimonides’ stipulation that affirmative attributes are ascribed to God only because human beings interpret actions in a certain way. According to Buijs, when Maimonides reinterprets ‘God is merciful’, he reinterprets it as ‘God is the one who did this (which we consider an act of mercy)’.

Granted that Aquinas’ arguments may not succeed against Maimonides, we may ask whether this is also true of the commonly held semantic solution. Unfortunately, the adherents of the view often do not discuss it in any greater detail than Thomas did in his summary. Obviously, some rule would have to be devised to restrict the predications made of God to the traditional divine attributes (perhaps relying on Anselmian pure

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Ibid.} (ed. Marietti, 202): “Item si nihil aliud intelligitur, cum dicitur ‘Deus est bonus’ nisi ‘Deus est et est bonitatis causator’: sequeretur quod eadem ratione omnia nomina effectuum divinorum de eo possent praedicari, ut diceretur, Deus est caelum, quia caelum causat.”

perfections, which it is better to be than not to be), otherwise the inconvenientia that Thomas alleged would leave us with a pantheistic God.

2.4 Conclusion

Although Bonaventure has more than one solution to the problem of the divine attributes scattered among his works, he was the first to articulate the view that the plurality of attributes is the effect of the human mind trying to understand or reason about God but unable to grasp the fullness of the divine essence. Writing at the same time, Albert the Great also provided a role for the intellect in his solution to the problem, though his more influential move was the use of the rationes of the attributes.

Thomas Aquinas, who wrote his principal discussion of the divine attributes a few years after Bonaventure and Albert, adopted the elements of their views and expanded them considerably. 126 As we have seen, his primary discussion of the divine attributes is located in his commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. The original draft of this work contained statements that appeared to conflict with divine simplicity, so Aquinas inserted a lengthy question clarifying his position, the so-called Quaestio de attributis. Most modern scholars thought that this was a special dispute from nearly ten years after the writing of the Scriptum that Aquinas inserted into his commentary, but we have examined and affirmed Adriano Oliva’s arguments to the contrary that the Quaestio was an early correction completed while Thomas was still lecturing on the Sentences. In the

126 Contrary to Hester Gelber, at least as far as the divine attributes are concerned. See Gelber, Logic and the Trinity, 12: “Two solutions emerged during the late thirteenth century to the problem of how the simplicity of the divine essence could be reconciled with the diversity of essential perfections and personal properties, that of Bonaventure and that of Thomas Aquinas.”
*Quaestio de attributis* Thomas clarifies his early position that suggested that there were *rationes* in God that correspond to *rationes* in the human mind. Instead, Aquinas painted an epistemological picture in which human beings know God only by means of the created world; in the world are found perfections that are analogically common to God and creatures. But human beings are finite and have finite cognitive capacities, which hinders their cognition of God, who is infinite. Thus, when creatures attempt to cognize God, who pre-eminently contains all of the perfections of creatures in a united and simple manner, they require a multiplicity of concepts.

The general solution that Albert, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas developed—concluding that the plurality of attributes that results from claiming that God is wise, just, good, and so on is the result of the operation of a mind unable to grasp the infinite divine essence—proved to be satisfying and subsequently numbered among its many adherents Giles of Rome, Godfrey of Fontaines, Thomas of Sutton, and Henry of Ghent.
CHAPTER 3:
RESPONSES TO THOMAS AQUINAS

The views of Thomas Aquinas were widely influential during the second half of the thirteenth century. Henry of Ghent described them as the ‘common opinion.’ In this chapter we shall examine the fate of Thomas’ doctrine of the divine attributes in the writings of his first followers and some of his critics. After brief remarks on those who did little more than copy or summarize Thomas’ views, we shall examine the position of Giles of Rome, a student of Thomas who nevertheless developed his own independent positions while remaining within the ambit of the Thomist solution. In particular, he singled out Aquinas’ *Scriptum super Sententias* for criticism, lodging three objections against the doctrine of the *Quaestio de attributis*. Giles’ criticism did not pass into history unnoticed, however; following our examination of Giles we shall briefly consider Robert de Orford, the otherwise unknown “Bernard” who wrote polemical treatises against Giles, and an anonymous treatise contained in Oxford, Magdalen College Library, Ms. 219. Another critic from this period was the Franciscan theologian William de la Mare, the instigator of the *correctoria* controversy. William rejects Thomas’ view in favor of the twelfth-century semantic position. During the late thirteenth century, most of the

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127 Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa (Quaestiones ordinariae)* a. 32 q. 4 (ed. Macken, 72): “Et hic est communis opinio, quod solummodo in comparatione ad intellectum creatum humanum vel angelicum habent divina attributa differentiam inter se.”
discussion about the problem of the divine attributes centered on Thomas’ *Quaestio de attributis*.

3.1 The Early Followers of Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas found students eager to defend his position in his own lifetime. As was mentioned above, Peter of Tarantasia adopted the doctrine of Aquinas’ *Quaestio de attributis*, simply restating the distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing as well as the theory of the cause of plurality with only slight verbal differences.\(^{128}\) Early students of Aquinas such as Romanus de Roma and Bombolognus of Bologna produced abbreviations of Aquinas’ commentary on the *Sentences* (including the newly inserted *Quaestio de attributis*) or simply summarized Thomas’ views in their own commentaries.\(^{129}\) In the early 1280’s Bernard of Trilia copied the first 40 lines of Aquinas’ *Responsio ad 108 articulos* (which in places is a paraphrase of the *Quaestio de attributis*) into his *Quodlibet III* q. 5.\(^{130}\)

Another student was Hannibal de Hannibaldis, who studied under Thomas at Rome. Hannibal does not simply abbreviate or copy, but re-states Thomas’ position in his own words. Hannibal employs the Dionysian *via eminentiae* to prove the presence of

\(^{128}\) See Petrus de Tarantasia, *In Sent. I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3*, in *Innocentii Quinti Pontificis Maximi In IV Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, vol. 1, Tolosae 1652, 20b-21a.

\(^{129}\) A. Dondaine, “Saint Thomas a-t-il disputé à Rome la question des Attributs Divins?”, 171*.

multiple attributes in God and argues that the plurality of divine attributes is a result of
the inherent imperfection of the human intellect; what is one and undivided in God is
multiple and distinct in human cognition. The attributes differ by virtue of their rationes,
which Hannibal, like Thomas, defines as the definition of what is signified by a name.131

After the death of Thomas Aquinas in 1274 controversies arose between the
Dominicans, many of whom followed Thomas, and those of more Augustinian
sympathies, such as the Seculars and the Franciscans. After the condemnations of 1277,
William de la Mare wrote a Correctorium of Thomas’ works, in which he singled out
particular statements and corrected them to make them suitable for Franciscan students.
At its General Chapter at Strasbourg in 1282, the Franciscan order mandated that
Franciscan students should read William’s work with the works of Thomas, not as
marginal commentary but incorporated into the text of Thomas. Interestingly, William
did not attack Thomas’ views on the divine attributes in his Correctorium.132 Perhaps for
this reason, Thomas’ views on this issue were not a topic of discussion in the ensuing

131 Cf. Hannibaldus de Hannibaldis, In Sent. I d. 2 a. 1 q. 2 (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms.
564, f. 8ra): “Respondeo: quidquid perfectionis est in creatura est in creatore tamquam in causa, sed
e excellentiior modo, quia nobilior modus est aliquid in causa quam in effectu. Unde cum perfectiones
attribuitorum sunt in creatura a creatore, erunt in creatore sed nobiliori modo. In creatura autem differunt
realiter, ergo in creatore erunt idem realiter; sed quia alia est ratio sapientiae et bonitatis, ideo haec attributa
differunt ratione; quae ratio nihil aliud est quam intentio intellectu(intellectum ms.) perceptibilis quae per
nomen rei aliquis vel per eius definitionem significatur. Haec autem differentia sive pluralitas contingit
tum propter defectum intellectus nostri, tum propter eminentiam divinae naturae; propter perfectionem
enim essentiae divinae et imperfectionem intellectus creati quod in Deo est per modum simplicitatis et
unitatis concipitur ab intellectu per modum divisibilitatis et multiplicatissatis. Ideo perfectiones attribuitorum
quae in Deo sunt idem diversis conceptionibus apprehenduntur ab intellectu, quia enim intellectus humanus
accipit a creaturis in quibus sunt huissmodi perfectionis diversae, ideo perfectiones has in Deo existentes in
quas devenit per perfectiones creaturarum diversimode apprehendit.”

132 Although he did attack them in his commentary on the Sentences and his Quodlibet; for these
texts, see below.
controversy and were at times quietly adopted by his erstwhile opponents.\textsuperscript{133} At least one prominent Franciscan, Richard of Menneville, simply paraphrased Aquinas’ \textit{Quaestio de attributis} in his own commentary on the \textit{Sentences} \textsuperscript{134}

3.2 Giles of Rome and His Critics

3.2.1 Giles of Rome

Giles of Rome was an Augustinian hermit who possibly studied under Aquinas during his second Parisian regency in 1269-1272. Following the condemnations of 1277, Giles was banished from the faculty of Theology at Paris. He was allowed to return in 1285 after Pope Honorius IV intervened on his behalf. He was regent master from 1285-1291, dying in 1316.\textsuperscript{135} His lectures on Peter Lombard’s \textit{Sententiae} are extant in a \textit{Reportatio} (1270-1272) and an \textit{Ordinatio}.\textsuperscript{136} Only this latter work contains material


\textsuperscript{134} Cf. Richardus de Mediavilla, \textit{In Sent}. I d. 2 a. 1 q. 3 (ed. Brixiae 1591), 30-32.


\textsuperscript{136} For the \textit{Reportatio}, see \textit{Reportatio Lecturae Super Libros I-IV Sententiarum}, ed. Concetta Luna (Firenze: Sismel, 2003), 75.
relevent to our inquiry.\textsuperscript{137} Book I of the \textit{Ordinatio} dates to 1272-1273, though this is not true of the remaining books, which were completed later.

Giles follows the general outlines of Aquinas’ views. From the titles of the three articles of the question on the divine attributes we can see that he was particularly interested in the epistemological problem of the correspondence between the plurality of human concepts and the simple divine essence:

\begin{quote}
\textit{In Sent.} I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3: Utrum isti pluralitati respondeat aliquid in re vel solum sit pluralitas rationum.
\end{quote}

Art. 1: Utrum pluralitati attributorum respondeat aliquid in re.

Art. 2: Utrum istis attributis respondeat aliquid ex parte rei ut proximum fundamentum.

Art. 3: Utrum talis pluralitas sit solum ex parte intellectus.\textsuperscript{138}

The first article begins with an investigation into what might cause the concepts of the intellect not to correspond with the thing which is being thought about. After discussing the various ways in which there can be a failure of correspondence, Giles concludes in the affirmative, that indeed something corresponds \textit{ex parte rei}, that is, on the side of God, to the plurality of human concepts. He immediately clarifies what this “something”

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{137} Luna’s edition contains Godfrey of Fontaines’ excerpts of Giles in an appendix; these excepts include Giles’ discussion of the divine attributes. See \textit{Reportatio} (ed. Luna, 496-498). Note that none of Giles’ positions on the attributes are on the list of censured propositions. For the propositions, see Aegidius Romanus, \textit{Apologia}, ed. Robert Wielockx (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1985).

\textsuperscript{138} I take the text from Aegidius Romanus, \textit{In primum Sententiarum} (Venezia 1521, repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1968), ff. 17v-18v. Note that I omit discussion of I \textit{Sent.} d. 2 prin. I q. 2: “Utrum Deo conveniat pluralitas attributorum,” where Giles proves that the attributes are in God based on the way of remotion, as well as d. 22 which treats of the divine names. These three articles are summarized in Godfrey of Fontaines’ excerpts of Giles’ \textit{Lectura super libros I-II Sententiarum.} See Aegidii Romani \textit{Opera Omnia,} vol. 3.2, 496-498.
\end{footnotes}
is by stating that it is one thing (the divine essence) apprehended in different ways by the created intellect.\footnote{Cf. Aegidius Romanus, \textit{In Sent.} I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 2 a. 1 (ed. 1521, f. 17vb): "...Cum igitur non possit intelligi pluribus modis pluralitati nominum respondere aliquod ex parte rei nisi modis dictis qui Deo non conveniunt, asserendum est pluralitati attributorum Deo respondere aliquod ex parte rei. Ad primum dicendum quod non oportet attributa esse in Deo modo pluri ad hoc quod ex parte rei attributis aliquid respondeat, sed sufficit quod una et eadem res aliter et aliter apprehendatur, ut est in proposito. Ad secundum dicendum quod quia una et eadem res ut essentia divina ab intellectu nostro non capitur secundum unam rationem, de Deo diversas conceptiones formamus..."}

The second article examines the signification of names and whether they have a proximate or remote foundation, a way of framing the problem inherited from the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}. Here we encounter Giles’ first criticism of Aquinas. After examining passages from Aristotle and Averroes in order to determine what a name is, Giles draws a distinction between the primary and secondary sense of a name.\footnote{The distinction is loosely based on Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysica} VIII c. 3 (1043a30).}

According to the primary sense (\textit{per prius}), a name signifies a perfection or form in act, while in its secondary sense (\textit{per posterius, ex consequenti}) it signifies an aggregate.\footnote{In Sent. I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1521, f. 18ra): "Respondeo dicendum quod quaestio est de significatione nominum. Philosophus autem in VIII \textit{Metaphysicae} quae sit quod nomen significet: utrum aggregatum vel formam sive perfectionem, et solvit quod significat utrumque, non una ratione dictum, sed quasi ad unum. Hoc est per quandam analogiam, quia unum per prius, aliud per posterius... Declarato quod nomen significat aggregatum et formam sed formam per prius, aggregatum ex consequenti..."}

The distinction also holds in the case of the divine attributes. A term such as ‘wisdom’ has two senses. In the primary sense the term signifies the perfection itself, which is properly said of God and is in God more truly than it is in creatures, just as an effect exists in its cause. In the secondary sense the term refers to the perfection as it exists in an aggregate, whether it is in the creature or as participated by the creature.\footnote{Cf. \textit{ibid.}: "Nam hoc quod dico sapientia suo significat: primo et principaliter perfectionem ipsum; ex consequenti et secundario significat talem perfectionem in aggregato ut in creatura sive a creatura..."}
Applying these distinctions to the question, that is, whether the divine attributes correspond by means of a remote or proximate foundation, Giles first considers whether the divine essence can serve as an immediate foundation. He does this by examining the relation between each of the two senses of a divine name and the divine essence. Taking first the secondary sense, it is clear that the immediate foundation of the divine attributes is not the divine essence. Rather the immediate foundation is the created effects that the intellect comes to know in the created world and then applies to God.\textsuperscript{143}

Giles devotes more space to the first sense of a name (which signifies the perfection itself). He begins with an extended paraphrase of Aquinas’ position:

Certain ones, however, draw a distinction such that the thing itself sometimes corresponds with the conceptions of the intellect as an immediate foundation just as to the conception of man and to whatever other [thing] signifying a first imposition according to natural things. Sometimes that which the name or conception of the intellect signifies is not immediately founded in a thing but in something existing in the mind, nor is it a likeness of a thing existing outside the soul but is something which follows from the mode of understanding the thing which is outside the soul, as are the names of second intentions, as genus, species, and suchlike. And all things are reduced to this mode which follow from the mode of understanding, just as the abstraction of mathematical [objects], because they understand a line existing in matter, not as it is in matter. Third, sometimes nothing in reality corresponds to the conception of the intellect, as to the conception of a chimera. They say that because those perfections are most truly in God, the divine being corresponds as the foundation of such conceptions, as ‘man’ corresponds to the conception of a man, and not as a thing corresponds to the conception of a genus or to the conception of participatam. Et ideo sapientia quantum ad ipsam perfectionem quam importat propriissime Deo competit, nam verius talis perfectio est in creatore quam in creaturis et in causa quam in causato.”

\textsuperscript{143} Cf. \textit{ibid.} (ed. 1521, f. 18rb): “Nam cum quaretur utrum divina essentia ut immediatum fundamentum respondeat significato talium nominum, dicendum quod si consideramus secundarium significatum nominum secundum quod talia transumptive Deo competunt, patet quod immediatum fundamentum talium sunt ipsi effectus a quibus ad divina nomina transumptur.”
mathematical [objects], because they do not have these as an immediate foundation.144

The clearest parallel to this passage in Thomas’ works is the Quaestio de attributis. Only in the Scriptum (I d. 19 q. 5 a. 1 and I d. 30 q. 1 a. 3) is there a discussion of the three ways in which the intellect corresponds (or does not correspond) to things, and only in the Quaestio de attributis does Thomas use the example of mathematical objects. Indeed, Giles’ summary corresponds quite closely to the second sub-section of the Quaestio de attributis.

Giles’ criticism of Thomas’ account in the Quaestio is that the statements it contains are not “well said.” This is because Aquinas’ position leaves no room for pseudo-Dionysius’ view of affirmative predication. According to Giles, Thomas does not allow for pseudo-Dionysius’ position that while negations are true, affirmations are defective and fall short of the divine nature. Giles interprets Thomas’ view as being that human predications of perfections of God signify God accurately, in just the same way as do predications pertaining to things in the natural, created world.145 This criticism is

144 Cf. ibid.: “Quidam autem sic distinguunt quod conceptionibus intellectus aliquando respondet res ipsa ut immediatum fundamentum sicut conceptioni hominis et cuilibet alii significanti primam impositionem secundum res naturales. Aliquando hoc quod significat nomen sive conceptio intellectus non immediate fundatur in re sed in aliquo existente in mente, nec est similitudo rei existentis extra animam sed est aliiquid quod consequitur ex modo intelligendi rem quae est extra animam, sicut sunt nomina secundarum intentionum ut ‘genus’, ‘species’, et huiusmodi. Et ad istum modum reducuntur omnia quae ex modo intelligendi consequuntur, sicut abstractio mathematicorum quia intelligunt lineam existentem in materia non prout est in materia. Tertio conceptioni intellectus aliquando nihil respondet in re ut conceptioni chimerae. Dicunt quod quia istae perfectiones verissime sunt in Deo, respondet res divina ut fundamentum conceptionum talium ut ‘homo’ respondet conceptioni de homine et non ut res respondet conceptioni generis sive conceptioni mathematicorum quia haec non se habent ut immediatum fundamentum.”

145 Cf. In Sent. I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1521, f. 18rb): “Sed si istud esset bene dictum, non esset dare causam quare affirmationes in divinis sunt incompactae, si a Deo proprie huiusmodi attributa enuntiarentur de Deo, sicut perfectiones naturalium de rebus naturalibus praedicantur, immo magis proprie in quantum tales perfectiones veriori modo in Deo existunt.” For the authoritative statement of the pseudo-
somewhat puzzling, for although in the *Quaestio de attributis* Thomas Aquinas does
indeed argue that God is the immediate foundation of the *rationes* of the divine attributes
and does not discuss negative theology or quote the famous maxim of pseudo-Dionysius,
nevertheless elsewhere in the *Scriptum* (I d. 4 q. 1 a. 2) Thomas is explicit that every
name fails to signify the divine being because no name can signify something that is both
simple and perfect. Furthermore, in various parts of his corpus Thomas quotes the same
authoritative statement of pseudo-Dionysius that Giles claims he fails to account for.
One solution to this puzzle is that Giles was simply unfamiliar with Thomas’ other
works, even though he was one of Thomas’ students. A more likely interpretation is that
Giles holds that the *Quaestio de attributis* is Thomas’ most authoritative statement on the
problem of the attributes and thus the primary passage of interest.

Giles’ own solution to the problem is to summon the traditional distinction
between the thing understood (*res intellecta*) and the mode of understanding (*modus
intelligendi*); according to the former the divine essence does serve as the immediate

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146 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum* I d. 4 q. 1 a. 2 (ed. Mandonnet I, 134): “Quamvis enim, ut
dicitur lib. De causis, prop. 5, omne nomen deficiat a significatione divini esse, propter hoc quod nullum
nomen significat simul aliquid perfectum et simplex, quia abstracta non significat ens per se subsistens, et
concreta significant ens compositum, nihilominus tamen abjiciendos id quod imperfectionis est, utimur
utrisque nominibus in divinis abstractis propter simplicitatem, concretis propter perfectionem.”

147 The adage again being “negationes in divinis sunt verae, affirmationes vero incompactae.” See
*Scriptum* I d. 22 q. 1 a. 2 ad 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 535-36); I d. 34 q. 3 a. 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 797); *Summa
theologiae* I q. 13 a. 12 ad 1 (ed. Leon. IV, 164); *Super librum De causis* prop. 6 in *Sancti Thomae de
*Super Boetium De Trinitate* q. 1 a. 2 ad 4 (ed. Leon. L, 85); *De potentia Dei* q. 7 a. 5 ad 2 (ed. Marietti,
199); *De potentia Dei* q. 9 a. 7 (ed. Marietti, 242).
foundation of a divine name, while in the latter it does not. When we take a particular
divine name, such as divine wisdom, according to the thing understood (*res intellecta*)
the divine essence corresponds as an immediate foundation because this perfection is
found most truly in God. But according to the mode of understanding (*modus
intelligendi*) the divine essence is not the immediate foundation for the divine name
“wisdom” because in the human mode of cognition we cannot conceive of the attribute as
it is really found in God, but only as we experience it in ourselves, where it enters into the
aggregate of substance and accident. According to Giles, the foundation for the name
with respect to the mode of understanding is mediate (or proximate, according to
Aquinas’ second way), similar to second intentions. To summarize Giles’ discussion,
according to the *res intellecta* the divine essence is the immediate foundation, while
according to the *modus intelligendi* the divine essence is the mediate foundation; thus,
Thomas’ threefold division of the ways in which things correspond to the intellect is
insufficient and requires a fourth member, which is midway between the immediate and
mediate foundations.148

Giles lodges three objections against Thomas Aquinas in the third and final
article, devoted to the question of whether the plurality of the divine attributes is only on

148 Cf. Aegidius Romanus, *In Sent.* I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1521, f. 18rb-va): “...cum intelligo
sapientiam divinam quantum ad rem intellectam ut immediatum fundamentum, respondet ipsa divina
essentia in qua verissime talis perfectio existit. Sed quantum ad intelligendi modum non respondet divina
essentia ut immediatum fundamentum, quia non est eo modo sapientia in Deo ut nos intelligimus... Sed
quantum ad rem habet immediatum et convenit cum naturalibus, quantum ad modum habet mediatum et
convenit cum secundis intentionibus. Et ideo si solum distinguimus quod conceptioni intellectus aliquando
respondet immediatum fundamentum in re, aliquando mediatum, aliquando nullum et non adderemus
quartum membrum, scilicet aliquando medio modo inter mediatum et immediatum, non proprin haberemus
quomodo divina essentia respondet ut fundamentum conceptionibus intellectus.”
the side of the human intellect.\textsuperscript{149} Giles’ question is essentially an analysis of the fourth section of the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}, which is clear from his summary of the opposing opinion. There Giles quotes both Chrysostom and the book of Zachariah, two authorities found together only in the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}. The textual similarity is clear from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aegidius Romanus, \textit{In Sent.} I d. 2 prin. 2 a. 3 (ed. 1521, f. 18va)</th>
<th>Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Scriptum} I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/\textit{Quaestio de attributis} (ed. Mandonnet I, 69-71)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utrum talis pluralitas sit solum ex parte intellectus.</td>
<td>Quantum ad quartum, scilicet utrum pluralitas istarum rationum sit tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel aliquo modo ex parte rei,</td>
</tr>
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Respondeo: dicendum secundum quosdam quod huissomodi pluralitas est ex parte intellectus nostri et aliquo modo ex parte rei, nam ista pluralitas non contingit nisi ex hoc quod res, quae Deus est, superat intellectum nostrum; et ideo, quia intellectus noster una conceptione non potest plures modos concipere de Deo, ei imponit diversa nomina. Est autem dupliciter causa quare intellectus noster diversimode Deum nominat. Una quia per creaturas Deum cognoscit, et quia perfectiones quae in Deo unum sunt in creaturis diversificantur, diversimode nominantur. Secunda est quia, dato quod Deus immediate cognitionem suam in intellectu imprimeret, quia intellectus noster deficit a divina simplicitate, diversimode illam impressionem reciperet et Deum nominaret diversimodum. Sed si intellectus noster Deum per se ipsum videret immediate, ei imponeret unum nomen quod erit in patria. Unde dicitur \textit{Zach.} ultimo, ‘in illo die erit Deus unus’ et ‘nomen eius unum’ et illud nomen non solum significaret sapientiam aut bonitatem sed omnia ista includeret.

Quantum ad quartum, scilicet utrum pluralitas istarum rationum sit tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel aliquo modo ex parte rei, |

Sciendum est, quod ista pluralitas rationum contingit ex hoc quod res quae Deus est, superat intellectum nostrum. Intellectus enim noster non potest una conceptione diversos modos perfectionis accipere:

\(\text{tum quia ex creaturis cognitionem accipit, in quibus sunt diversi modi perfectionum secundum diversas formas:}\)

\(\text{tum quia hoc quod in Deo est unum et simplex, plurificatur in intellectu nostro, etiam si immediate a Deo recipert; sicut multiplicatur processio suae bonitatis in alis creaturis... una conceptione non potest integre perfectionem eius apprehendere, et per consequens nec nominare...}\)

\(\text{Si autem intellectus noster Deum per se ipsum videret, illi rei posset imponere nomen unum quod erit in patria et ideo dicitur \textit{Zach.} ult., 9 ‘In die illa erit Dominus unus,’ et ‘nomen eius unum’. Illud autem nomen unum non significaret bonitatem tantum, nec sapientiam tantum, aut aliquid huissomodi, sed significata omnium istorum includeret.}\)

\textsuperscript{149} I have verified the text of the Venezia 1521 edition by an examination of Cambridge, Pembroke College Library, Ms. 121. The only significant variant is a homoeoteleuton in the manuscript in the second objection against Aquinas. The Cambridge manuscript contains the marginal annotation of “\textit{A opinio}” next to this passage on f. 19va.
Addunt tamen quod si intellectus secundum conceptionem quam habet de Deo ei nomen imponeret, nominaret ipsum multis nominibus quia totam divinam essentiam non comprehenderet; unde et

Chrysostomus dicit quod angeli laudant Deum, quaedam ut maiestatem, quaedam ut bonitatem et sic de singulis.

His visis, concludunt quod huiusmodi pluralitas est ex parte Dei et ex parte intellectus nostri. Sed ex parte intellectus nostri est quantum ad causam, quia tota causa pluralitatis est intellectus noster. Sed quantum ad modum est etiam ex parte rei, quia haec Deo attribuuntur non solum secundum intellectum sed quia etiam in ipsa re tales perfectiones existunt.

Sed tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam videret, et nominaret mediante conceptione quam de ea habet, oporteret adhuc quod imponeret plura nomina quia impossible est quod conceptio intellectus creati repreaesentet totam perfectionem divinae essentiae. Unde una re visa diversas conceptiones formaret, et diversa nomina imponeret, sicut etiam Chrysostomus dicit, quando angeli laudant Deum, quidam ut majestatem, quidam ut bonitatem, et sic de aliis...

Qui ergo dixerunt, quod pluralitas ista est tantum ex parte intellectus nostri, vel ex parte effectuum, quodammodo verum dixerunt, et quodammodo non. Si enim hoc referatur ad causam multiplicationis, sic verum dicunt, quod est ex parte intellectus nostri, et effectuum quodammodo, ex eo quod intellectus noster non potest concipere divinam perfectionem una conceptione, sed pluribus... Si autem referatur ad modum quo istae rationes attribuuntur Deo, falsum dicunt. Non enim ex hoc quod bona facit, vel quia ad modum bonorum se habet, bonus est; sed quia bonus est, ideo bona facit et alia participando ejus bonitatem ad modum ejus se habent.

Giles grants that the view contains “some truth,” but again, as in the previous article, it is not “well said.” His first objection is that Thomas has built his theory on an impossible foundation, namely, that a name can signify an extramental thing directly, without the mediation of a concept. According to Giles, names are only attributed to something by means of a concept, and they more immediately signify a concept than a thing. If a name were attributed to some extramental thing without a concept, the name
would not signify the concept at all, a conclusion he views as unsuitable *(inconveniens)*.\(^{150}\)

This objection does not seem to touch Thomas’ position, however, for Thomas states explicitly in the first sub-question of the *Quaestio de attributis* that the name does signifies the concept. Instead, Thomas denies that the *ratio* signifies the concept of the thing, holding instead that it signifies the intention or definition.\(^{151}\) If we restrict our gaze to the text of Aquinas that Giles has summarized, it may be that Giles in this first objection is criticizing Thomas’ example of the beatific vision. Thomas states that if the human intellect sees God through himself (*per se*), then it can attribute one name that equally signifies all the divine names. But if the human intellect tries to name what it sees and to name based on its concepts, then there will be a plurality of names. Given this somewhat unclear distinction of Thomas, Giles is then objecting to the first part of Thomas’ example, in which there is indeed an immediate intellectual vision followed by the imposition of one name without the mediation of a concept. But if this interpretation is correct, Giles’ objection is against the unclarity of Thomas’ example, rather than against a substantive point of his actual position.

\(^{150}\) Aegidius Romanus, *In Sent.* I d. 2 prin. 2 q. 3 a. 3 (ed. 1517, f. 18va): “Hoc autem, licet aliquam veritatem contineat, non tamen est bene dictum, deficit enim tribus. Primo, quia supponit impossibile, quia numquam nomen imponitur nisi mediante conceptione, et ideo nomina immediatius repraesentant conceptionem quam rem; nec unquam representant rem nisi mediante conceptione. Si ergo sine conceptione nomen rei imponeretur, nomen significaret rem et non significaret conceptionem, quod est inconveniens.

\(^{151}\) Thomas de Aquino *In Sent.* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 *Quaestio de attributis* (ed. Mandonnet I, 66): “Nec tamen hoc nomen ‘ratio’ significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatum per nomen rei; sed significat intentionem huius conceptionis sicut et hoc nomen ‘definitio’ et alia nomina secundae impositionis.”
Giles’ second objection concerns the immediate vision of the divine essence. He grants to Thomas that the intellect, if it directly beheld the divine essence through the mediation of a concept, would attribute only one name to God. This is because of Giles’ assumption that there is no discursive cognition on the part of a creature in the vision of the divine essence. Each intellect in the beatific vision has one concept of the divine essence and therefore imposes only one name to what it understands through the concept. Consequently, the adage of Chrysostom is better explained by recalling that there are many intellects beholding the divine essence at once; since different intellects have different capacities (for example, different ranks of the angelic hierarchies compared to each other and to the human intellect would on Giles’ view all have different levels of intellectual capability), some will understand more of the divine essence than others. Because no created intellect can fully apprehend the divine essence, there will be a multiplicity of concepts and therefore a multiplicity of divine names.152 But one intellect is not solely responsible for the plurality of the divine names.

This second objection is inconclusive. Giles is objecting to the rather unclear distinction of Aquinas between the human intellect’s cognition of the divine essence through the divine essence (per seipsum) or through the mediation of a concept. According to Thomas, in the former case the intellect can impose only one name to what

152 Aegidius Romanus, I Sent. d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1517, f. 18va-b): “Secundo deficit quia si intellectus immediate videret divinam essentiam et mediante conceptione sua ei nomen imponeret, uno modo eam nominaret. Nam cum nomen repraesentet conceptionem intellectus et conceptus intellectus formetur ex visione intellectus sive ex actu eius, quia tunc esset una visio, esset unum conceptum et esset unum nomen, tamen diversi intellectus ei imponerent diversa nomina, quia nullus comprehendit divinam essentiam. Ideo alio alius plus intelligit et illud quod intelligit unus est alius ab eo quod intelligit alius, et ideo nominatio est alia et alia. Propter hoc signanter dicit Chrysostomus quod aliqui laudant Deum ut maiestatem, aliqui scilicet alii ut bonitatem.”
it sees, while in the second case it necessarily imposes many names. Thomas does not
defend this distinction in any detail, though neither does Giles defend his claim that there
is no discursivity in the creaturely cognition of the divine essence, which underlies his
view that there is only one name per concept per intellect.

The third objection is largely a matter of the wording of Aquinas’ position. As
Giles reports it, Thomas’ position is that the plurality of the divine attributes is partially
on the side of God and partially on the side of the human intellect. On the side of the
human intellect, the intellect is the “total cause” of plurality, while on the side of God
there is a plurality according to “mode,” because God really does super-eminently
contain the perfection attributed to him. Giles objects that the statement that the intellect
is the “total cause” is untrue. He prefers rather to speak of both God and the human
intellect as the “cause” of plurality. He also points out that Thomas himself grants that
plurality arises owing to the weakness of the human intellect, which cannot comprehend
God. The reason it cannot comprehend God is because God surpasses the intellect.
Consequently, it is better say that the cause of the plurality of the divine attributes is
divine excellence and the defective nature of the human intellect. His motivation for

153 Thomas de Aquino, Scriptum I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 (ed. Mandonnet I, 70): “Si autem intellectus noster
Deum per seipsum videret, illi rei posset imponere nomen unum, quod erat in patria... Illud autem nomen
‘unum’ non significaret bonitatem tantum, nec sapientiam tantum, aut aliquid huiusmodi, sed significata
omnia istorum includeret. Sed tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam
videret, et nominaret mediante conceptione quam de ea habet, oporteret adhuc quod imponeret plura
nomina, quia impossibile est quod conceptio intellectus creati repraesentet totam perfectionem divinae
essentiae. Unde una re visa diversas conceptiones formaret, et diversa nominam imponeret...

154 Aegidius Romanus, In Sent. I d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1517, f. 18vb): “Tertio deficit quia
dicunt quod tota causa est ex parte intellectus nostri, quod etiam non est verum. Nam, ut ipsimet concedunt,
ista pluralitas non convenit nisi ex eo quod intellectus noster deficit a comprehensione divinae maiestatis;
sed nunquam intellectus noster deficeret nisi illa superaret, quia ergo contingit ista pluralitas ex
impropriotione intellectus ad Deum. Impropriatio autem includit excellentiam in uno extreMO et defectum in
this objection may be that he fears that positing the plurality solely on the side of the human intellect separates human cognition too far from its object and thus leaves it open to the charge of being false and vain. Whatever the case may be, Giles is here focused on a few sentences from the *Quaestio de attributis*; Thomas’ meaning can still be gleaned despite one or two mis-statements, so this third and final objection fares little better than its companions. But, however one views the success of Giles’ objections, they do point towards the historical and systematic importance of the *Quaestio de attributis* as Thomas’ most detailed account of the problem of the attributes.

In his solution to the question Giles gives a threefold reason for the plurality of divine attributes, describing the object, subject, and cause of the plurality. The object is the divine essence, from which plurality “has being.” The divine essence serves as the immediate foundation of human concepts and contains that which is signified by such concepts. Plurality “has being” from a subject, as it is contained in the human intellect as in a subject. Plurality “has being” from a cause, which is nothing other than God, insofar as he exceeds the human intellect, and the human intellect, which cannot attain perfect cognition of God.\(^{155}\)

Giles returns to the analogy of human cognition of mathematical objects to explain how the intellect is not deceived or rendered false because it understands by

\[\text{alio; utrumque debemus dicere causam esse huiusmodi pluralitatis: divinam excellentiam et defectum intellectus nostri.}^{\text{155}}\]

\[\text{Cf. ibid.: “Et propter hoc dicendum est aliter quod cum quieritur qualiter contingit talis pluralitas... Ex parte objecti habet esse ex ipsa divina essentia quae respondet ut immediatum fundamentum conceptionibus talibus in qua significata talium conceptionum verissime continentur. Ex parte subjecti provenit ex intellectu nostro in quo talis pluralitas ut in subiecto esse habet. Ex parte causae contingit ex utroque, nam divina essentia est causa huius quia propter sui excellentiam superat intellectum nostrum. Et etiam est causa ex parte intellectus nostri quia deficit a perfecta cognitione eius et superatur ab ipsa...”}\]
means of multiplicity what is actually one in God. Invoking the Aristotelian maxim
“there is no falsity in abstraction,” Giles argues that the intellect knows the extramental
thing when it knows a mathematical object, although in another mode, namely abstracted
from matter. Likewise, when the human intellect considers a divine attribute, it is not
rendered false simply because the attribute exists in a different way as it is in God than in
its abstracted form in the human intellect. Modifying the Aristotelian maxim, Giles
claims that just as there is no falsity in abstraction, so there is none in the intellect’s
“falling short” of the divine essence.156

Giles of Rome’s contribution to the debates on the divine attributes is a modest
one. He does not advance any new, controversial views, nor does he substantially modify
the views he inherited. He takes his basic terminology from Thomas Aquinas. His
solutions are largely those of Thomas as well. In the case of the foundation of the
attributes he modifies Thomas’ view that the divine essence serves as the immediate
foundation in favor of the view that there is a fourth kind of foundation, halfway between
an immediate and proximate foundation. The same is true of his discussion of the origin
of plurality, in which he analyzes the subject, object, and cause of plurality, whereas
Thomas’ view accounts for only the subject and cause. Despite the similarity of their
views, nonetheless Giles lodged objections against features of Thomas’ position. These,
however, do not undermine Thomas’ views in any serious way, but rather criticize

156 Cf. ibid.: “Sed sicut intelligendo rem mathematicam intelligit rem quae est, sed non prout est.
Et tamen ‘abstrahentium non est mendacium,’ quia abstrahendo lineam mathematicam a materia sensibili
non mentitur intellectus, licet modum actualem essendi rei non retineat propter abstractionem. Ita
intelligendo divinam sapientiam, quia sapientia maxime est in Deo, licet non intelligat eo modo quo est in
Deo propter sui defectum, sicut abstrahentium non erat mendacium, sic deficientium non est mendacium.”
Thomas’ formulation of key passages and attempt to resolve their ambiguities. This is not surprising, however, as Giles’ general judgement on these passages is that they are not “well said,” a claim about their wording.157 Giles’ primary importance, then, is that he took the *Quaestio de attributis* as the object of his criticism and foundation of his own views. He shows us that Aquinas’ students took the *Quaestio de attributis* as his definitive treatment of the problem of the divine attributes.

3.2.2 The Critics of Giles of Rome

Giles’ criticism of Thomas Aquinas did not pass into history unmarked. Two Dominicans authored works devoted to the refutation of Giles’ views during the 1280’s. Both targeted Giles’ theory of the divine attributes in his commentary on Book I of the *Sentences*. One of these works has been attributed to Robert of Orford, while the other is anonymous with a colophon in a later hand ascribing the work to ‘Bernardus Claromonensis’.158 There is also a third treatise, currently unedited, which is without any attribution, medieval or modern; it is of a very rudimentary nature.159 In what follows, we

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157 Consequently, I do not agree with Hester Gelber’s view that Giles was “imperfectly acquainted” with Aquinas’ views and “apparently did not know” of Aquinas’ rejection of the view that the human intellect was the sole cause of multiplicity. See Hester Gelber, *Logic and the Trinity*, 30-31.


shall take Robert of Orford’s treatise as representative of the genre of anti-Aegidian polemic.

3.2.2.1 Robert of Orford

The English Dominican Robert of Orford was bachelor at Oxford between 1284 and 1286 and regent master ca. 1289-1290. He composed his *Reprobationes dictorum a fratre Egidio in Primum Sententiarum* around 1288-1291. According to Pelster, this was the first work of its kind. The sole purpose of this work is to defend Thomas Aquinas from any real and perceived attacks by Giles of Rome. The procedure is to quote Giles’ work *verbatim* and then attack it. Francis Kelley judged that the quality of the work is poor, owing to its niggling character, though this is hardly surprising given that the arguments of Giles that we have examined above are hardly substantive; Robert did not have much to work with. Surprisingly, Robert is so intent on refuting Giles that he even recycles arguments made by William de la Mare against Thomas and turns them on...
Giles, rather surprising behavior for a defender of Thomas.\textsuperscript{163} Despite his fierce criticism, however, Robert adopts two of Giles’ arguments for the real distinction of essence and existence in his polemic against Henry of Ghent and his intentional distinction.\textsuperscript{164}

Robert attacks the second and third articles of the question of Giles we have examined above. In his analysis of Giles’ second article, in which Giles attacks the second section of the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}, Robert defends Thomas’ position against Giles’ argument that Thomas cannot account for the Dionysian doctrine that the affirmations predicated of God do not distinctly signify the divine essence. Robert’s response is to deploy the distinction between the mode of signification (\textit{modus significandi}) and the thing signified (\textit{res significata}): when a name is said of God and the thing signified is taken into account, the name is said of God without any deficiency and has the divine essence as its immediate foundation. But as far as the mode of signification is concerned, the divine essence does not serve as a foundation and the name signifies deficiently.\textsuperscript{165} This is Thomas’ way of treating the problem of how a divine name is able to signify the divine essence in the \textit{Summa theologiae} and the \textit{De veritate}.\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{163} Kelley, “Robert Orford’s Attack on Giles of Rome,” 94.

\textsuperscript{164} Kelley, “Two Early English Thomists,” 355-356.

\textsuperscript{165} Robertus de Orford, \textit{Reprobationes} d. 2 q. 9 (ed. Vella, 58): “Sed illud faciliter solvitur, quia frater Thomas, cuius est dicta distinctio, distinguuit etiam de nominibus que proprie de Deo dicuntur, quod in eis est duo considerare, scilicet rem significatam et modum significandi. Quantum ad rem significatam proprie dicuntur de Deo, nec sunt incompacte, et sic habent <fundamentum> immediatum essentiam divinam. Quantum vero ad modum significandi non est essentia divina fundamentum eorum immediatum, et sic sunt affirmative, omnes sunt incompacte...”

\textsuperscript{166} Recall that when Thomas discusses the problem of the plurality of attributes and their \textit{rationes}, he does so under the rubric of whether the attributes are synonymous.
Robert also defends Thomas against Giles’ objections against the fourth subsection of the *Quaestio de attributis*, carefully reciting Giles’ summary of the *Quaestio de attributis* as well as the objections Giles lodged against it. To Giles’ first objection, in which he claimed that Thomas was wrong in holding that the divine names signify the thing rather than the concept of the thing because then it would not signify the concept, Robert simply denies that Giles’ conclusion follows from anything found in Thomas’ account. Anticipating the response to the second objection, Robert argues that even if God were to impress an immediate cognition of the divine essence on a human intellect, this would still require the creation of a mediating species in the intellect, for the species is the principle of cognition. The intellect would form a concept from the species, and on the basis of the concept attribute a name to God.\(^{167}\) Even if the intellect were to see God by means of the divine essence, that is, if the divine essence became the form for the intellect, Robert holds that the intellect would form one word (*verbum*) representing the vision of the essence, and by means of this concept would attribute a name.\(^{168}\)

Responding to Giles’ second argument, Robert grants that multiple intellects enjoying the vision of God will have different concepts of the divine essence, and thus

\(^{167}\) Robertus de Orford, *Reprobationes* d. 2 q. 10 (ed. Vella, 60): “Ad primum dicendum, quod conclusio quam concludit quasi esset inconveniens et impossibile, non sequitur ex aliquo quod in prefata opinione suppositum est, ut quia Deus in patria immediate imprimeret cognitionem intellectui non tamen imponeret nomen sine intellectus conceptione. Non enim est intelligendum quod Deus imprimat conceptionem intellectui sine forma que est principium conceptionis... Sed sicut debet intelligi quod Deus imprimat quamdam similitudinem creatam que sit principium actus intelligendi, mediante qua intellectus formet conceptum sive verbum, et mediante illo conceptu imponeret nomen ad significandum rem.”

\(^{168}\) Cf. *ibid.* (ed. Vella, 60-61): “Adhuc etsi intellectus videret Deum per essentiam, per ipsum Deum sicut per ipsum medium, sicut est in beatis in Patria, et imponeret ei unum nomen, non tamen fieret sine conceptione, quia intellectus nomina formet ab intellectu redeunte super ipsum visionem <mediante> qua apprehendet Deum, et ita conciperet verbum unum representans ipsum visionem mediante qua conceptione imponeret nomen.”
will attribute different names to God. But taken singly, each intellect will still attribute only one name, as there is only one vision and one concept. Here Robert distinguishes between a concept that represents the vision of the divine essence (that is, in the Thomistic account of the beatific vision the divine essence becomes the *ratio cognoscendi*) and a concept that attempts to represent the divine essence as the thing seen. In the former case there is only one concept and one vision. But in the latter the intellect will require multiple concepts; as many, in fact, as it would if it were still *in via* rather than *in patria*. The reason for this is that in the second case a created concept is involved and nothing created can perfectly represent the divine nature. Robert explains this by recourse to Thomas’ *Quaestio de attributis*, in which Thomas comments that if the human intellect would see God through God, then it would only attribute one name; but if it were to attribute a name to that which it saw it would require many concepts. This distinction between knowing God by means of one concept and knowing by many created concepts is not especially clear in Aquinas (as is evident from Giles’ criticism), and Robert does add an important clarification.  

Robert’s response to Giles’ third objection is exegetical rather than philosophical. Robert, perhaps perplexed by Giles’ criticism, claims that Giles contradicts himself in his

\[\text{169 Cf. *ibid.* (ed. Vella, 61): “Concedo enim quod intellectus beatus modo predicto imponeret ei unum nomen, nec hic repugnat quod diversi intellectus imponerent diversa nomina quoniam in diversis intellectibus esset diversa visio et per consequens diversa conceptio. Tamen in uno et eodem intellectu est nisi una visio, et ita nisi una conceptio, quare nisi unum verbum. Hoc tamen est sciendum, quod si verbum conceptum representet ipsam visionem qua Deus per essentiam videtur, sic non erit nisi unum verbum sicut et una visio... Si vero debet representare rem visam, et sic oporteret facere diversos conceptus in Patria sicut et in via, quia ille conceptus esset quid creatum, et impossibile est quod aliquid creatum representet ipsam divinam essentiam: tamen visio unius beati differt ab alterius visione secundum quod unus clarius alio videt bonitatem, unde supra Thomas dicit sic: Si intellectus noster Deum per seipsum videret illi rationi posset imponi unum nomen, quod erit in patria, ideo... Tamen si intellectus videns Deum per essentiam imponeret nomen rei quam videret, quod imponeret multa nomina.”}\]
summary of Thomas’ position: in the beginning Giles claims that Thomas holds that plurality is partially from the human intellect and partially from the side of God, whereas later he claims that according to Thomas plurality is solely on the side of the human intellect.\textsuperscript{170} Robert’s response to this contradiction is simply to quote a passage from the fourth sub-section of the \textit{Quaestio de attributis}, in which Thomas compares the views of Maimonides, Avicenna, and Anselm and states in what respect they spoke truly. Robert also quotes the response to the fifth principal objection in which Thomas explains how the divine essence verifies human concepts according to the strength of their truth (\textit{firmitatem suae veritatis}).\textsuperscript{171}

Robert concludes his discussion of distinction 2 with an argument that is not directly related to any of Giles’ statements. Robert claims that there is a triple plurality in God: one of Persons, attributes, and ideas. In extra-mental reality, all these entities are one. But when certain comparisons are made, these entities can be distinguished. When there is a comparison to the object (God), there is a plurality of Persons. When there is a comparison to the divine intellect, there is a plurality of ideas. When there is a comparison to the human intellect, there is a plurality of divine attributes. As far as the definition of an attribute is concerned (that is, the basic notion of attributing a perfection to God), there is a plurality of attributes in God. But Robert explains this as meaning that the attributes are in God because the divine intellect can compare the divine essence to

\textsuperscript{170} Cf. \textit{ibid.}: “Ad tertium dicendum quod ipse in arguendo repugnat sibi ipsi. Dicit in principio quod secundum quosdam huiusmodi pluralitas est ex parte intellectus nostri et aliquo modo ex parte rei; et postea dicit eos dicere quod tota pluralitas est ex parte intellectus nostri. Ista enim sunt contradictoria, quia si aliquo modo ex parte rei, non igitur tota pluralitas est ex parte intellectus nostri.”

\textsuperscript{171} Cf. \textit{ibid.} (ed. Valla, 61-62); Thomas de Aquino, \textit{Scriptum} I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/\textit{Quaestio de attributis} (ed. Mandonnet I, 70-71; Idem, \textit{Scriptum} I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 ad 5/\textit{Quaestio de attributis} (ed. Mandonnet I, 72).
creatures, knowing that it (the divine essence) is understood in diverse ways by creatures according to diverse perfections. But when the attributes are taken in an abstract sense, the subject of their plurality is the human intellect. Robert’s remark about the divine intellect comparing the divine essence to creatures betrays knowledge of Henry of Ghent’s Quodlibet V, and Robert’s position is the standard Thomistic response to Henry on the issue of the origin of the divine attributes.

3.3 William de la Mare

William de la Mare was the Franciscan regent master at Paris probably in the late 1260’s and might have been the student of John Pecham, though these facts are disputed. He was an English theologian best known for writing the Correctorium fratris Thomae. He was also the author of a Quodlibet and a commentary on the Sentences, both of which treat the issues surrounding the divine attributes. In both works William examines and rejects the Thomistic theory that the plurality of the divine attributes is caused by the human mind and in its place advocates a return to the twelfth-century semantic theory.

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172 Cf. ibid.: “Item sciendum est hoc quod idem sunt re ydea et attributum, sed aliter, quia ydea dicitur per comparationem ad intellectum divinum, quia huissmodi Deo attribuit. Secundum igitur quod attributum induit rationem, sic dicendum est, quod pluralitas attributorum est in Deo, quia in intellectu divino comparantem essentiam divinam ad creaturas, prout est sic intellecta ab hac vel hac creatura secundum talem vel talem perfectionem. Secundum vero quod abstracte dicitur attributum sic est pluralitas in intellectu nostro, ut dictum est. Sic igitur in Deo est triplex pluralitas, una per comparationem ad objectum, ut pluralitas personarum, alia per comparationem ad intellectum, vel divinum, sicut pluralitas ydearum, vel humanum, sicut pluralitas attributorum.”

In his commentary on Book I of the Sentences, William first argues for a plurality of attributes in God prior to criticizing Thomas’ view regarding their origin. He proves that they are in God both causally and formally. He shows that they are in God causally by an appeal to the Dionysian pre-eminence principle that perfections found in effects are found in a higher manner in their cause. Effects are in God formally because each attribute exists in its noblest manifestation in God. William includes the standard claim that despite the presence of the attributes in God, they are present in God in a different way than they are present in creatures, that is in God they are one and differ according to reason while in creatures they differ according to reality (secundum rem).

Having proved that there is a plurality attributes according to reason in God, William moves to consider the nature of the distinction of reason in God. He does this first by criticizing Thomas Aquinas. The text of Thomas that William has in mind is


174 For a discussion of Williams’ views as found in his commentary on the Sentences, see Hans Kraml, “William de la Mare,” 251-255 and Idem, “The Quodlibet of William de la Mare,” 154-161. Kraml gives slightly different accounts of the matter, but does see Thomas’ position as a development of Bonaventure. He does not, however, see the connection between connotation theory and the twelfth century, or remark upon Bonaventure’s reliance on it in the Breviloquium. Consequently, while Kraml speaks of William “moving beyond” Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, I prefer to describe him as “falling back” to the earlier Franciscan school and the twelfth century. However, according to Kraml, William may be the first to claim that the attributes are formally (formaliter) present in God, which could be considered an advance towards the formal distinction of Duns Scotus.

175 Cf. Scriptum I d. 2 q. 2 (ed. Kraml, 63-64): “...omnis perfectio quae est in causato debet inveniri in causa vel formaliter vel causaliter. Formaliter sicut calor invenitur in omnibus calidis per naturam ignis et in igne est calor formaliter. Causaliter sicut forte calor est in istis inferioribus per corpora superiora et in eis est causaliter tantum et ideo, cum in creatura rationali invenitur sapientia, bonitas, pulchritudo, fortitudo, prudentia et huiusmodi, oportet quod ista sint in Deo et quia nihil potest esse causa bonitatis nobilior quam bonitas, bonitas enim a nullo causatur ita bene sicut a bonitate, nec causa nobilior sapientiae quam sapientia et sic de aliis, ideo ista attributa sunt in Deo etiam formaliter, sed tamen alio modo quam in creatura quia in Deo sunt ut unum et sola ratione distincta, in creaturis autem differunt etiam secundum rem.”
clearly the *Quaestio de attributis*. He summarizes the opinion of his unnamed opponent as holding that the diversity of reason is partly on the side of God and partly on the side of the creature, which is the case because the divine essence exceeds the creature by its infinity and so the creature cannot comprehend the divine essence by one act but requires several. The plurality of divine attributes then is the result of the multiple human concepts formed of the divine essence.\(^{176}\)

William rejects Aquinas’ position by means of two (in the *Quodlibet* there are three) somewhat unclear and uncompelling arguments. He first argues that each divine attribute itself is infinite, and so exceeds the capacity of the created intellect to grasp it; but the divine perfection apprehended by the intellect does not exceed the intellect, therefore a perfection so apprehended is not an attribute.\(^{177}\) Here he seems to be trying to break the link between divine attributes and human cognition. The implication for Aquinas is that he was wrong to think the divine essence served as a foundation for the human concepts of attributes, for there are no such concepts.

The second objection argues against the same feature of Thomas’ position. William argues that on Thomas’ view the difference between the attributes is between

\(^{176}\) *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 2 (ed. Kraml, 64): “Ad secundum quaestionem dicendum secundum quosdam quod ista diversitas rationis partim sumiter a parte rei, partim a parte intellectus nostri, et hoc patet sic: Perfectio divina excedit omnem perfectionem creaturae in infinitum, ideo excedit capacitatem intellectus creati in infinitum et ideo unica apprehensione aut conceptione non potest apprehendere divinam perfectionem. Ideo diversis conceptionibus apprehendit, ut modo una apprehensione apprehendat potentiam, alia scientiam, alia sapientiam et sic de aliis et ista perfectio sub tali determinatione sic apprehensa est attributum et secundum diversitatem conceptionum et apprehensionum est diversitas attributorum.”

\(^{177}\) *Ibid.*: “Haec autem opinio stare non potest quia quodlibet attributum in Deo excedit nostrum intellectum in infinitum, sed perfectio apprehensa ab intellectu sub tali determinatione non excedit intellectum, ergo talis perfectio sic apprehensa non est attributum.”
more and less, because the intellect first understands power, then knowledge, then
wisdom, and so on. The only difference between these different attributes, however, is
then the order in which the intellect cognizes them. Here William ignores Aquinas’ use of
the rationes, each of which, even if generated by a series of human cognitive acts,
contains its own intrinsic content that differs from the ratio of another attribute.178

William’s own view of the matter is that the diversity of reason is founded neither
in the divine essence nor in the human intellect. The difference between the attributes is
rather a result of the effects in the created world that co-signify or connote the attributes.
William adduces the examples of mercy and justice, the standard examples found in the
twelfth-century discussions: justice connotes the effect of granting to each person
according to his merits, mercy connotes the effect of aiding the unhappy. The foundation
of the distinction is the diverse effects in creatures, because if the foundation was the
human intellect alone, without reference to the effects in creatures, the intellect would be
false because it does not correspond with anything (God cannot serve as the foundation of
diversity owing to divine simplicity). That is, the only foundation would be the intellect
itself. As further explanation of his position, William relates an example of Averroes:
Socrates in the forum is only rationally distinct from Socrates at home. The foundation of
the diversity is not Socrates, but the forum and the house.179

178 Ibid.: “Item si ita esset ut dicunt, cum istae perfectiones sic apprehensae non different nisi
secundum magis et minus quia intellectus primo apprehendit in Deo potentiam, secundo magis proficit et
apprehendit scientiam, terto adhuc magis proficit et apprehendit in eo sapiens anim et sic de aliis, tunc ista
attributa divina non different nisi secundum magis et minus et hoc non est verum.”

179 Ibid. (ed. Kraml, 64-65): “Propterea dicendum est aliter quod ista attributa in Deo sunt omnino
unum et diversitas rationis secundum quam different, non fundatur in Deo nec fundatur in intellectu nostro
solum, quia ex quo nihil ei responderet in re, esset cassus et vanus. Sed ratio diversitatis aliquorum
attributorum, ut sunt misericordia et iustitia, fundatur super effectus connotatos. Iustitia enim connotat
William also raises a possible objection: if it is granted that there are some attributes that do not have connoted effects, what then is the foundation of the diversity? (An example here might be divine omnipotence or infinity.) William replies that in this case the foundation is still the perfections found in creatures which are composites of really distinct attributes. The human intellect applies the perfections to God, and somehow knows that although they are really distinct in creatures they are only rationally distinguished in God. In this way, William thinks that he can still maintain that the foundation of the real diversity is in creatures rather than in God.\(^{180}\) This view is not terribly distant from that of Thomas Aquinas, however, and it remains unclear how William can claim this without allowing for the possibility that the human mind cognizes the divine essence or corresponds to it.

As we have seen, leading Franciscans such as Bonaventure and Alexander of Hales also held the twelfth-century semantic solution to the problem of the divine attributes. William, then, is part of this earlier Franciscan tradition. Not surprisingly, given his textbook status among the Franciscans, William’s endorsement of the semantic solution was adopted by others. Roger Marston is one example of a master who largely

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\(^{180}\) Ibid.: “Sed quid dicemus: Nonne sine effectu connotato ponimus multa attributa in Deo? In quo ergo talium attributorum diversitas fundatur?Dicendum secundum Commentatorum, Super 11. Metaphysicae, quod intellectus intelligit talia attributa secundum assimilationem ad res compositas, et quia videt quod ista attributa differunt re, ponit quod in Deo differunt ratione. Ista ergo diversitas rationis fundatur super realem diversitatem istorum in creaturis, non autem fundatur super aliquam diversitatem in Deo, et ideo intellectus hanc diversitatem rationis ponens inter attributa divina non est cassus et vanus.”
accepted William’s position without any additions of his own, maintaining both positive attributes in God and the explanation of their plurality by recourse to the twelfth-century connotation theory.\textsuperscript{181}

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have surveyed a number of responses to Thomas Aquinas from roughly the period 1270-1290. We have seen a number of different reactions. Some Dominicans simply paraphrase Thomas. Giles of Rome criticized Thomas’ formulations, but largely adopted the Thomist solution. Giles’ criticism was itself criticized in a series of polemical treatises defending Thomas’ original formulation. Among the Franciscans, some also paraphrased Thomas, while others developed objections. At the heart of this discussion was Aquinas’ Quaestio de attributis, which was seen by most of the thinkers whom we have examined Thomas’ definitive treatment of the divine attributes. The probable Bonaventurian and Albertist origin of Thomas’ solution was forgotten.

Recalling our threefold division of the medieval solutions to the problem of divine attributes from the introduction to this study, we can see that two of the solutions are at play among Thomas’ critics and defenders. The semantic solution was defended by prominent Franciscans earlier in the thirteenth century and continued to be maintained by Franciscan thinkers. What I have called the ‘Thomist’ position was not substantially modified by most of the theologians whom I have discussed in this chapter. At this stage

\textsuperscript{181} Cf. Quodlibet I q. 13 and Quodlibet III q. 1 in Fr. Rogeri Marston O.F.M. Quodlibeta Quatuor, ed. Girard Etzkorn and Ignatius Brady (Grottaferrata: Padri Editori di Quaracchi, 1994). These date from the early- to mid-1280’s.
of the debate, moreover, there was an agreement that the mind that distinguishes the
divine attributes is the human mind. This would change with Henry of Ghent, who
introduced a division among the adherents of the Thomist solution with his claim that the
mind in question is the divine mind.
CHAPTER 4:
HENRY OF GHENT

Henry of Ghent was the most significant thinker at the University of Paris between the death of Thomas Aquinas (1274) and the arrival of John Duns Scotus (1302), and his works continued to be read into the early modern period. His views on the divine attributes are an example of his significance, for they generated controversy during his lifetime and beyond. The significance of Henry’s views lies in the rupture that they caused among the proponents of the Thomist solution. Prior to Henry’s *Quodlibet V* of 1280, most Scholastic thinkers followed Thomas Aquinas on the attributes, though the semantic solution continued to win followers. Henry was deeply influenced by Thomas’ position, but significantly modified it. Henry claimed that the intellect that distinguished the attributes was in fact the divine intellect, rather than the human intellect, as Thomas had claimed, thereby solving the problem of the correspondence between the divine essence and the human mind. For Henry, there is a plurality of divine attributes *ab aeterno*, prior to all human cognition of the divine essence. This eternal plurality of attributes corresponds to the plurality of human concepts of God. Consequently, Henry’s views introduced a rift among the defenders of the Thomist solution, and he was attacked by defenders of Thomas Aquinas, such as Godfrey of Fontaines, who reaffirmed that the created intellect was the cause of the attributes. They attempted to account for the divine cognition of the attributes by recourse to the theory of the divine ideas: God primarily
knows his essence, and knows that it can be imitated in various ways by creatures who form various concepts of God.

Henry’s lengthy discussions about the divine attributes are the most extensive of any medieval thinker. Consequently, we have organized Henry’s involved treatment into four main topics: (1) his criticism of the Thomist position, (2) the definition of the divine attributes, (3) the origin of the divine attributes, which is Henry’s most innovative contribution to the debate, and (4) the degree of distinction that obtains among them.182

4.1 Henry on the Thomist Solution

Despite his original contributions to the debate over the attributes, Henry was profoundly influenced by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors, such as Bonaventure, Giles of Rome, and especially Thomas Aquinas. Most modern scholarship, however, emphasizes the Platonic (in its Augustinian and Avicennian forms) elements of Henry’s thought.183 One of Henry’s most controversial positions, that the activity of the divine intellect causes the plurality of the divine attributes, had its origins in Thomas’ idea of a distinction that is made by the intellect but founded in the thing (fundamentum in re). Henry, however, changed the intellect under consideration from the human intellect, as in Thomas’ view, to the divine. This move simplified Thomas’ solution, because it dispensed with the need to specify the foundation for the human intellect in its

182 Henry’s positions with respect to the divine attributes remained stable throughout his career; in this chapter we shall investigate material from the period ca. 1279 to ca. 1292. For the chronology of Henry’s works, see J. Gómez Caffarena, “Cronología de la ‘Suma’ de Enrique de Gante por relación a sus ‘Quodlibetos,’” Gregorianum 38 (1957), 116-133.

cognition of the divine essence, at least as far as the origin of the divine attributes is concerned. This is because there is a plurality of divine attributes from eternity; all the human intellect must do is discover them. Thomas Aquinas, as we saw above, detailed three kinds of foundations for human concepts and ultimately decided that the divine essence served as the immediate foundation for the human intellect. This proved unsatisfying to some thinkers, and there was debate on the topic. Giles of Rome, for example, argued that there needed to be a fourth way, midway between a mediate and immediate foundation, to account for his view that a divine name signifies the divine essence immediately according to the res intellecta, but only mediatly according to the modus intelligendi, since human beings do not enjoy a direct cognition of the divine essence in the present life.\(^{184}\)

Henry reports the common opinion on the attributes in his Summa of ordinary questions, article 32, question 4, which treats the signification of the attributes. After a lengthy analysis and quotation of such authorities as Maimonides, Averroes, Avicenna, Augustine, and pseudo-Dionysius, Henry turns to the common opinion, which is largely the position of Thomas Aquinas. Henry provides the basic features of Thomas’ account, such as the idea that the divine perfection so surpasses the human intellect that the latter requires a multiplicity of concepts in order to grasp the divine essence, and that the distinction of divine attributes is a result of the operation of the human or angelic

\(^{184}\) Hester Gelber, Logic and the Trinity, 39-40, claims that Henry’s debt to Thomas Aquinas is the view that if God were to present himself immediately to a created intellect, that intellect would still know by means of a plurality of concepts; but Gelber’s summary of Henry’s argument that incorporates this Thomistic view is not found in any of the passages currently under consideration, nor does Gelber give a reference for this argument.
intellect. Henry concludes that on this view, if there were no created intellect, then there would be no diversity of attributes in God, whether in reality, intention, or reason. This claim, however, does not faithfully represent the position of Thomas Aquinas, who had explicitly denied that God has no attributes ab aeterno in the *Quaestio de attributis*.\(^{185}\)

Consequently, Henry may have more in mind than simply the views of Thomas, or he may think that the logic of Thomas’ position amounts to such a denial of the attributes. In this passage of his *Summa* Henry did not criticize the common opinion, though he promised to return to the topic when he treats the distinction of divine attributes.\(^{186}\)

Henry fulfills this promise in article 51 question 1 of the *Summa*, which is devoted to a lengthy analysis and refutation of this position.\(^{187}\) This is worthy of note.

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\(^{185}\) Cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Scriptum* I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3/*Quaestio de attributis* (ed. Mandonnet I, 71): “Unde si nullam creaturam fecisset nec facturus esset, ipse in se talis esset ut posset vere considerari secundum omnes istas conceptiones, quas habet nunc intellectus noster ipsum considerando.”

\(^{186}\) Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa* a. 32 q. 4, ed. R. Macken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), 72: “Et hic est communis opinio, quod solummodo in comparatione ad intellectum creatum humanum vel angelicum habent divina attributa differentiam inter se. Ut nulla omnino dicatur esse differentia attributorum in Deo, nisi ex comparatione ad intellectum creatum non potenter totum pelagus divinae perfectionis una ratione concipere et simul, propter quod pluries sub diversis rationibus et modis concipiendi concipit eundem. Cum tamen ipse suam perfectionem totaliter unico simplici intuitu conceperit sine omni rationem diversitatem, sed sub illa unitate ad quam reedit omnis rationum diversitas, sub qua concipitur ab intellectu increato, non concipitur ab intellectu creato, ita quod, si non esset intellectus creatus sic diversos conceptus sub diversis perfectionibus formans de Deo, nulla omnino dicenda esset in Deo esse diversitas attributorum, non solum secundum rem aut secundum intentionem, sed neque etiam secundum rationem. Sed quid nobis videatur super hoc sentiendum, inferius videbitur loquendo de differentia attributorum in Deo.”

\(^{187}\) A similar discussion was carried out earlier in *Quodlibet* V q. 1, which was disputed at roughly the same time as this article of the *Summa* was written. Cf. *Summa* a. 51 q. 1 (ed. Führer, 216): “Quaestionem istam determinavimus anno praeterito in quadam quaestione de Quolibet, ex qua aliqua succincte capientes et reliqua ex ibi declaratis supponentes...” Strangely, Hester Gelber claims that Henry is arguing against Godfrey of Fontaines, even though she begins her discussion of Henry by dating his *Quodlibet* V to 1280 and Godfrey of Fontaines’ *Quodlibet* VII to 1290. See *Logic and the Trinity*, 35, 37. Henry has a very specific target in mind in this *Quodlibet*, and not Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa*, as Maarten Hoenen has argued. The position Henry attacks contains the example of the relation between a point and a line (similar to Giles of Rome), as well as the claim that there is only one divine attribute, *deitas*, and that all other attributes are mere human fictions. Cf. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen*, 40-41. I have not been able to identify Henry’s opponent.
because the counter-attack from his contemporaries, such as Godfrey of Fontaines, and Thomas of Sutton, is largely a modification of this common view. By studying Henry’s criticism of this position we can glean what his likely response to his critics would have been.

As Henry reports it, the common opinion can be reduced to two points: (1) the attributes are distinct only in relation to the corresponding perfections found in created things where they are distinct, and (2) the attributes do not differ as absolute beings, but only insofar as they are considered by an intellect. The second point Henry concedes, because he agrees that there must be some cognitive activity in order for the divine essence to be related to creatures in a way other than as their cause.\textsuperscript{188} The controversy concerns the first point, according to which the attributes are distinct in relation to an intellect. The underlying claim of this position is that a plurality of reason requires a prior plurality in reality. Applying this claim to the attributes, Henry argues on behalf of the common opinion that the attributes which are many in reason in God are only so because a mind has compared the divine essence to the plurality which exists in reality in the created world.\textsuperscript{189}

Henry’s response is that if the multiplicity arises from a diversity ultimately based on creatures, there must be a corresponding relation in God; this, however, could only be

\textsuperscript{188}Henricus de Gandavo, \textit{Summa} a. 51 q. 1, ed. M. Führer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007), 220: “Et continet dictum istud duo in summa, quorum primum est quod differentia attributorum non sumitur nisi ex comparatione ad correspondentia eis diversa re in creaturis, secundum est quod non sumitur etiam secundum hoc quod habent res esse in se absolute, sed solummodo secundum quod cadunt in consideratione intellectus. Nec est litigium de isto, quia bene verum est quod absque consideratione intellectus divina essentia non habet habitudinem ad ea quae sunt in creaturis, nisi secundum rationem causae, secundum quam non sumitur ratio attributorum, ut dictum est.”

\textsuperscript{189} Cf. \textit{ibid}. (ed. Führer, 216-219).
a relation in the genus of cause, specifically efficient cause. If this were the case, we
would be left with the opinion ascribed to Avicenna and Maimonides, according to which
God is not himself wise, but is only the cause of wisdom in creatures. Henry regards this
view as having been satisfactorily refuted in article 32.\footnote{Ibid. (ed. Führer, 217-218): “Si ergo diversitas illa secundum rationem est in Deo ex respectu ad diversa quibus respondent in creatura, oportet quod respectus huiusmodi sequantur in Deo ex aliquo modo se habendi ad creaturam, qui non est nisi secundum aliquod genus causae, maxime efficientis. Nisi enim illa diversa re in illis efficerec, respectum ad illa non haberet, ut eis denominaretur... Et sic sequeretur quod omnia huiusmodi attributa Deo attribuerentur secundum genus causae efficientis tantum, secundum quod opinati sunt Avicenna et Rabbi Moyses, ut patet ex supra determinatis circa significata attributorum, et sic non diceretur iustus nisi quia facit nos iustos, neque sapiens nisi quia facit nos sapientes. Quod falsum est, quia contrarium est verum. Non enim nos faceret sapientes nisi prius sapiens esset, et sic de aliis. Et praeterea ista attributio non fit per proprietatem, sed per similitudinem et metaphoram tantum.”}

Again, granting (2), the intellect in question cannot be the created intellect, for the created intellect has no direct access to the divine essence and can conceive of it only by knowing creatures.\footnote{Ibid. (ed. Führer, 221): “…bene verum est quod non habet esse in Deo ex consideratione intellectus creati, nisi in consideracione intellectus attributa divinae essentiae comparantur ad sibi correspondentia in creaturis, quia intellectus creatus nihil omnino circa divinam essentiam concipit, nisi ex aliquo modo sibi correspondentii in creaturis, non solum rationem attributi, sed etiam nec rationem divinae essentiae, aut esse eius, quia Deum esse non conicit, nisi quia concipit esse in creaturis.”}

Henry follows this with the argument that if the opposing opinion were true and all distinction was solely the result of the created intellect’s activity, the problem would still remain that then God would only have attributes according to the manner of an efficient cause, for example, he would be called wise or just because he causes wisdom and justice in the created world.

If this were true, then there would be no way to say that God is wise or indeed to predicate any other attribute of him.\footnote{Ibid. (ed. Führer, 221-222): “Unde si nullo modo diversitas attributorum esset in Deo nisi ex consideratione intellectus creati, bene verum esset quod dicit opinio illorum, sed sic, ut dictum est, non diceretur ullo modo sapiens aut bonus aut aliquid huiusmodi ab aeterno nisi secundum genus causae efficientis, et hoc in habitu tantummodo...”}
Henry’s position is that the divine attributes are distinct prior to human cognition of God. The argument for this is that since the attributes exist eternally in God, the reason for their presence in God cannot be because they exist temporally in creatures. He also tries to prove this with the argument that God is perfect while creatures are imperfect, and since the perfect is prior in an absolute sense to the imperfect, therefore the attributes must be in God. Henry also supports his view with the theological argument that the attributes are the foundation of the trinitarian Persons (the Son proceeds through the activity of the divine intellect, the Holy Spirit by means of the divine will); the presence of the Persons in God and their distinction cannot be dependent on the human intellect in any way. This reference to the Trinity is one of Henry’s unique contributions to the debate; no other thinker links the Persons and the attributes so closely.\textsuperscript{193}

This argument, in addition to its interest with respect to Henry’s later critics, also sheds light on what Henry’s solution is to the problem of the divine attributes. He does not deny the common opinion that the created intellect forms multiple concepts of God that correspond to the divine attributes, nor that this is because a created intellect cannot conceive the divine essence directly in the present life so that the intellect is limited to knowing God through created perfections. Henry departs from the common opinion by arguing that the created intellect does not cause the distinction of the divine attributes.

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.} (ed. Führer, 222): “Illud autem falsum est, quia formaliter debent poni in Deo, et hoc ab aeterno, ut existentia ipsorum in creatura, etiam si in habitu, non sit ratio existendi ea in Deo, sed e verso magis, tum quia creatura habent rationem imperfecti et in Deo rationem perfecti, ratio autem perfecti semper absolute praecedit rationem imperfecti et est ratio illius, non autem e verso, tum quia differentia attributorum fundamentalis est respectu distinctionis personarum, quae nullo modo dicenda est esse in Deo ex aliiquo respectu ad creaturas...”
Thus it is necessary that the divine intellect distinguish the attributes, as we shall see below, with the result that they are distinct antecedent to any human cognition of them.

4.2 The Definition of the Divine Attributes

According to Henry’s view in his *Summa*, a. 32 q. 1, all human cognition begins with sensible objects. The human mind is able to discern perfections in the created world and attribute these perfections to God. These perfections, as predicated of God, are the divine attributes.194

Adopting a distinction from Aristotle, Henry holds that there are two different kinds of perfections, both of which can be predicated of God.195 The first kind is what perfects a creature in substantial being, as a substantial form gives being in a primary sense. The second is what perfects a creature in accidental being, which is said to perfect it in existing (*bene esse*).196 Relying on quotations from Aristotle, Henry argues that those perfections in creatures that perfect them in existence are quasi-attributes of the primary being of creatures; by an invocation of Anselm’s rule that ‘whatever it is absolutely better

194 Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa* a. 32 q. 1 (ed. Macken, 30): “Iuxta ea igitur quae videmus in creaturis, conicere debemus ea quae intelligere debemus in Creatore, et hoc maxime in creaturis sensibilibus, ex quibus omnis nostra scientia concipitur ortum habens ex sensu...”

195 Cf. Aristotle, *Topics* III c. 2 (118a5-10).

196 Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa* a. 32 q. 1 (ed. Macken, 30): “Nunc autem in creaturis duo videmus quae ad earum perfectionem pertinent. Unum per quod perficiuntur secundum gradus suos in esse substantiali, ut est forma substantialis cuiuscumque, quae dat ei esse primum... Aliud vero est, per quod perficiuntur in esse accidentalis, ut est forma nobilis accidentalis, quae dat ei bene esse, quod appellatur esse secundum...”
to be than not to be’ can be attributed to God, he argues that both kinds of perfections can be attributed to God.\textsuperscript{197}

Henry gives two ways in which the perfections derived from creatures are attributed to God: through creatures (\textit{per creaturas}) and from creatures (\textit{a creaturis}). In the first way, the perfections are negative, that is, they are negations of perfections found in creatures. Three such perfections are infinity, immutability and simplicity (simplicity is negative because it is generally interpreted as meaning “not composed of parts”). These perfections are said of God because he is a certain kind of essence, and they are obviously not found in creatures.\textsuperscript{198} The second mode (\textit{a creaturis}) is subdivided into two, both of which pertain to positive attributes. In the first, perfections such as living, essence and life are said to be in God; in the second, perfections such as wisdom and goodness are attributed to God on the basis that they are “noble” features of creatures. The first of these modes is based on perfections that are part of the essence of a creature, while the second mode is based on those that pertain to the accidents of an essence. The two parts of this subdivision correspond to the aforementioned Aristotelian distinction between primary and secondary perfections.\textsuperscript{199}

\textsuperscript{197} Cf. \textit{ibid.} (ed. Macken, 31): “Et secundum regulam praedictam Anselmi, quod ‘absolute melius est ipsum quam non ipsum’... Esse igitur ex circumstantia bonorum Deo attribuendum est, non solum esse absolutum. Hoc autem non fit nisi Deo attribuendo aliqua quae sunt dignitatis et nobilitatis absolutae in creaturis.”

\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Summa}, a. 32 q. 1 ad 3 (ed. Macken, 33): “Ad tertium dicendum, quod aliquid conicimus in Deo ex creaturis dupliciter: aut quia per creaturas, aut quia a creaturis. Primo modo conicimus in Deo simplicitatem, immutabilitatem, infinitatem et huiusmodi, quae insunt Deo ratione qua est essentia quaedam, et nullo modo sunt in creaturis.”

\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Ibid.}: “Secundo modo conicimus aliqua in Deo esse dupliciter, aut ab eis quae sunt de essentia creaturae, aut ab eis quae sunt addita essentiae velut accidentia in ea. Primo modo conicimus Deo inesse vivere, essentiam et vitam. Secundo modo conicimus ei inesse sapientiam, bonitatem et huiusmodi, et hoc quia videmus ea aliquo modo inesse creaturis ut aliquid nobile, propter quod ea attribuimus Deo...”

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Henry does not think that all three kinds of attributes (negative, substantial, “accidental” or those that perfect with respect to existence) are attributes according to the strict definition of an attribute, a bold claim in respect of the thinkers whom we have examined thus far. According to Henry, perfections predicated of God in the first way (negative attributes, such as infinity or immutability) are not properly attributes, although he allows that they can be considered such in an extended sense of the term. Perfections predicated according to the first subdivision of the second mode are not considered attributes either, not even in an extended sense.\textsuperscript{200} Attributes strictly speaking are only those perfections predicated according to the second subdivision, that is, the mode in which accidents are predicated of an essence or which perfect the substantial, primary being according to its existence.\textsuperscript{201} These attributes have a definition (\textit{rationem}), which has three features: (1) there is a subject underlying the attribute, and the attribute is a corresponding “quasi” disposition of the subject; (2) it is something noble; and (3) it is also found in creatures.\textsuperscript{202}

Henry further develops his account of the nature of an attribute in question 4 of the same article.\textsuperscript{203} In this elaborate question, devoted to the topic of whether the

\textsuperscript{200} Henry here refers to three ways of attributing created perfections to God, rather than the two ways in which the second is subdivided into two parts as he had at the beginning of the paragraph.

\textsuperscript{201} \textit{Summa}, a. 32 q. 1 ad 3 (ed. Macken, 33-34): “Quae primo modo coniciuntur in Deo, non dicuntur attributa, nisi extenso nomine. Quae vero secundo modo conicimus Deo inesse ex creaturis, nullo modo dicuntur attributa Deo, sed solum illa quae conicimus ei inesse tertio modo.”


\textsuperscript{203} Divine simplicity is motivating the discussion, as is clear from one of the principal arguments of \textit{Summa} a. 32 q. 4 (ed. Macken, 56): “Attributa omnia, esse Dei et eius essentiam praesupponendo, Deo attribuuntur. Unde dicuntur attributa, quia esse vel essentiae eius tributa. Et est essentia vel esse Dei quasi
attributes have a positive or negative signification, Henry reconciles the views of Avicenna, Augustine, Anselm, pseudo-Dionysius and Maimonides; essentially, he treats here the entire pre-Scholastic tradition on the divine attributes. In a section of the question examining in turn the ratio, mode of signifying, and imposition of a name, Henry revisits the process of attributing a created perfection to the divine nature. He rehearses two of the three above-mentioned features of a ratio of an attribute and gives some examples of rationes.204 For creatures, the ratio of wisdom is that it illuminates the cognitive power, while that of goodness is that it draws the affective power. For God, the ratio of divine wisdom is that the divine essence illuminates the cognitive power of God, enabling his cognition of the true.205 Henry is here expanding on Thomas’ definition of the term ‘ratio’ by giving examples of what it is that the name signifies.

Unlike the conditions of an attribute that Henry developed in the first question of article 32, in question 4 he maintains that an attribute is constituted from a ratio and the divine essence. That is, the concept of an attribute, or alternatively, what is signified by

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204 Summa, a. 32 q. 4 (ed. Macken, 65): “Sciendum est ergo iuxta praedeterminata, quod nomina attributorum prima impositione imposita sunt rebus, quae in creaturis dicunt aliquid quod est perfectionis et dignitatis simpliciter, quod melius est omnino esse ipsum quam non ipsum, et a creaturis transferuntur ad Creatorem, non secundum naturam rei significatae, quia illa non habet inesse Creatori, sed secundum rationem illam nobilitatis, quae supereminenter habet esse in Creatore circa ipsam divinam essentiam, in quantum habet in se rationes omnium perfectionum in quantum simpliciter perfectiones sunt in creaturis, ut infra videbitur.”

205 Ibid. (65-66): “Cum enim ratio perfectionis sapientiae propria in creaturis in quantum sapientia est, sit illustrare virtutem cognitivam, et ratio propria boni allicere affectivam, rationes istae, quia simpliciter nobilitatis sunt, ponendae sunt existere in perfectione divinae essentiae, ut ipsa in quantum ex se habet rationem illustrantis, sit verissime sapientia, et tanto verius quam sapientia creati, quanto verius illustrat cognitivam virtutem in Deo ad cognitionem veri, quam illa illustrat cognitivam virtutem in creatura; et sic de bonitate et aliis attributis.”
the name of an attribute, is a simple concept comprising both the *ratio* of the attribute and the divine essence. For example, “divine wisdom” is a simple concept containing the divine essence and the *ratio* of “illuminating the divine intellect.” Both of these aspects of the concept of an attribute are required to constitute the concept. The *ratio* is formally (*formaliter*) constitutive of the attribute (though it should be noted that he qualifies this with “quasi”), while the divine essence is materially (*materialiter*) constitutive of the attribute. The *ratio* differs from the divine essence, however, when the divine essence is considered absolutely, and also differs from the *rationes* of all other attributes (presumably, by reason or *ratione*). The concept of a divine attribute is then the divine essence considered under a *ratio*, which is a “quasi” something added to the essence.206 Henry does not specify the agent doing the thinking in this passage, but as we shall see below, it is the divine intellect.

This view of the concept of an attribute does not conflict with Henry’s definition or features of an attribute that we have examined above. The features determine the content of the *ratio*, the formal aspect of the concept, while the divine concept of an attribute requires both a material and formal aspect. Both questions of the *Summa* contain the underlying idea that there is a subject and something that perfects a subject.

Henry is aware that his position appears to conflict with divine simplicity and takes steps to alleviate the tension. He notes that there cannot be an addition to the

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206 *Summa* a. 32 q. 4 (ed. Macken, 66): “Et ista duo, scilicet essentia et huiusmodi ratio, in uno simplici conceptu conclusa constituant attributum, et attributum ambo in significato nominis sui continet. Ita tamen quod formaliter imponatur nomen ab illa ratione, per quam differt ab essentia ut absolute consideratur, et a quolibet alio attributo. Unde et quasi formaliter est constitutiva attributi, quod continet in se essentiam quasi materialiter: attributum enim nihil aliud est quasi secundum rationem alicud additum super divinum essentiam.”
essence of a being that is positive and absolute unless it differs from it in reality (re) or in intention (intentione). Something positive and absolute necessarily makes the concept other than that to which it is added; things that are positive and absolute can then only be conceived as such. Owing to divine simplicity, therefore, the divine attributes cannot be positive and absolute entities. This leaves Henry, explicitly following Avicenna, with the option that the attributes are either negative or relative.207 This is not to suggest that Henry denies positive attributes in the more general sense of positive attributes inherited from the previous philosophical tradition, however. Henry grants positive attributes according to the Dionysian way of pre-eminence and the Anselmian method of attributing pure perfections to God, but these perfections are qualified by the addition of the prefix “super”. An example of this is the modification of “goodness” into “super-goodness.” This modification, however, signifies excess, and by it humans do not understand what they signify, rather only what they intend to signify.208

207 Ibid.: “Nunc autem ita est, quod additio super essentiam alicuius positivi et absoluti non potest esse, nisi alicuius differentis ab essentia re vel intentione, quia differens positivum et absolutum necessario facit conceptum alium ab eo cui additur. Non est enim positivum absolutum, nisi secundum se et absolute possit concipi... Et ita additio positivi absoluti non est nisi in differentibus re vel intentione. Quae omnino divinae simplicitati repugnant... Attributum ergo divinum, quantum est de ratione impositionis nominis attributi, a qua habet quod dicatur attributum, non potest significare aliquid absolute positivum. Cum ergo praeter rationem significandi absolutae et positive non est nisi ratio significandi negative et in respectu, simpliciter ergo dicendum quod nullum attributum, quantum est ex ratione formalis attributi in Deo, significat aliquid absolute positivum... immo omnia attributa, quantum est de ratione propria attributi, aut significant negative, aut in respectu, secundum quod dicit Avicenna...”

208 Ibid. (ed. Macken, 71): “Exemplum de tertio modo est, quod Deus dicitur bonus vel sapiens et cetera huiusmodi, quia ista aliquid perfectionis simpliciter, quod est omnino melius esse ipsum quam non ipsum, significant in creaturis, significando in ratione excessus, quemadmodum significant superbonus et supersapiens non id quod per huiusmodi nomina significatum intelligimus, sed significari intendimus.”
4.3 The Origin of the Divine Attributes

Henry’s most extensive treatments of the distinction, origin, and reconciliation of the plurality of attributes with divine simplicity are found in his *Quodlibet* V question 1 and *Summa* article 52. In these texts Henry advances views that provoked criticism from nearly all of his contemporaries and caused a division among the proponents of the Thomist solution, namely, those who held that the divine attributes are the effects of cognitive activity.

Henry examines the fundamental question of this study, namely, whether the plurality of divine attributes is consistent with divine simplicity in *Quodlibet* V q. 1. The stated topic of the question is whether the divine attributes should be understood to be distinguished according to a relation *ad intra* or not, that is, whether the attributes are distinguished by a relation to some feature of the divine nature or by a relation to some aspect of the created realm.

Henry’s solution to the problem is to draw a distinction between two senses of divine simplicity. According to the first sense, the divine essence is considered

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211 Note that this distinction corresponds to the two senses of *esse* enjoyed by every *res*; see *Quodlibet* V q. 1 ad arg. in opp. (ed. Badius I, f. 153vA): “...res quaecumque non habet nisi duplex esse: unum in se absolute ut est extra intellectum, aliud ut est in conceptu intellectus et hoc dupliciter: vel simplici intelligentia vel collatione circa eam facta. Unde cum attributorum diversitas nullo modo habet esse in re ex natura rei absolute ut est extra intellectum neque etiam ut in sua absolutione est considerata et in intellectu simplicis intelligentiae, nisi quasi in potentia, ut patet. Solummodo ergo habet esse in ea ut
according to the being (esse) that it has in itself absolutely, as it is a thing (res) and a nature. In this sense of divine simplicity, there is no plurality of any kind, not even a plurality of rationes. However, Henry qualifies this with the comment that there is a plurality in potency, in an extended sense of the term (nisi quasi in potentia tantum). In the second sense of divine simplicity the divine essence is considered according to the being that it has insofar as truth is known in the intelligence. This sense of divine simplicity is divided into two kinds: in the first the divine essence is considered insofar as it moves the divine intellect by simple understanding (the intellects of the angels and the blessed also have this mode of cognition), while in the second the divine intellect, posterior to its apprehension of the divine essence, cognizes (negotiando) the essence, causing distinctions of reason in the intellect.212 Here Henry is applying Aristotelian doctrine to the workings of the divine mind (though again, with the qualification of “quasi”).213 The actions of simple apprehension and reasoning are two of the three Aristotelian acts of the intellect. Whether or not they are genuinely Aristotelian, they

cadit in consideratione intellectus pertractantis et conferentis circa eam, per hoc quasi educentis rationes illas quae erant potentia in re secundum se considerata, de potentia in actum.”

212 Henricus de Gandavo, Quodlibet V q. 1 (ed. Badius I, f. 152v): “Dicendum quod de simplicitate divinae essentiae dupliciter possimus loqui. Uno modo secundum esse quod habet in se absolute ut res et natura aliqua. Alio modo secundum esse quod habet in quantum ut veritas cognita cadit in ipsa intelligentia. Si primo modo sic nullam omnino in se habet diversitatem sive pluralitatem etiam rationum, nisi quasi in potentia tantum. Unde si secundum modum talis esse concipiatur ab intellectu, concipitur secundum rationem suae simplicitatis absque omni respectu et pluralitate rei vel rationis. Sed sic nullus intellectus creatus ex puris naturalibus potest eam concipere, aut intelligere omnino sine adminiculo creaturarum.” At the end of his question,

213 This observation modifies the secondary literature. Maarten Hoenen, Marsilius of Inghen, 40-41, characterizes Henry’s entire theory as being a neo-Platonic derivation of multiplicity from the one’s self-knowledge, according to the emanative schemes found in Avicenna and the Liber de causis. Hester Gelber, Logic and the Trinity, 35, claims that the issue concerns how distinction and diversity can arise from the cognition of something simple. But Aristotle is exercising a greater degree of influence over Henry here than is Plato.
were viewed as such during the thirteenth century and certainly derive from the late-
anticipate Peripatetic tradition.²¹⁴

In the first member of the subdivision, namely simple apprehension, the divine
intellect understands the divine essence without any distinction, whether in reality or in
reason. There are no rationes of attributes at play at this stage, although we are again
confronted with “quasi-potency,” for Henry allows that the plurality of divine attributes is
present in the divine essence in this state.²¹⁵ The second member of the subdivision
corresponds to the second act of the human intellect, composition and division, although
it is not composition in the proper sense, as Henry’s version does not involve judgments
of truth and falsity. At this stage the divine intellect cognizes the divine essence
(negotiatur) and by its act of cognition educes the attributes from their state of quasi-
potency into act. This is accomplished without any reference to creatures, and although
the divine essence is still conceived in its “real” simplicity, nevertheless Henry allows
that there is a plurality and distinction of rationes present in it.²¹⁶

tres actus. Quorum primi duo sunt rationis secundum quod est intellectus quidam: una enim actio
intellectus est intelligentia indiuisibilium, siue incomplexorum, secundum quam concipit quid est res, et
hec operatio a quibusdam dicitur informatio intellectus siue ymaginatio per intellectum; et ad hanc
operationem rationis ordinatur doctrina quam tradit Aristotiles in libro Predicamentorum; secunda uero
operatio intellectus est compositio uel diuisio intellectuum, in qua est iam uerum et falsum; et huic rationis
actui deseruit doctrina quam tradit Aristotiles in libro Peryermenias. Tercius uero actus rationis est
secundum id quod est proprium rationis, scilicet discurrere ab uno in aliu, ut per id quod est notum
deuensiat in cognitionem ignoti; et huic actui deseruiunt reliqui libri logice.”

²¹⁵ Henricus de Gandavo, Quodlibet V q. 1 (ed. Badius I, f. 152v): “Si vero loquamur de
simplicitate divinae essentiae secundo modo sic adhuc consideratur dupliciter. Aut in quantum movet
intellectum quasi simplici intelligentia. Sic adhuc concipitur per rationem suae simplicitatis absque omni
respectu et pluralitate rei vel rationis, nec habet in se pluralitatem attributorum nisi quasi in potentia
tantum, et sic capit eam omnis intellectus beatus quasi prima et simplici actione intelligendi.”

quasi post comprehensionem huiusmodi negotiatur circa huiusmodi simplex comprehensum per actum
Later in the same question Henry explains how the divine intellect’s movement is ordered, distinguishing three stages:

First, by simple understanding he [God] conceives his essence under the aspect of essence; (2) and then by cognizing the essence as conceived, he conceives it as the object understood, as the agent that understands, and as the means (ratio) of understanding. And because in knowing and understanding himself he is also pleased, (3) he then conceives his essence as the object willed, the agent that wills, and the means (ratio) of willing.217

The sequence runs from knowledge of the essence as essence (1) to knowledge of the essence as understood (2) to knowledge of the essence as willed (3). Since the first stage corresponds to simple apprehension, the divine attributes are actualized in the second stage, analogous to composition and division. Again we are confronted by the Aristotelian acts of the intellect, applied to God in a manner foreign to Aristotle. Also un-Aristotelian is the introduction of the will to this sequence. While all three stages are properly the action of the divine intellect, the third stage presupposes the activity of the will (being “pleased” is an action of the will) and the knowledge of this activity. Henry does not state in this passage from the *Quodlibet* whether or not the will has its own stages of willing that parallel those of the intellect’s understanding. In the *Summa*, however, he posits at least two stages in the activity of the will: (1) an initial drawing or attraction (*allicit*) in which the divine intellect supplies an object for the will, and (2) the

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will moving itself to will the end. In all likelihood, the intellect supplies the object to
the will in its second stage, and once the will has been “attracted” (that is, its act has been
elicited) the intellect enters its third stage, conceiving the divine essence as willed. It
should be noted, however, that the divine will and intellect enjoy a more robust existence
than the other divine attributes, because the other attributes depend on the intellect and
will. Neither of these two latter powers seem to depend on the other, however, for
although the divine intellect supplies an object to the will and thereby moves it from
potency to act, the will does not exist as a relation of reason in the divine intellect.
Instead, the divine will has an independent operation and its own series of attributes
dependent on its operation, such as love, the lovable, and the good.

At this point a doubt arises. Since the divine intellect distinguishes the other
attributes, educing them into a state of actuality, what actualizes the intellect? Can it
actualize itself? Henry responds to the question in the negative. According to Henry, the
intellect cannot actualize itself but rather is moved to its act by its object, which is the
ture. Although the intellect supplies material for the will, the will is properly actualized
by the good. Henry does not expand on the consequences of this view, but at the very

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218 Cf. Summa a. 49 q. 5 (ed. Führer 91): “Bonum autem cognitum in intellectu allicit voluntatem,
qua allecta sua actione quasi movet se in finem, ipsum sibi adipiscendo sub ratione boni et finis ut est
causa causarum...”; see also q. 6 (ed. Führer, 136-137).

creaturas, oportet distinguui in Deo secundum rationem, intellectum et voluntatem, et eorum operationes, et
per consequens caetera attributa, ut sunt scientia, scibile, veritas et huiusmodi, ex parte intellectus, amor,
diligibile, bonum et huiusmodi ex parte voluntatis.”
least the good and the true must be distinct prior to the actualization of the divine intellect and will, perhaps in the divine essence or as aspects of it.\textsuperscript{220}

It is clear that the series of stages Henry introduces into divine cognition and volition explains the origin of the plurality of divine attributes and is a way to maintain both this plurality and divine simplicity. The attributes arise at the second stage of divine intellectual operation in which the intellect cognizes the divine essence, an operation which educes them from a state of potency to one of actuality. After this actualization, they exist as relations of reason founded in the divine essence but are in act in the divine intellect and the divine will. Henry does allow that there are real relations in God, but these are constitutive of the Persons of the Trinity and do not pertain to the divine attributes.\textsuperscript{221} This does not mean that there is no relation between the Persons and the attributes, however, for the Son proceeds by an act of the intellect and the Spirit by an act

\textsuperscript{220} Summa a. 51 q. 2 ad arg. princ. 1 (ed. Führer, 233): “Et similiter in proposita quaedam attributa magis dicuntur differre inter se quam quaedam alia, quia pluribus rationibus differunt, quia ratione illa qua attributa pertinentia ad divinum intellectum differunt ab illis quae pertinent ad eius voluntatem, non differunt ipsa inter se. Sed illa differentia qua different inter se etiam differunt quodam modo ab illis quae pertinent ad intellectum, quemadmodum differenunt bonum et verum quod verum et alia quae pertinent ad intellectum in hoc conveniunt quod communiter referuntur ad actum intellectus, bonum vero et alia quae pertinent ad voluntatem ad actum voluntatis communiter referuntur. Verum autem differt ab ipso intellectu quod verum est motivum intellectus, intellectus autem non est motivum sui ipsius. In quo etiam differt a bono quia bonum sub ratione boni non est motivum intellectus.” On the topic of the transcendentals, see Jan A. Aertsen, “Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent,” in Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of his Death (1293), ed. W. Vanhamel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 1-18.

\textsuperscript{221} Quodlibet V q. 1 (ed. Badius I, f. 152v): “Rationes enim attributorum secundum quas intellectus diversos conceptus de simplici essentia format non sunt nisi respectus fundati in divina essentia. Sunt autem respectus plures ne synonymi sint conceptus, quia conceptum plurium absolutorum circa divinam essentiam impedicit simplicitas... Ad videndum autem qualiter dicit respectus rationis accipiantur scindendum quod large sumendo respectus rationis vel relationem ad respectus quibus aliquid dicitur relative ad aliam et quibus non dicitur... in Deo praeter respectus ad creaturas, duplex est genus respectuum sive relationum ad intra: sunt enim in Deo quaedam relationes secundum rem sive reales, quaedam vero secundum rationem sive rationales. Relationem sive respectum realem important divinæ personæ et personales proprietates. Secundum rationem vero important omnia attributa. Omnia enim in suo significato includunt divinam essentiam ne sint vana, sub ratione alicius respectus ne sint synonyma.”
of the will. According to Henry, the act of the divine intellect is always first and the act of the will is always second. Once these powers are actualized, the Persons proceed in a subsequent logical instant after the powers reflect on themselves and enter into notional acts.222

Henry ultimately preserves divine simplicity because the attributes exist only as relations of reason in the intellect and will, enjoying no reality independent of divine intellecction and volition. The attributes are distinct, but only in the divine mind. Relying on the authority of Averroes, Henry is adamant that there is a vast gulf between things that are distinct in reality outside the mind and things distinct only by means of the operation of the intellect.223

Henry gives a similar account in his Summa, article 51. In this passage his vocabulary and doctrine bear a striking resemblance to that of Thomas Aquinas. This Thomistic influence, however, does not lead Henry to abandon the views found in his Quodlibet; the vocabulary is simply fused with the Thomistic language regarding a distinction completed by the intellect but with a foundation in the thing (fundamentum in re).224

222 For the series of instants (signa) by which the divine intellect and will generate the trinitarian Persons, see Summa a. 60 q. 5 ad 2 (ed. Badius II, f. 173r-R-S) and the discussion of this passage by Juan Carlos Flores, Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), 89-95.

223 Ibid. (ed. Badius I, f. 152v): “...ubi dicit Commentator magna est differentia inter ea quae differunt in esse tantum, et quae differunt in intellectu tantum. Multiplicitas igitur in Deo non est nisi in intellectu differentia, non in esse.” See also Summa a. 74 q. 1 (ed. I. Badius vol. 2, f. 281v): “Et magna differentia est inter ea quae differunt in esse et intellectu, et quae differunt in intellectu tantum. Multiplicitas ergo in Deo non est nisi in intellectu tantum non in esse.”

224 Cf. Summa a. 51 q. 1 in corp. (ed. Führer, 220): “Absque etiam considerattione intellectus et opere eius, quidquid est in Deo non habet rationem aliam quam simplicis essentiae, in qua secundum quod huiusmodi sicut in radice et quasi in potentia...”
In the third question of article 51, Henry examines whether the difference of the attributes causes any difference in God. Henry recalls and clarifies the two kinds of divine simplicity referred to in *Quodlibet* V q. 1, namely, the divine essence as a thing and a nature in potency to being understood, and the essence as known by the divine intellect. In article 51, he clarifies the senses of divine simplicity by describing the first kind as unity in reality (*rei*) while the second is a unity of reason (*rationis*). Additionally, he characterizes the first kind as infinite, which allows him to make it the origin and foundation of the second.225 The plurality of the attributes has being in the divine essence, although Henry qualifies this by describing the plurality as being present in the essence according to origin (*originaliter*) and root (*in radice*). The second of these terms is also present in Thomas Aquinas’ *Quaestio de attributis*, where it had two senses: to provide a foundation for the *rationes* of the attributes in the human intellect according to their being, and to found them in the divine essence according to their truth. According to Henry, the plurality of attributes requires the operation of the divine intellect, which “completes” the plurality of attributes and is able to distinguish one attribute from the other.226 If there were no foundation or root of the divine attributes on which the intellect

225 *Summa* a. 51 q. 3 ad 1 (ed. Führer, 236-37): “...dicendum quod in Deo praeter unitatem personalem est duplex unitas essentialis, quaedam rei, quaedam vero rationis. Prima est ipsius divinae essentiae secundum quod est res et natura aliqua, de qua habitum est supra quomodo est singularitas quaedam. Secunda vero est attributorum singulorum, et singulorum quae in Deo ponunt differentiam secundum rationem tantum. In prima unitate consistit divina simplicitas infinita, propier quod ipsa est origo et fundamentum omnis alterius unitatis et etiam pluralitatis secundum ipsam, sive sit personarum, sive attributorum...”

226 *Summa* a. 51 q. 3 in corp. (ed. Führer, 235): “Sic autem est in proposito quod pluralitas attributorum originaliter et sicut in radice habet esse in divina essentia, licet completive ab operatione intellectus, cuius est unita vel potius quae sunt unum et id ipsum discernere.” Cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Scriptum super Sententias*, I d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 ad 5/Quaestio de attributis (ed. Mandonnet I, 72): “Rationes ergo attributorum fundantur vel radicantur in intellectu quantum ad firmitatem sui esse... in essentia autem
could operate, then the attributes would be a figment of the divine intellect.\textsuperscript{227} Henry is not especially clear on this point, but this entire state of affairs is the result of God’s infinity and simplicity, which require that God be pure being and that he contain within himself, in a pre-eminently manner, every perfection that creatures possess only by participation. All of the kinds of \textit{rationes} that the divine essence contains, whether they are of attributes, personal properties, or ideal \textit{rationes} (that is, divine ideas), imply the \textit{rationes} of perfections and so, as such, cause no real composition in God.\textsuperscript{228} Another important reason for this, as Henry reaffirms in a reply to one of the initial objections, is...
that *rationes* in God are all relative, not absolute (that is, they are relations between different elements of the divine nature).  

This question of Henry is difficult to interpret. For while it is written clearly, it is also short and relies on positions Henry has developed elsewhere, most importantly in *Quodlibet V*. The question is summary in form and does not contain an explicit argument for why his view must be accepted. Setting this aside, it must be noted that this question is a rather clever attempt to accommodate the arguments of Thomas Aquinas to his position, whose view he had described as the common opinion in article 32 of his *Summa*. In this question he employs Thomistic language, such as the terms *completive* and *radice* and uses them in similar senses. He also appeals to the notion of Dionysian pre-eminence to explain the mode of being that the perfections of creatures have in God. Even the appeal to divine infinity is indebted to Thomas’ discussion, because it is the feature of the divine nature that causes it to exceed human comprehension and thereby—according to Thomas—helps cause the plurality of attributes. Despite this surface similarity to Thomas, however, Henry retains the basic elements of his quodlibetal discussion, such as his view that the attributes exist in quasi-potency in some way prior to the operation of the divine intellect, which by its activity draws the attributes from potency to actuality.

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229 *Summa* a. 51 q. 3 ad 2 (ed. Führer, 239-240): “De eo vero quod facit rem non esse penitus id ipsum secundum rationem, distinguendum: aut secundum rationem absolutam, aut secundum rationem respectivam... Secundo modo autem diversitas rationum in nulla re ponit compositionem, quia respectus nihil realitatis habet praeter realitatem sui fundamenti... deitas ipsa quasi fit, immo, ut verius dicam, est completive sapientia, bonitas et cetera huiusmodi per intellectus considerationem... ut ipsa deitas assumat in se rationem bonitatis, sapientiae et ceterorum absque cuiuscumque additione...”
Henry’s views as expressed in *Quodlibet* V q. 1 and *Summa* a. 51 are not immune from objections. His application of the Aristotelian acts of the intellect to divine cognition is certainly controversial, and even if not contrary to divine simplicity, seems to violate divine immutability. In Henry’s defense, in the first question of *Quodlibet* V Henry himself writes that in reality God conceives the divine essence in a single intuitive act.\(^{230}\) Also, in the *Summa* he expressly states that any progression or movement or priority and posteriority that he introduces into God should be understood under the qualification that it is according to the human mode of understanding, and so should not be interpreted as positing movement or priority on the side of God.\(^{231}\)

Henry might also be accused of violating divine simplicity by his usage of “quasi-potency”. This is because potency and act are distinct principles of being, and potency,

\(^{230}\) *Quodlibet* V q. 1 (ed. Badius I, f. 152v): “...ut cadit sub actuali perceptione intellectus, non simplicis intelligentiae, sed quasi componentis et dividendi, licet hoc intellectus divinus faciat uno simplici intuitu, quo totum pelagus infinitatis divinae essentiae comprehendit.”

\(^{231}\) *Summa* a 39 q.7, ed. Gordon Wilson (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 248-249: “Sic ergo quod ordo rationis et primum et secundum et huiusmodi circa divina sint ex parte intellectus nostri, hoc non contingit nisi quia intellectus noster ea quae considerantur in divinis non est natus concepere nisi per discursum... Et ideo sicut in ordine originis primum est illud a quo alius, et secundus qui ab alio, sic in ordine rationis primum est illud a quo discurritur in alium, et secundum, in quod discurritur ab alio. Quae etsi nullo modo recipereatur in divinis ex natura rei nisi originaliter, tamen recipi debent in eis ex parte et ex natura intellectus nostri, ut considerentur sicut determinaciones actus intelligendi intellectus nostri discurrentis dicto modo non autem aliquius ex parte rei. Et secundum hunc modum intelligimus in omnibus dictis nostris et scriptis, primum, secundum, tertium, et sic deinceps, ubicumque mentionem fecimus aut faciemus de eis, ut secundum hoc, si dicamus quod in Deo intelligere est primum, et velle secundum, aut quod verum est attributum primum, bonum vero secundum, ut quod essentia divina est prima, respectus vero vel relatio fundata in ipsa secunda, aut quod Patri intelligere et omnia essentialia conveniunt primo, Filio vero secundo, Spiritui Sancto autem tertio, hoc non intelligimus nisi ut primum, secundum, tertium, sunt determinationes solius actus intelligendi nostri, non autem aliquius ex parte rei intelliget.” Also relevant to this discussion is *Summa* a. 40 q. 6 ad 1 (ed. Wilson, 275): “Nunc autem intelligibilia distincta, distincte intellecta, non intelligentur diversis et distinctis actibus, nisi quando secundum se absolute, absque conceptione intellectus, sunt formalia objecta diversa; quando vero in uno formali objecto realiter conveniunt, in quo nullam habent distinctionem, sed unitatem, sed tamen habent radicem, secundum quam completive distinguunt possunt in ipsa operatione intellectus, unico simplici intuitu possunt intelligi distincte, unico actu intelligendi omnino indistincto.”
even in a loose or extended sense, is still potency. But against this it should be noted that
in the *Summa*, article 28, which is devoted to divine simplicity, Henry denies that there is
any composition of potency and act, absolute things, or intentions in God. Instead, the
potency affects the *rationes*, which are relations of reason in the divine intellect. Potency
here rather means potency to being understood and does not posit any potency in the
object being thought about (that is, Henry supports the principle that even in the case of
God, intelligibility is prior to actual understanding). While we might ask if this requires
that there is potency in the divine intellect, Henry would probably reply that he means
such statements to be understood as obtaining for the human mode of knowing, as we
saw above. Therefore, we should not understand Henry’s “quasi-potency” as if it were a
concrete entity halfway between real potency and non-potency. His denial that the divine
essence is composed of potency and act is then sufficient to safeguard divine
simplicity.\(^{232}\)

4.4 The Degree of Distinction of the Divine Attributes

We have seen that according to Henry divine attributes, which are composites
consisting of the divine essence and a *ratio* supplied by the divine intellect, are all
positive entities relative either to the divine intellect or the will and are “rooted” in the

actu et potentia... nec tamen potest inveniri in Deo quia in ipso non potest inveniri aliquorum diversitas re
absoluta vel intentione, ut infra videbitur, quorum tamen alterum necessarium est ad quamlibet
praedictarum compositionum, ut patet ex praedeterminatis et amplius declarabitur inferius. Unde etsi divina
essentia sit habilis ut concipiatur sub ratione sapientiae, bonitatis et huiusmodi, et sic quodammodo est in
potentia ad illa, sola tamen ratione haec omnia ab invicem differunt et ab ipsa divina essentia quae nullam
faciunt compositionem ita quod quocumque modo in Deo consideretur potentia, illa ab actu ad quem est,
sola ratione differt.”
divine essence. In many passages of his works Henry claims that everything in God is constituted by a *ratio*, whether it be an attribute, personal property, or divine idea. On many occasions Henry even writes that there are *rationes* “in” the divine essence. The ontological status of these *rationes* and the kind of distinction that obtains among them is the topic of this section. This is necessary because Henry constantly asserts that the divine attributes are identical with God but distinct in reason or distinguished by means of their *rationes*. So while we might think that Henry holds that the attributes are ‘intentionally’ distinct, perhaps in order to give a more real foundation in God for human cognition, this is in fact not the case. Indeed, Henry is quite explicit that the type of distinction that obtains between the divine attributes is a distinction of reason: “...for the attributes differ by reason (*ratione*) between themselves and from the essence and notional properties and Persons...” In order to further clarify this, however, we must locate the rational distinction within Henry’s general theory of distinctions.

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233 For example, see *Summa* a. 33 q. 2 in corp. (ed. Macken, 136): “Et est advertendum quod in Deo sunt aliqua, quae suo nomine dicunt rationes quasi formales attributorum essentialium, ut sunt veritas, sapientia, bonitas, et cetera huiusmodi...”; *ibid.* q. 3 in corp. (ed. Macken, 157): “[Deus] continet autem rationes illas omnium non tamquam aliqua multa, vel re vel intentione, sicut species naturae continent in se rationes generis et differentiae, sed tamquam unum simplex in essentia deitatis, quae est una ratio simplex intelligibilitatis in Deo ad intelligendum se ipsum...”; a. 35 q. 8 (ed. Wilson, 77): “...quod divina attributa omnia significant aliquid in Deo positive, quod id ipsum est, scilicet divina essentia, et hoc sub aliqua ratione respectus vel negationis reducendae ad affirmationem. Quem respectum significant diversa attributa diversimode, per quem et differunt secundum rationem inter se et a divina essentia, et quibus diversas perfectiones in Deo concipimus...”

234 *Summa* a. 51 q. 2 (ed. Führer, 231): “...fit discretio per intellectum attributorum in deitate ab invicem et ab essentia et ab omnibus quae in ipsa considerantur... Sola enim ratione attributa inter se et ab essentia et a proprietatibus notionalibus et a personis differunt...”. See also a. 52 q. 2 (ed. Führer, 251): “...pluralitas... differentium secundum rationem tantum, ut attributorum inter se et a personalibus...”; *Summa* a. 33 q. 2 ad opp. (ed. Macken, 153): “Nunc autem deitas, veritas et omnia attributa inter se cum divina essentia id ipsum sunt re, differunt autem sola ratione...”

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4.4.1 Henry’s Theory of Distinctions

There are three kinds of distinction in the thought of Henry of Ghent: real, intentional, and rational. The divine attributes are distinguished by the third kind, but we shall also briefly consider the others in order to provide context for the third.

The first is the real distinction. The precise nature of it is difficult to determine, however, because he appears to have two versions of it. This might be because it is used in a different sense in two different sciences. The first is the domain of physics and involves the separation of real, concrete existing things. The second is the realm of metaphysics and involves the separation of essences. The feature of each real distinction that separates them from the intentional and rational distinctions is real separability. This is a criterion that Henry in all likelihood takes from Giles of Rome; at the very least, the criterion emerged from debates with Giles regarding the distinction between essence and existence.

The second is the intentional distinction. This is one of Henry’s most controversial contributions to philosophy. Henry engaged in numerous debates with his

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contemporaries, especially Godfrey of Fontaines and Giles of Rome, largely over his claim that essence and existence are intentionally distinct. Contemporary scholars have also debated the interpretation of this distinction. Raymond Macken argues that it is supposed to be understood in an ontological sense as a distinction midway between a real distinction and a rational distinction, a view Roland Teske criticizes as “unhelpful.” Teske, however, provides no alternative save a comparison to modern neo-Thomistic theories of distinctions, and thus is guilty of the same charge. Macken’s interpretation, however, is more probable, since it is firmly grounded in the text of *Quodlibet* X q. 7, where Henry explicitly states that entities that are intentionally distinct have a greater degree of reality than those that are rationally distinct, and they differ less than those distinguished by a real distinction. The “intention” from which this distinction takes its name is not a second intention (though he does not deny it is a first intention), but rather something that, even if it is not a part of an essence, really pertains to an essence of an absolute thing and is able to be conceived without some other feature of the same

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238 Henry’s views on this topic are too complicated for me to treat here, but note that the primary divine attributes of intellect and will enter into this discussion as well: beings with esse essentiae are contained in the divine mind as ideas or exemplars, receiving esse actualis existentiae once the divine will has chosen to instantiate their essence in the created world. According to Henry, these two kinds of esse are intentionally distinct. On this topic, see Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent*, 108-115; Jan A. Aertsen, “Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent,” 1-18.


240 Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Quodlibet* X q. 7 in corp., ed. Raymond Macken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1981), 165-166: “Nec etiam differunt re... Sed medio modo, scilicet plus quam ratione sola et minus quam re... Est enim alius modus differendi secundum speciem... et est medius modus differendi secundum speciem, quo genus differt a differentia quia aliquam faciunt compositionem in specie, sed non realem ut prius. Unde, licet in dictis tribus modis differendi est differentia secundum magis et minus, non tamen omnes tres vel duo eorum sunt in eodem modo differendi secundum speciem, sed in diversis necessario... Baptizetur ergo ille modus medius et detur ei nomen, et si non competenter possit appellari differentia secundum intentionem, ut omnino idem sit differre intentione et ratione, detur ei aliud nomen.”

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Henry defines an *intentio* as “a kind of inward focus, in which the mind ‘tends’ by its concept into something which is determinately in some thing, and not into something other which is a part of the same thing.” Separability is still at play in this distinction, but it is only in thought (unlike the real distinction). The basic idea is that the intellect, by knowing an absolute thing outside the mind, can form diverse concepts of the features of the object, which are called ‘intentions,’ and which are distinct from each other “intentionally.” Consequently, when this distinction is described as “midway” between a real and a rational distinction, this means that it takes elements from both, since it is based on the activity of the intellect concerning an extrametrical object, rather than that it obtains in a third degree of being other than pure being of reason and pure, real being outside the intellect. We could also label this distinction as “mixed,” because it involves the combination of the mental and the real, rather than being based solely on

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242 *Ibid.*: “Unde dicitur intentio quasi intus tentio eo quod mens conceptu suo in aliquid quod est in re aliqua determinate tendit, et non in aliquid aliud quod est aliquid eiusdem rei, ut sic super idem in re per intellectum, cuius est dividere ea quae sunt idem in re, formentur diversi conceptus, ut de diversis penes conceptum mentis, eisdem autem in re.”


244 Note that according to most Scholastics being is exhaustively divided into the real being of the categories and mental being in the soul, a view commonly attributed to Aristotle. Cf. *Les Auctoritates Aristotelis un florilège médiéval: Ètude historique et édition critique*, ed. J. Hamesse (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1974), 128: “Ens per se aliquid est in anima, aliquid extra animam, et divditur in decem praedicamenta, scilicet substantiam, quantitatem, qualitatem et sic de aliiis.” This adage is the final one for book VI of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* but Hamesse found the source instead in Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on the same book.
either extramental reality or the mental realm (for example, on the difference between genus and species).

According to Henry there are six grades of intentional distinction of varying degrees according as the intentiones include each other, or not. Those intentiones are most distinct that do not include each other; for example, when rational, vegetative, and sensible are considered with respect to a human being, they are really the same as a human but differ from each other in concept to such a degree that none of them includes any of the others.\textsuperscript{245} That is, the concept of the rational does not include the concept of the vegetative or vice versa. A lesser degree of distinction is found among those intentions in which there is an asymmetric relation of containment, in which one intentio contains another but is not itself contained. Intentions that include each other are not said to differ properly by intention, and considered together they are still labeled as an intention. Henry gives life and being as examples; being is included in the concept of living, but living is not necessarily included in the concept of being (after all, some things have being but no life, such as rocks).\textsuperscript{246} Finally, even though distinct intentiones are all one in the absolute

\textsuperscript{245} Quodlibet V q. 6 (ed. Badius I, ff. 161r-L-v): “Sed in eis quae intentione differunt sunt gradus secundum differentiam maiorem et minorem. De eis enim quae sunt idem re in eodem, aliquando sic formantur conceptus diversi, ut neutrum eorum in suo conceptu alterum includat, ut sunt conceptus diversarum differentiarum quae concurrunt in eodem, sicut sunt in homine rationale, sensibile, vegetabile, inquantum differentiae sunt. Et in istis duobus modis est maxime differentia intentionum... Sunt et alii quatuor modi, in quibus minor est differentia, quia conceptus unius intentionis includit alterum, sed non e converso...”

\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.: “Similiter conceptus vivere in creaturis, conceptum esse, non e converso... Et est hic advertendum, quod in istis quatuor modis id quod alterum continet non differt intentione ab illo quod ab eo continetur, nisi ratione alterius partis contentae in significato eiusdem. Ita quod ista duo proprie dicuntur differre intentione sicut contingit in praedictis duobus modis. In istis autem quatuor ultimis modis ipsum totum, quod alterum continet non proprie dicitur intentio, neque proprie dicitur differre intentione ab eo quod est sicut pars eius, nisi quatenus includit in se aliquid aliud cum quo in toto illo ponit aliquam rationem compositionis. Quod si secundum se concipiatur, proprie debet dici intentio.”
thing outside the intellect, that they give rise to distinct concepts makes it impossible for entities only intentionally distinct to be predicated of each other by formal predication.247

The third and final distinction, which is the most important for our discussion of the attributes, is the rational. It is so named because it is a distinction among rationes. It posits the lowest degree of distinction between the distinguenda. Henry defines the term ratio in a passage strikingly similar to the remarks of Thomas Aquinas in his Scriptum super Sententias examined above in chapter 2.248

_Ratio_ itself here is not a name for the cognitive power of an intellectual substance from which our soul is called ‘rational,’ nor even the operation of reason, according to which an argument is called a _ratio_, which causes belief, that is, granting certitude about a doubtful matter; but here _ratio_ is a general term indicating some mode of a thing under which it is made to be determinately conceived without being conceived under another [mode], under which it can likewise be conceived (and this without any difference in reality or in intention), so that the thing conceived as the same in reality and in intention is said to differ according to diverse modes

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247 _Summa_ a. 27 q. 1 ad 5 (ed. Badius I, f. 162r-v): “Non tamen propter inseparabilitatem huiusmodi esse et essentiae sequitur quod possit dici quod ipsa essentia sit suum esse aut e converso, quamvis comparatum illud esse ad essentiam incidit omnino in ipsam nec est alius re omnino ab ipsa quantunquamque tamen in substantiam incidat et trahatur ad rationem absoluti, nunquam potest dici praedicatione formali unum eorum de altero, quia etsi non differunt re, different tamen intentione non sola ratione, quae bene praedicationem huiusmodi impedit. Propter quod etiam in eodem possunt ab invicem separari secundum intellectum, etsi non secundum rem... Secundum hoc ergo dico quod essentia creaturae est esse eius comparatum ad ipsam quantunquamque incidunt in ipsam essentiam, intentione tamen differt ab illa, quia conceptus quae format de se essentia ut essentia est, nihil omnino includit de ratione esse et ideo formaliter et abstractive unum eorum de altero non potest praedicari, sed concrectivo dicitur quod essentia est ens et oblique quod esse est essentiae.” Formal predication is contrasted with identical predication. It is a term for the traditional Aristotelian modes of _per se_ predication that treat how a predicate inheres in a subject. Identical predication, motivated by divine simplicity, allows for all the various elements of the divine being to be predicated of each other, with the exception of the Persons and personal properties. Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, _Summa_ a. 75 q. 2 (ed. Badius II, f. 292rQ): “…in divinis est quaedam praedicatio per identitatem, talis scilicet quod quidquid est in divinis, quia id ipsum est et una res singularis absoluta plurificata solummodo secundum rationem absolutam aut respectivam, abstractam et concretam in divinis…”; Duns Scotus, _Ordinatio_ I d. 5 p. 1 q. un. ‘Adnotatio Duns Scoti’ to n. 32 (ed. Vat. IV, 29): “‘Praedicationes per se’ sunt formales, de ‘identicis’ Aristoteles non tradidit.” For further discussion of these modes of predication, see Sandra Edwards, “St. Bonaventure on Distinctions,” 196-197.

248 See the text quoted in n. 58 above.
of conceiving according to reason, insofar as it is conceived in one of those modes and not another.\textsuperscript{249}

Here Henry denies that the relevant sense of \textit{ratio} is that of a cognitive power, or even the discursive operation of the intellect. Rather, it is a mode of conceiving something.

Henry, however, does not define what he means by a “mode of conception.” Since \textit{intentiones} also pertain to concepts in that they are conceptualizations of aspects of extra-mental objects, it would seem that \textit{rationes}, if they are not identical with \textit{intentiones}, are entities added in some way to concepts or a different kind of concept; the precise relation is not clear. As we saw earlier, Henry denied that \textit{intentiones} are second intentions, though he did not affirm them to be first intentions either. If they are first intentions, the relation of \textit{intentiones} and \textit{rationes} is that of concepts of things to concepts of concepts.

It is also necessary to distinguish between different kinds of \textit{rationes}, especially between those that pertain to the divine attributes and those that pertain to the divine ideas. Although Henry certainly develops a robust theory of the divine ideas that relies on his views on the transcendentals, participation, and imitation, what is relevant here is that in its most basic sense a divine idea is a \textit{ratio} that contains a relation \textit{ad extra} to the

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\textsuperscript{249} Henricus de Gandavo, \textit{Quodlibet} V q. 6 (ed. Badius I, f. 161vM): “Ratio autem hic non appellatur vis quaedam cognitiva substantiae intellectualis a qua anima nostra dicitur rationalis, neque etiam opus ipsius rationis, secundum quod argumentum dicitur ratio rei dubiae faciens fidel, id est certitudinem. Sed ratio hic appellatur generali nomine modus aliquis circa rem, sub quo nata est concipi determinate absque eo quod concipiatur sub alio, sub quo similiiter nata est concipi, et hoc sine omni eius differentia re vel intentione, ita quod idem re et intentione conceptum diversis modis concipiendi dicitur differre secundum rationem in quantum concipitur uno illorum modorum et non alio...”
\end{flushright}

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created world, while the ratio of an attribute contains a relation ad intra to the internal features of the divine nature.\textsuperscript{250}

Henry’s paradigmatic examples for the distinction of reason are the divine attributes and the relation between a definition and the thing defined.\textsuperscript{251} These entities are conceived of by means of the same concept, and are completely inseparable in both the absolute thing outside the intellect and in the intellect itself.\textsuperscript{252}

The precise manner in which the rational distinction differs from the intentional distinction is not readily apparent. Henry’s remarks on the subject are rather cryptic, but the situation seems to be that the respective distinctions are based on the objects distinguished, that is, intentiones and rationes, rather than on any conditions associated with separability or predication. Consequently, it is necessary to examine this issue


\textsuperscript{251} Quodlibet V q. 6 (ed. Badius I, f. 161vM): “...sicut patet in conceptione definitionis et definiti, et in diversitate divinorum attributorum, ut habitum est supra.” See also Summa a. 27 q. 1 ad 5 (ed. Badius I, f. 162v): “Dico autem differre ratione sola quae cumque eadem re sunt et formant eundem conceptum sed modo diverso ut sunt definitio et definitum... propter hoc idem omnia attributa in Deo sola ratione differunt, ut infra videbitur.”

\textsuperscript{252} Summa a. 27 q. 1 ad 5 (ed. Badius I, f. 161vM): “...dicendum quod differentium quaedam differunt secundum rationem tantum, ut definitio et definitum et ista nullo modo sunt separabilia, quia idipsum sunt in re et in intellectu indivisibiliter et talia separari non possunt nec secundum rem extra nec secundum intellectum, sicut neque idem potest separari a seipso.”
further because Teske has claimed that the distinguishing feature of the rational distinction is that the *distinguenda* can be predicated of each other.⁴²⁵ According to this view, Henry would accept the following statement: ‘the *ratio* of wisdom is the *ratio* of justice’. Teske’s view of the distinguishing features of the intentional and rational distinctions is incorrect, however. First, Henry nowhere states this, not even in the texts that Teske cites.⁴²⁶ Furthermore, some *rationes* can be predicated of each other while others cannot. The factor that determines whether or not two *rationes* are mutually predicable is whether or not one includes the other, but this is determined by the inherent nature of each *ratio*. *Rationes* can be predicated of each other when one includes the other, but cannot be predicated of each other when this is not the case.⁴²⁷ Consequently, while Teske’s use of predication cannot be correct here, the relation between inclusion and predicableability suggests that there is a graded series of rational distinctions that are similar to the grades of the intentional distinction. Whatever the truth of the matter (Henry does not explicitly state that there are grades of the rational distinction as he does in the case of the intentional distinction), this leaves the relation between the rational and

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²⁵³ For example, see Teske, “Distinctions in the Metaphysics of Henry of Ghent,” 242. Paulus makes a similar suggestion in *Henri de Gand*, 225 n. 3.

²⁵⁴ Note that Teske’s discussion is restricted to *Summa*, a. 27 q. 1 and *Quodlibet* V q. 6.

²⁵⁵ Cf. *Summa* a. 75 q. 2 (ed. Badius II, f. 293rX): “Circa secundum propositorum est advertendum quod in divinis essentialibus sunt aliqua rationibus diversis distincta quarum una includit aliam, et talia bene praedicantur invicem et omnino proprie et per se si illud cuius ratio tamquam communior includitur in ratione alterius de illo praedicatur in cuius ratione sua ratio includitur, puta in ratione deitatis includitur ratio entitatis. Et ideo bene dicitur ‘deitas est entitas’ et omnino proprie et per se et e converso ‘entitas est deitas’, sed non ita proprie, quia quedammodo per accidens secundum quod per accidens de magis communi dicitur praedicari minus commune... Sic etiam entitas praedicatur de quolibet divino attributo dicendo ‘bonitas, veritas et sic de caeteris est entitas’, sed non ita proprie dicitur e converso... Quae vero sunt in divinis distincta rationibus quarum una non includit aliam, illa tali modo invicem non possunt praedicari dicendo ‘bonitas est veritas’ aut e converso et hoc loquendo de praedicacione abstracti de abstracto. Per hunc etiam modum non dicitur ‘deitas est bonitas, veritas’ aut aliquod caeterorum.”
intentional distinctions still obscure. My view is that separability is more important than predicication in distinguishing the two kinds of distinctions and that specifically, as Henry states, the distinguishing feature of the distinction of reason is an inseparability both in reality and the intellect.

4.4.2 The Theory Applied to the Attributes

Having outlined Henry’s theory of distinction, we turn now to his application of the theory to the divine attributes. Henry himself was probably aware of the ambiguity that might arise with respect to the application of the rational distinction to the divine attributes and consequently devoted article 51 of the Summa to a further exploration of the matter. In question 1, although it addresses the promising topic of whether the divine attributes admit of a difference between them, Henry devotes entirely to his criticism of the common opinion regarding divine attributes, which is also found in the first question of Quodlibet V treated above. In the question, however, Henry makes some interesting remarks on the proper vocabulary that he thinks should be employed when dealing with the divine attributes. The second question treats whether the distinction of the attributes admits of more or less. This question contains valuable material for ascertaining his views on the distinction of the attributes and the status of the rationes, but unfortunately does not provide any further clarification on how to separate the intentional and the rational distinctions. On the contrary, it adds to the ambiguity, because the intentional distinction is clearly grouped with the rational distinction; there is no attempt to explain it as in some way midway between a real distinction and one of reason. The third question, which we have already considered above, analyzes whether the distinction of attributes posits a distinction in God.
In the first question of article 51 Henry makes careful stipulations regarding the terminology for describing the distinction between the divine attributes. He does not think that it is fitting to use terms that suggest plurality, such as ‘difference’ (*differentia*) and ‘diversity’ (*diversitas*), although he does allow such terms in extended senses (because of their usage by the saints). Instead, Henry utilizes the vocabulary of Peter Lombard’s *Sententiae*.\textsuperscript{256} The term ‘distinction’ refers to the diversity of real relations in the Trinity. The term for discussing relations of reason, which is what the *rationes* are, is ‘separation’ (*discretio*). According to Henry, the terms ‘separation’ and ‘distinction’ are used to express non-identity in the divine nature, though he does not develop this idea any further, nor is it found in his other discussions of the divine attributes.\textsuperscript{257} Henry may have been inspired in this by the traditional strategy for mitigating the reality of positive attributes by reinterpreting them as negations (according to which statements such as ‘God is wise’ means ‘God is not foolish’). In question 3 of article 51 Henry clarifies this terminology by noting that the term ‘distinction’ properly applies to the persons of the Trinity, while ‘separation’ applies to anything that is distinguished by means of a *ratio*.\textsuperscript{258}


\textsuperscript{257} Cf. Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa* a. 51 q. 1 ad 1 (ed. Führer, 225): “Et quia sic plura adhuc non convenit ponere in Deo, ideo neque nomen quod est ‘differens’ proprie recipi debet in Deo, secundum quod procedit ratio ista; immo quia omnis pluralitas in Deo consistit in ratione respectus qui fundatur in rei eiusdem simplicitate, ideo comparatio talium plurium, quia est absque omni eorum divisione, debet habere alia nomina a praedictis quibus exprimi debet eorum non-identitas, quia in ipsis est in quantum in eis est pluralitas, sed nulla differentia proprie dicta aut diversitas, quae quidem nomina sunt ‘distinctio’ aut ‘discretio’, ut distinctio sit quasi diversitas plurium secundum relationes reales, discretio vero sit quasi diversitas plurium quasi secundum relationes rationis. Large tamen sumendo ‘diversitatem’ et ‘differentiam’, secundum quod utuntur eis sancti pro ‘distinctione’ et ‘discretione’, possunt accipi in divinis.”

\textsuperscript{258} Cf. *Summa* a. 51 q. 3 ad 2 (ed. Führer, 241): “Pluralitas enim personarum est distinctione per divinas productiones; pluralitas vero attributorum est discretione per intellectus discretionem. Nulla autem
Henry begins his solution to the second question with a crucial distinction. It is different to ask whether the divine attributes themselves admit of more or less or whether just the distinctions that separate them do, because attributes and their distinctions belong to different *genera*, which is true for both created and uncreated being. The subjects themselves that differ are things of first intention and natural things, while the differences, which are *rationes*, are second intentions (*differentia* being one of the five Porphyrian predicables), and “quasi” accidents.²⁵⁹ Owing to this, the question regarding more and less cannot apply to the divine attributes themselves, because the attributes, according to Henry’s consistent portrayal, are the divine essence considered under a certain respect, and obviously the divine essence itself cannot admit of more or less.²⁶⁰

We have here further clarification of the nature of the divine *rationes*, or at least several more terms to describe them: *quasi accidens, res secundae intentionis, differentia*, and *res rationis*. At least on the surface, this does not appear to conflict with the definition in *Quodlibet V* that they are modes of conception (*modi conceptionis*).

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²⁵⁹ *Summa* a. 51 q. 2 (ed. Führer, 227-228): “Dicendum ad hoc quod differt quærere utrum attributa ipsa in se suscipiantur magis et minus, an ipsa differentia qua attributa differunt inter se. Alterius enim generis rerum sunt ipsa attributa, et alterius ipsa attributorum differentia, et hoc non solum in divinis, sed etiam in rebus naturalibus aliud genus rerum sunt ipsa quae differunt, quae sunt subjecta inter se differentia... aliu vero ipsa eorum differentia, quoniam ipsae re subjectae differentiae sunt res primae intentionis, ipsa vero ratio quae dicitur differentia eorum est res secundae intentionis, quae est quintum universale praedicabile. Et iterum, res subjectae differentiae sunt res naturae, ipsa vero differentia est res rationis, quae est quasi accidens rei naturae...”

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: “Quantum ergo ad ipsa attributa in Deo non intelligitur ista quaestio habere locum, quia re nihil important nisi divinam essentiam cum respectu, ut habitum est supra. Essentia autem non recipit magis aut minus propter eius simplicitatem neque respectus...”
Having made this clarification, Henry specifies that the question he is actually asking is whether the differences between the divine attributes admit of more or less. This is because he holds that there are varying degrees of difference obtaining between the attributes. The reason why certain things differ more or less is found in their essences. Not that this should be understood in this case to refer to the divine essence, but rather to the essence of the difference itself and the ratio that constitutes it. Division, distinction, or separation are properly between entities that are present in something else, and in which in various degrees they are one. Division is contrary to their unity in the containing entity, and so to differ more or less is to be closer or further away from being one; things that are more one differ less, and those that differ more are less one. Henry views this principle as a general rule that applies to both created and uncreated being. Applying this to the divine nature, Henry makes the obscure claim that of the things that differ only according to their rationes, what is first to be divided (the example he gives is the difference) differs less than what remains to be divided. He proceeds through a series of

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261 Ibid.: “De eo ergo quod est res rationis circa attributa ex consideratione intellectus secundum iam praedeterminata, quod est res secundae intentionis, intelligenda est solummodo proposita quaestio, utrum in ipsa differentia sit accipere magis et minus, ut quaedam attributa magis differant inter se quam quaedam alia.”

262 Ibid. (ed. Führer, 229): “In eis autem quae recipiunt magis et minus, causa eius quod est magis et minus ex parte essentiae eorum accipienda est... Ex parte ergo divisionis sive distinctionis sive discretionis differentium, consideranda est ratio eius quod est magis et minus in ipsa differentia. Divisio autem non est nisi alicuius in quo uniuntur et quodam modo sunt unum ipsa divisa. Et est divisio contraria unioni in illo uno, ita quod radix eius quod est magis et minus in divisione consistit in eo quod est magis et minus circa unionem, quia quae magis sunt unum, et minus differunt, et quae minus, magis differunt.”

263 Ibid. (ed. Führer, 232): “Et secundum hanc regulam iudicanda est differentia secundum magis et minus quorumcumque differentium et quocumque modo differentium, sive in Deo sive in creaturis.”

264 Ibid. (ed. Führer, 231): “…sic ista quae sola ratione differunt secundum discretionem rationum, minus differunt quae primo discernuntur ut differentia, quam illa quae manent discernenda in membris illis.”
separations performed by divine intellection acts, first dividing the absolute from the relative (that is, the divine essence from the Persons), and so on down to the rationes of the divine attributes. Here he separates the intellect from will; both of these faculties contains other attributes “below” them and ordered to them. Finally giving his answer to the original question, Henry states that the attributes differ less from the divine essence than either the essence or the attributes differ from the Persons. The attributes as a class differ less from each other than they differ from the divine essence, and those attributes that pertain to the will differ less from each other than they differ from those that pertain to the intellect (as was mentioned above, Henry reduces all divine attributes to either the divine intellect or will).

Henry locates this series of rationally distinct attributes within a general classification of distinctions. This system is meant to cover only the kinds of distinctions that can be found within an individual entity; consequently, it can shed no light on the nature of the real distinction in its strongest sense, as it obtains among distinct substances or as it would be treated in physics. The first division of the kinds of distinctions is between things distinct ex natura rei both originaliter and completive, and those distinct ex natura rei and originaliter, but are distinct completive by the operation of the

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265 *Ibid.*: “Quare cum discernimus ratione absolutum in Deo a relativo, sub absoluto autem continentur essentia et omnia attributa essentialia; illud autem absolutum cum discernimus in absolutum sub ratione absoluti et absolutum sub ratione respectus, et sub absoluto sub ratione respectus continentur rationes omnium attributorum, et hoc cum discernimus in illa quae pertinent ad voluntatem et intellectum, et sub ambobus plura attributa continentur...”

266 *Ibid.* (ed. Führer, 231-232): “...minus ergo differunt attributa ab essentia, quam ipsa attributa aut essentia differant a personis et notionibus, et minus differunt attributa inter se quam ab essentia, et minus illa quae pertinent ad voluntatem inter se, quam differant ab illis quae pertinent ad intellectum.”
intellect. 267 The phrase *ex natura rei* refers to the individual entity that is the subject of the distinction, apart from any cognitive consideration. We have encountered a term similar to *completive* already, in our discussion of Thomas Aquinas’ *fundamentum in re.* 268 There it indicated a product of intellectual activity, such as the universal ‘humanity’. The final term, *originaliter,* seems to correspond to Aquinas’ notion of being present as in a root (*in radice*), basically a feature of an object in potency to cognitive activity.

The first kind of distinction (*ex natura rei et originaliter et completive*) is real. It obtains in either an absolute or relative sense. In the absolute sense, this distinction is found in creatures and is caused by the level of separation between differences in the genus-species model. This kind of distinction does admit of more and less. 269 The relative sense appears to be a special division to account for the trinitarian Persons, which are


268 The following text of Thomas is more explicit than the statements in the *Quaestio de attributis: Scriptum* I d. 19 q. 5 a. 1 (ed. Mandonnet I, 486): “…eorum quae significantur nominibus, invenitur triplex diversitas. Quaedam enim sunt quae secundum esse totum completum sunt extra animam; et huiusmodi sunt entia completa, sicut homo et lapis… Quaedam autem sunt quae habent fundamentum in re extra animam, sed complementum rationis eorum quantum ad id quod est formale, et per operationem animae, ut patet in universali. Humanitas enim est aliquid in re, non tamen ibi habet rationem universalis, cum non sit extra animam aliqua humanitas multis communis; sed secundum quod accipitur in intellectu, adiungitur ei per operationem intellectus intentio, secundum quam dicitur species… Similiter dico de veritate, quod habet fundamentum in re, sed ratio eius completur per actionem intellectus, quando scilicet apprehenditur eo modo quo est.”

269 Henricus de Gandavo, *Summa* a. 51 q. 2 (ed. Führer, 229-230): “Primo modo non est nisi differentia eorum quae realiter differunt inter se, quod potest fieri dupliciter: vel re absoluta, quod non fit nisi in creaturis per divisionem propria acceptione differentium ab invicem, quorum tanto maior est differentia, quanto magis ab invicem dividuntur et minus in aliquo in quo convenient uniuntur, quemadmodum maior est differentia differentium genere quam differentium specie, et maior differentium specie quam numero, et hoc nullo modo cadit in divinis attributis...”
really distinct from each other (this was the common opinion) although they share the
same essence without causing any division or distinction in it.\(^\text{270}\)

The second major subdivision is also divided into two kinds. This distinction
pertains to entities that are distinct \textit{ex natura rei originaliter} but \textit{completive} by the
intellect, which Henry explains is between entities that are entirely indistinct and
undivided in the nature of the thing. The two members of this class are distinctions by
means of absolute concepts and distinctions by means of relative concepts.\(^\text{271}\) The first of
these is the intentional distinction, which is by the distinction and “intellectual division”
of different intentions. The intentional distinction admits of more or less, insofar as the
intentions agree or differ in various degrees of being one.\(^\text{272}\) The second member of this
subdivision is the separation of the divine attributes from each other and from the divine
intellect, and indeed from all other elements of the divine nature. This separation is
brought about by the activity of the intellect, and though Henry does not specify in this
passage whose intellect is doing the work, we know from the other passages we have
examined (such as \textit{Quodlibet} V q. 1) that this is the divine intellect. The concepts of the

\(^{270}\) \textit{Ibid.} (ed. Führer, 230): “...vel re relativa, quod non fit adhuc in divinis attributis, sed cadit in
divinis personis, non per divisionem, sed per distinctionem differentium personarum absque omni divisione
et distinctione unius et communis essentiae.”

\(^{271}\) \textit{Ibid.}: “Secundo autem modo est differentia eorum quae in una simplici et indivisa et indistincta
natura rei conveniunt circa quam operationem intellectus, cuius est discernere indiscreta et quodam modo
dividere adunata... Talium autem discretio per intellectum completive potest fieri dupliciter: vel penes
conceptus absolutos, vel penes conceptus respectivos.”

\(^{272}\) \textit{Ibid.} (ed. Führer, 230-231): “Primo modo fit per intellectum generis et differentiae in conceptu
speciei et fit per distinctionem et divisionem intellectualem differentium intentionum, quorum tanto maior
est differentia, quanto ab invicem dividuntur et minus conveniunt sive unissantur in aliquo uno,
quemadmodum cum in homine differunt intentione substantia, corporeum, vegetabile, sensibile, rationale,
plus differunt intentione corporeum a substantia quam a vegetabili et inferioribus, et vegetabile plus ab
utroque illorum quam a sensibili et rationali, et sensibile plus ab illis quam a rationali, quia semper superius
in quantum dividitur contra suum contrarium sub suo superiori in se continet sibi inferioria.”
attributes are relative because, as we saw above, they are relations of reason between the divine intellect (or the divine will) and the divine essence.273

In the end, Henry’s position on the distinction of divine attributes is an extension of views developed in other contexts, whether regarding the divine attributes or not. The most basic element is the definition of an attribute as the divine essence considered under a certain ratio (relation of reason). To this is added the notion of a rational distinction, or distinction between rationes or by ratione, with its accompanying ambiguity regarding the dividing line between an intentional and a rational distinction. Henry’s contribution in article 51 to these features is to dispel this ambiguity by means of his Porphyrian tree-like attempt to classify different kinds of distinctions, as well as to restrict the terms used to discuss difference in the divine to ‘distinction’ and ‘separation’.

4.5 Conclusion

Henry’s views concerning the divine attributes are the most elaborate of any medieval thinker yet considered. The attributes are at the center of Henry’s doctrine of God. He holds that there are two primary attributes, the divine intellect and will, which generate a series of attributes subordinate to them as well as the Persons of the Trinity. The divine intellect and will are also intimately connected to Henry’s theories of the transcendentals and the divine ideas.

273 Ibid. (ed. Führer, 231): “Secundo autem modo fit discretio per intellectum attributorum in deitate ab invicem et ab essentia et ab omnibus quae in ipsa considerantur, sive sint proprietates notionales sive personae. Sola enim ratione attributa inter se et ab essentia et a proprietatibus notionalibus et a personis differunt, quemadmodum etiam sola ratione differunt essentia, personae, et notiones inter se, de quibus proposita est quaestio.”
Henry solves the basic problem of positing divine simplicity and a plurality of
divine attributes not by recourse to the weakness of the created intellect as did his
predecessors, but by introducing a distinction between different senses of divine
simplicity, one of which allows for a multiplicity of attributes. These attributes are not
absolute beings in God conditioning the divine essence or entering into composition with
it, but rather relations of reason that the divine intellect generates in its cognition of the
divine essence and that the divine will forms in its volition of the essence. Henry argues
that the attributes are distinguished by a rational distinction, which is between modes of
conceiving the same object.  

Clearly, then, Henry of Ghent espouses the Thomist solution to the problem of the
attributes. Like Thomas Aquinas and his followers, Henry posits a mind as the cause of
the plurality of the attributes. He also holds that the attributes are distinguished only by a
rational distinction. But because for him the mind is the divine mind, the attributes are
distinct prior to any human cognition of them. With this move he solves the problem of
how human concepts correspond to God, which Thomas had not answered in a
satisfactory way. Thomas had held that the plurality of attributes arose from human
cognition of God, which could not grasp the infinite divine essence with only one
concept. Consequently, the plurality is only on the side of the human intellect. For Henry,

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My interpretation differs somewhat from that of Scott Williams. Williams holds that (1) the
divine attributes are mind-independent; they do not depend on God’s thinking for their existence (2) the
distinction between the divine attributes and the divine essence is dependent on God’s thinking. See Scott
College, Oxford, 2011, 129-131, 222-229. However, though I accept (2), I think the existence of the
attributes depends on the act of divine thinking as well. Williams does not address Henry’s claim that the
attributes exist in “quasi potency” and are actualized by the divine intellect, nor does he qualify his use of
“mind-independent” to account for divine simplicity.
however, the plurality is present from eternity, so the human mind in a sense only “discovers” it, rather than causes it. Therefore, there is a correspondence between the real plurality of human concepts and the rational plurality of divine attributes. This position is similar to the original draft of the question on the attributes in Thomas’ *Scriptum*, for in this text the *rationes* of the attributes are also in God independently of human cognition.

Henry’s theory comes with a price, however. This price is the positing of various “quasi” entities in the divine being, such as quasi-potency and quasi-discursivity in the divine cognitive and volitional activity. Perhaps Henry felt justified in this move because even on traditional theories, such as those of the pseudo-Dionysius, the entirety of creation was posited in God pre-eminently without detriment to divine simplicity. But whether or not this is true, Henry’s version of divine simplicity is weaker than that of Thomas Aquinas.

Finally, Henry’s views represent the medium between the extremes of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Henry had attempted to solve the problem of the veracity of human concepts and did so for the human case, but not the divine. In effect, he simply transposed the problem. The problem remained, for there was still tension with a single, simple being corresponding to a plurality of concepts. It remained for Duns Scotus to take even the divine mind out of consideration, so that God also “discovers” the attributes in the divine essence.
CHAPTER 5:
RESPONSES TO HENRY OF GHENT

Henry of Ghent was roundly attacked by the followers of Thomas Aquinas, despite the profound influence that Thomas exercised over him.\textsuperscript{275} In this chapter we shall examine a variety of responses to Henry’s position. Most will be by the defenders of the Thomist solution to the problem of the divine attributes, but we shall also examine the first appearance of the realist solution.

The followers of the Thomist solution continued to maintain that the plurality of the attributes was primarily a feature of the human mind. Thomas of Sutton represents the “orthodox” Dominican approach to the views of Henry of Ghent, in which Henry’s arguments are countered in favor of a restatement of the position of Thomas Aquinas: the distinct divine attributes amount to distinct human concepts. The human mind forms these concepts because it is unable to grasp the divine essence owing to its infinite nature.

Godfrey of Fontaines, while advocating a similar view, was also influenced by Henry of Ghent. Godfrey allowed that the divine attributes were in a restricted sense in potency in God, a state which allowed the divine essence to serve as the foundation for human

\textsuperscript{275} This is not to imply that Henry had no followers; indeed, there was a faction known as the Gandavistae in the early fourteenth century, which presumably followed Henry’s teaching on the divine attributes. On this school see Ludwig Hödl, “The Quodlibeta of John Pouilly,” in Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century, 205-208.
knowledge. Yet another approach was taken by Bernard of Auvergne, who at the turn of
the fourteenth century continued the Dominican polemical tradition of the Correctoria by
writing Reprobationes of the Quodlibeta of James of Viterbo, Godfrey of Fontaines, and
Henry of Ghent.276

Henry had touched on a weakness in Thomas Aquinas’ position, however, and
had offered a striking alternative. He had argued that Thomas’ view that the attributes
were distinguished primarily by human cognition meant that God did not have any
attributes from eternity, but rather human cognition was responsible for them. This called
for a response on the part of the adherents of the Thomist solution. The response was
unified and defended by numerous thinkers. Here we shall examine only the version of
Godfrey of Fontaines and Thomas of Sutton. They maintained that the plurality of
attributes was not the result of the divine intellect’s consideration of internal features of
the divine essence but rather arose from God’s knowledge that the divine essence can be
imitated by creatures. By knowing his essence, God knows the plurality of concepts that
creatures form about him and that he is the foundation of these concepts. Only by this
indirect, comparative divine knowledge of creatures are the divine attributes distinct on
the part of God.

The final response to the views of Henry that we shall examine is that of William
of Ware, an exponent of the realist solution. William, like Henry, applied the basic
Aristotelian apparatus of powers, objects, and operations to God. Having done this,

276 On Bernard see Russell Friedman, “Dominican Quodlibetal Literature, ca. 1260-1330,” in
Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century, 411-418, and the literature cited in
this article.
however, William reasons that because operations presuppose powers and powers presuppose objects, the objects of the intellect and will must precede their operations. That is, since the objects of the divine intellect and will—the true and the good—are distinct in some sense prior to the operations of these powers, they are really distinct. William’s ultimate response to Henry, then, is to deny that the divine intellect and will generate a series of attributes, holding instead that these powers “discover” their objects already distinct in the divine essence.

5.1 Godfrey of Fontaines

Godfrey of Fontaines (born before 1250, died 1306 or 1309) was one of the most important masters of theology in the late thirteenth century. He taught in the faculty of theology at Paris from 1285 until 1303-4, the date of his last quodlibetal dispute. Unlike Henry of Ghent, however, Godfrey did not develop novel and controversial positions on the divine attributes. Instead, he maintained the Thomist position, namely, that all plurality and distinction are the result of the operation of the created intellect. Godfrey treats the divine attributes in the first question of Quodlibet VII, dated to


briefly revisiting the issue in *Quodlibet* XIV (1298/1299) and again in *Quodlibet* XV (1303/1304), where he maintains the same position.

The question proposed in Godfrey’s *Quodlibet* VII q. 1 is “Whether the distinction of divine attributes is understood by a comparison or relation to an intrinsic feature [of God] or to those things which befall God in himself, or by a comparison or relation to an extrinsic feature or to those things which are found in creatures.” This clearly is a response to Henry’s *Quodlibet* V. q. 1, which treats “Whether the plurality and distinction of essential attributes should be understood according to a relation and comparison to something outside God, or to a comparison to something within God.” Godfrey directly quotes a series of arguments from Henry’s *Quodlibet* V q. 1 before attacking them.

Godfrey divides the response of *Quodlibet* VII q. 1 into three parts. In the first he defines the term ‘attribute,’ in the second he examines whether there is a plurality of attributes in God, and in the third, keeping with the tradition of Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, he considers the origin of the plurality of attributes. Godfrey attacks Henry’s arguments in the responses to the principal arguments of the question and also examines the nature of the rational distinction.

In the first section, Godfrey stipulates that the term ‘attribute’ has two meanings. The first is an eminent, divine perfection freed from all limitation and the defects of the

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created world. In this sense of ‘attribute’ a created perfection is purified of its specifically “creaturely” features, which clearly betrays the neo-Platonic influence of the Dionysian via eminentiae. The second meaning of ‘attribute’ is that given by Henry of Ghent in his Summa, which utilized the Aristotelian distinction between primary and secondary actuality, or substantial and accidental being. According to this definition, an attribute is that which perfects a substance in accidental being (bene esse) and can be described as a “quasi” quality or disposition that perfects the divine essence. According to Godfrey, this is the common definition of the divine attributes. Whereas the first way was Dionysian in inspiration, the second definition is Aristotelian (though Godfrey here explicitly relies on the authority of Augustine).

In the second section of the response to the question Godfrey relies on the Dionysian notion of pre-eminence to argue that the attributes are in God in a uniform way. Every perfection that creatures possess is found in God in a pre-eminent and unlimited manner. Thus, in virtue of this infinity, God contains in a united manner the...

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280 Godefridus de Fontibus, Quodlibet VII q. 1 (ed. de Wulf-Hoffmans, 365): “...attributum in Deo potest intelligi duobus modis: uno modo sic quod intelligatur aliqua divina perfectio eminens, ex eo quod perfectionem simpliciter et absolute absque defectu et limitatione importat in creatura, ipsi Deo in quo omnis perfectio creaturarum eminientius inventur tributa...”

281 Ibid.: “...alio modo sic quod attributum generaliter dicatur in quacumque re aliquid quo res perficitur non in esse simpliciter quod dicitur esse substantiale et primum, sed in bene esse quod dicitur esse accidentale. Secundum talia enim quae dant rei bene esse intelliguntur esse quaedam attributa illis quae dant esse simpliciter et absolute; et secundum hoc attributum in Deo dicitur id quod in ipso intelligitur ut quaedam dispositio quae simpliciter et absolute absque aliqua limitatione perfectionem nobilium importans ipsum quasi in esse secundo et in bene esse perfectum, et hoc modo in Deo dicuntur communiter esse attributa; unde, attributa divina significant quasi quasdam qualitates divinae substantiae ipsum quasi accidentaliter et in bene esse proficientes, secundum quod dicit Augustinus...”
many perfections that creatures have in a divided manner.\textsuperscript{282} This argument was a commonplace and thus common to Henry’s and Thomas Aquinas’ positions.

In the third section, concerning the origin of the plurality of attributes, Godfrey defends the Thomist solution to the problem. He reasons that since God is simple and maximally one, the divine attributes, taken as absolute perfections, must be the divine essence itself. God is a single, indistinct thing; there are no real distinctions between the divine essence and the attributes or between the attributes themselves. The only real distinction that Godfrey admits is between the trinitarian Persons and the personal properties.\textsuperscript{283} Thus, between the attributes there is only a distinction of reason, the result of the operation of an intellect apprehending the divine essence. But Godfrey appears to be influenced by Henry of Ghent, in that he too posits a potential multitude in God:

> It is necessary, therefore, that the distinction and plurality of these attributes, which cannot be according to a real difference which they have from the thing itself, is a distinction and plurality of reason, arising from the operation of reason or the intellect apprehending the divine essence which is one and simple according to reality, containing many perfections in quasi-potency with respect to the actuality of distinction, of [an intellect] distinguishing formally and actually under diverse aspects (\textit{rationibus}), for example, under the aspect of wisdom, goodness, etc., that by such an operation of the intellect that quasi potential

\textsuperscript{282} \textit{Ibid.}: “Huiusmodi autem qualitates sive perfectiones sic Deum quasi accidentaliter pericientes plures sunt; nam, cum omnem perfectionem creaturae sit in Deo ponere, licet per alium modum eminentiorem, quaecumque in creaturis absolute et simpliciter absque defectu et limitatione perfectionem important in Deo eminentius inveniuntur et in eo rationem perfectionis quae attributum dicitur habent. Talia autem sunt plura. Hoc autem contingit Deo ratione suae perfectionis infinitae et illimitatae, scilicet quod omnium entium perfectiones in se continet eminenti modo, prout dicit Dyonisius...”

\textsuperscript{283} \textit{Ibid.} (ed. de Wulf-Hoffmans, 265-266): “Sciendum est igitur quod, cum Deus sit in essentia sua simplicissimus et maxime unus, talia autem attributa dicunt perfectiones absolutas quae non sunt nisi ipsa essentia divina, constat quod in Deo secundum se non habent aliquam distinctionem realem, sed omnino sunt quid unum et indistinctum.... Nec est in Deo aliqua pluralitas vel distinctio realis secundum essentiam et essentialia, sed solum secundum personas vel supposita et personales proprietates.”
multitude is brought into act or to an actual distinction and multitude.\textsuperscript{284}

From this text we see that an intellect is the cause of the plurality of the attributes, though in this passage Godfrey does not specify whether it is the created or divine intellect. But, as is clear, he retains elements of Henry’s account. Most important is the notion of quasi-potency, which is completely absent from the teaching of Thomas Aquinas. In Godfrey’s view there is a multitude of attributes in the divine essence, in a state of quasi-potency. The intellect, in its cognition of the divine essence under various _rationes_, can distinguish or actualize the plurality of the attributes.

This sets the stage for the reply to the original question of whether the distinction of attributes results from a comparison of the intrinsic properties of God or extrinsic properties of creatures. In order to solve the problem, Godfrey employs his two-fold definition of an attribute. According to his first definition, in which the attribute is conceived according to the Dionysian _via eminentiae_ as a perfection free from limitation, the distinction and multitude of attributes is the result of the created intellect attempting to know God from the perfections found in the created world. Because human cognition is dependent upon created perfections, it is unable to conceive them in the united fashion in which they exist in God; instead the human intellect knows God by means of the likeness (_similitudo_) which an effect has to its cause. The reason why it cannot know

\textsuperscript{284} _Ibid._ (ed. de Wulf-Hoffmanns, 266): “Oportet ergo quod distinctio et pluralitas huiusmodi attributorum, quae non potest esse secundum realem differentiam quam habeant ex re ipsa secundum se, sit distinctio et pluralitas secundum rationem, contingens ex opere rationis vel intellectus apprehendentis divinam essentiam unam et simplicem secundum rem et multas perfections quasi in potentia quantum ad actualitatem distinctionis continentem sub diversis rationibus actualiter et formaliter distinguentis, puta sub ratione sapientiae, bonitatis et cetera, ut sic opere intellectus quasi reducatur in actu sive ad actualem distinctionem et multitudinem illa quasi potentialis multitudo.”
perfections in their united and divine sense is that as present in creatures they are really
distinct. Godfrey notes that this is how the masters commonly treated the distinction of
attributes, and so we are not surprised to detect in this summary the doctrine of Thomas
Aquinas.\footnote{285}

Godfrey follows this with an attack on the views of Henry of Ghent. Relying on
the principle that whatever a creature knows, God must know, Godfrey concludes that
according to this principle God must then know the distinction and plurality of divine
attributes according to their distinct \textit{rationes} apart from the divine knowledge of creation.
This sense of ‘attribute,’ however, is the second according to Godfrey, namely, that of a
disposition or quality added to an essence.\footnote{286}

Godfrey’s solution to the issue of whether the divine intellect can know the divine
attributes without reference to creatures draws on his initial claim that in reality
\textit{(secundum rem)} the divine essence is an object that is one, single, simple, and indistinct.
Godfrey thinks that it is impossible for such an entirely simple object to have simplicity
in reality and diversity in thought without a comparison to an external object. This is

\footnote{285 Cf. \textit{Quodlibet} VII q. 1 (ed. de Wulf-Hoffmans, 266-267): “...secundum quod aliquid dicitur
attributum primo modo, sic non contingit huiusmodi distinctio et multitudo nisi ex operatione intellectus
praecipue creati, apprehendentis Deum ex his quae in creaturis reperiantur. Talis enim intellectus non
potens apprehendere essentiam divinam in se ipsa ut unire omnem perfectionem continentem, sed ex
perfectionibus creaturarum devenit in cognitionem perfectionis divinae ut ex effectibus habentibus
similitudinem aliquam suae causae et qui in sua causa virtualiter continentur ita quod ex diversis
perfectionibus, quae simpliciter et absolute absque defectu et limitatione perfectionem important, in
creaturis repertis, quae realiter differunt et de quibus format intellectus diversos conceptus, devenit in
cognitionem perfectionis divinae quam, quia apprehendit ex sic diversis, licet secundum se sit una et
simplex et secundum unam rem simplicem omnes huiusmodi perfectiones continet, tamen illam sub aliqua
una ratione apprehendit in quantum continet unam talem perfectionem et sub alia ut comprehendit aliam.
Hoc modo autem doctores videntur loqui committere de distinctione attributorum, modicam aut nullam
mentionem faciendo de distinctione attributorum secundum quod Deus ab intellectu suo apprehenditur ut
habet esse in se ipso.”}

\footnote{286 Cf. \textit{ibid.} (267).}
because the same simple object would give rise to both unity and multiplicity, a contradiction. 287 This interpretation of divine simplicity, which holds simplicity in reality and reason, is a far stronger sense than was common at the time.

Godfrey assumes throughout this question that any distinction of reason presupposes a corresponding real distinction outside the intellect. Consequently, there can be no diversity in either reality or reason in the divine cognition of the divine essence, and therefore also no knowledge of the divine attributes or their rationes. The divine intellect apprehends the divine essence according to a single and simple ratio.288 Thus, in order for God to know the differences of the divine attributes, the divine intellect must compare the ratio of the divine essence to entities that actually are distinct.

According to Godfrey, there are only two kinds of distinction: real and rational. Godfrey defines a real distinction as that which obtains between two things that differ of themselves without any comparison by an intellect to some other thing, while a distinction of reason obtains when things are distinguished or made a plurality by means of a comparison to things that are really distinct.289 The first is mind-independent, the

287 Cf. ibid. (270): “Quod enim in uno omnino simplici et indistincto secundum rem ponantur aliqua plura et distincta pure secundum rationem absque comparatione ad aliquam, quae aliquo modo differunt ab eo in quo huiusmodi distincta sola ratione ponuntur, est impossible, alioquin ab uno eodem modo se habente secundum rem et secundum conceptionem sumeretur unitas et pluralitas.”

288 Cf. ibid.: “Cum igitur essentia divina ut secundum se consideratur non sit nisi quid indistinctum omnino simplex re et ratione, non potest dici quod absque comparatione eius ad aliquam in quo inventur diversitas rei vel rationis talis distinctio possit esse, quia, cum apprehenditur id quod omnino unitum et simplex est sub ratione quae sibi competit secundum se et absque habitudine ad aliquam in quo sit aliqua distinctio, sicut apprehensum non est nisi unum secundum rem, ita nec potest apprehendi nisi secundum unam et simplicem rationem; et sic in essentia divina, cum apprehenditur secundum se, non apprehenditur nisi una res simplicissima et sub una et simplicissima ratione...”

289 Cf. ibid. (271): “Ergo videtur quod icta pluralitas et distinctione accipiatur ex comparatione divinae essentiae simplicis secundum rem et rationem, ut secundum se consideratur, ad aliquam quae secundum se diversitatem et distinctionem important. Quaecumque enim differunt aut habent differentiam
second mind-dependent. Godfrey explains, in a passage reminiscent of Thomas Aquinas, that there are three conditions for a distinction of reason (though in fact he gives only two of them). These conditions are the presence of the thing itself which serves as the foundation of the distinction, in order to prevent the concepts of the intellect from being rendered vain, and some real diversity to which the comparison is made. Applying this to the divine attributes, Godfrey argues that the divine intellect can conceive the divine essence as one in reality and many in reason, but only with reference to creatures. He goes so far as to claim that the divine knowledge of the attributes of goodness and wisdom requires a co-apprehension of these attributes as really distinct in creatures. It is on the basis of this position that he criticizes Henry of Ghent’s arguments, and thereby rejects Henry’s view that the divine intellect is able to know the divine attributes apart from any relation to creatures.
Godfrey’s views follow and extend aspects of the positions of Thomas Aquinas. He follows Thomas in that he holds that all diversity and distinction are solely the result of the created intellect cognizing the divine essence. He moves beyond Thomas in that he considers a problem that Thomas did not, namely, whether God has knowledge of distinct attributes. Godfrey’s answer to this difficulty is to extend the basic principle that the distinction of attributes is based on the consideration of the human intellect. God knows the divine attributes as rationally distinct by reference to creatures; he does not know the attributes by knowing the divine essence directly, but indirectly by knowing the diversity of human concepts and the perfections in the created world.

Despite his criticism of Henry, however, it is clear that Godfrey holds a similar position. Godfrey’s solution to the problem of whether God knows his own attributes requires that (1) God know his own essence and (2) know it as capable of imitation in comparison with creatures, but this comparison is a reflexive act, and so distinct in some sense from (1). One could distinguish a third stage in which God then knows the multiple concepts that the created intellect generates in its attempt to cognize the divine essence, and thus comes to know the plurality of divine attributes. Like Henry, then, Godfrey allows moments or stages in the divine cognition.

Finally, Henry’s influence is also clear on Godfrey’s treatment of the problem of the foundation of the *rationes* of the attributes. Thomas Aquinas had asserted a correspondence between the multiplicity of *rationes* in the human mind and the unified, simple *plena perfectio* of the divine essence. Henry had attempted to make this more plausible by positing a series of acts in which the divine intellect distinguished the *rationes*, moving them from a state of quasi-potency to one of actuality. Godfrey
relocated the intellect under consideration back to the created realm, but interestingly left the quasi-potency clearly in God. So in the end, Godfrey defends the Thomist solution to the problem, but attempts to strengthen its weak points by recourse to Henry’s innovations.

5.2 Thomas of Sutton

Thomas of Sutton was born after 1250. He was a socius at Merton College prior to joining the Dominican order and probably regent master at Oxford between 1290 and 1295. He disputed his *Quodlibeta* I-II after the death of Henry of Ghent in 1293, while *Quodlibeta* III-IV were disputed shortly before 1300. Thomas died after 1315.292

Thomas of Sutton’s discussion of the distinction of the divine attributes is found in *Quodlibet* II q. 2-3 and *Quodlibet* III q. 1.293 In *Quodlibet* II q. 2 he claims that the controversy over the divine attributes in his day was between masters who held that the divine intellect distinguished the attributes prior to the operation of the human intellect.


293 Other passages in which Thomas of Sutton treats the divine attributes are *In Sent* I d. 22, found in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Ross. lat. 431, ff. 59r-65v, and a question either by Thomas of Sutton or Hervaeus Natalis in Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 717, ff. 14vb-17rb: *utrum ista pluralitas attributorum nihil respondeat ex parte rei ut proximum immediatum fundamentum*. On the former text see Hödl, “Die philosophische Gotteslehre des Thomas von Aquin O.P. in der Diskussion der Schulen um die Wende des 13. zum 14. Jahrhundert,” 127 n. 62, 128 n. 69; on the latter see *Quaestiones Ordinariae*, ed. Schneider, 21*-25*. 150
and those who held that the attributes were distinguished solely by the human intellect. Interestingly, he characterizes both sides of the debate as having a great number of followers, which constitutes further evidence that Henry’s views on the attributes were adopted by other masters in the universities.²⁹⁴

Thomas of Sutton sets up the problem in *Quodlibet* II q. 2 with an argument proving the principle common to both positions, namely, that the distinction of attributes arises from the operation of an intellect, not from any real or actual feature prior to intellectual operation. According to Thomas, a real distinction obtains between things that are distinguished by their own natures, apart from any cognitive activity. The intellect alone can distinguish those things that are not distinct in reality and in the case of a simple object, the intellect can consider it under different aspects and form diverse *rationes* of it;²⁹⁵ these exist only in the intellect, not in the thing. The intellect is not able to make something distinct in its own nature, for whatever is distinguished through its own nature is really distinct. All the masters agree that the divine attributes are not really distinct and consequently that they are distinct only in reason. Therefore the attributes are distinct only by means of an act of understanding. Therefore the attributes cannot be said to be really distinct from their own natures, because such a distinction would be of

²⁹⁴ Cf. *Quodlibet* II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 164-165, 166).

²⁹⁵ Note that Thomas of Sutton defines *ratio* as a concept. See *Quodlibet* II q. 3 (ed. Schmaus, 179): “...Ratio prout hic loquimur, non est alitd quam conceptus intellectus.”
absolute things and could not be without composition. But there is no composition in 
God, only supreme simplicity.296

Thomas develops a similar argument in Quodlibet III q. 1, showing the 
consequences of holding that the attributes are really distinct. Because the attributes 
would not be distinguished only by the intellect, but would be distinct in reality, they 
would be distinct things in God. Since they are absolute they would have distinct 
essences. If this were true, either God would have many essences, or he would be 
composed of many essences. But if this were true, God would no longer be the first 
principle, because every composite is posterior to its components; God would then be 
posterior to his attributes and dependent on them.297 As was the case in the previous 
argument, Thomas does not explain the move from the attributes being distinct things to 
being absolute things. He means by this to contrast absolute things with relative things, 
which in God are Persons and personal properties. Because they are common to all three

296 Quodlibet II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 165): “...omnis distinctio actualis, quae non est per intellectum, 
est distinctio realis. Intellectus enim solus distinguere potest ea, quae secundum rem non sunt distincta. 
Potest enim considerare unum simplex diversimode et sic potest habere diversas rationes in se de ipso, quae 
quidem rationes non sunt distinctae in illo, quod intelligitur, sed solum in intellectu distinguente. Sic autem 
non potest natura distinguere, immo quaecumque per naturam per se ipsa distinguuntur, realiter 
distinguuntur. Manifestum est autem omnibus intelligentibus quod sapientia dei et bonitas et alia attributa 
non distinguuntur realiter, sed solum secundum rationem. Ergo per solum actum intelligendi distincta sunt. 
Ideo autem oportet dicere quod non sunt distincta realiter ex se, quia distinctio realis absolorumor in eadem 
natura non potest esse absque compositione. In deo autem nulla est compositio, sed summa simplicitas, 
quamvis in se habeat quamcumque perfectionem cuiuscumque generis, comprehendit enim in se 
perfectiones omnium entium, sed non per modum compositionis, sed unitae in uno simplici.”

297 Quodlibet III q. 1 (ed. Schmaus, 340): “Quia cum illa distinctio non esset per intellectum, non 
distinguerentur attributa secundum rationem tantum, sed secundum rem, ita quod attributa essent in deo res 
distinctae, et cum sint absoluta, essentia certa distinctae. Et sic in deo non esset una tantum essentia, sed 
multae, nisi diceretur quod una essentia dei componeretur ex multis rebus. Et tunc deus non esset primum 
ens, quia ex quo esset compositus, et omne compositum est posterius suis componentibus et dependens ex 
epsis, deus esset posterius ens quam quodcumque attributum et esset dependens ex multis.”
Persons, attributes are essential features and so are absolute. Thomas thus bases his move from distinct to absolute on common, uncontroversial usage.

Having shown that the distinction of attributes must be the result of some intellect, he proceeds in *Quodlibet* II q. 2 to ask which intellect causes the distinction, whether it is the divine or human intellect. As a follower of Thomas Aquinas, Sutton argues that it is the human intellect. He bases this on the principle that the “same, insofar as it is the same, makes only the same.” From this he argues that something that acts by its nature always acts in the same way, because its nature does not change. As nature makes a thing, so the intellect knowing something makes or produces a concept of it. The divine intellect, insofar as it is the same, never distinguishes a plurality of *rationes* of the divine essence. Setting aside all cognitive relations to creatures, the divine intellect knows the divine essence as one; therefore the divine intellect does not distinguish *rationes* in the divine essence but has only one concept, and consequently one *ratio*, of the essence.298 This rather compressed argument is the only positive argument Sutton makes for his position; but he also quotes and refutes three arguments from Henry of Ghent’s *Quodlibet V*.

Thomas of Sutton’s most extensive criticism of Henry of Ghent comes in *Quodlibet* II q. 3. First, Thomas mounts an elaborate attack on Henry’s view that the

298 *Quodlibet* II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 167-168): “...idem in quantum idem non facit nisi idem. Et propter hoc videmus quod natura semper eodem modo operatur, quia manet eadem et non mutatur. Sed sicut natura facit rem, ita intellectus cognoscens aliquid facit vel producit vel format eius rationem. Intellectus ergo divinus in quantum idem numquam distinguuit plures rationes essentiae suae, quam cognoscit. Sed circumscripto omni respectu ad creaturam intellectus divinus non se habet in cognoscendo essentiam suam nisi uno et eodem modo tantum. Ergo non distinguuit plures rationes attributorum absque respectu ad creaturas, sed tantum habet unam rationem essentiae suae, per quam perfecte cognoscit ipsam.”
divine intellect distinguishes the divine attributes (six arguments, as well as three further arguments against the counter argument of “aliqui”); second, he quotes and refutes some of Henry’s arguments; third, he criticizes Henry’s *modus ponendi*, by which he means the view that the divine intellect has quasi-acts (two arguments, as well as possible objections and their responses); finally, he attacks Henry’s view that if the distinction of the attributes is reduced to a real distinction, this is in reference to the trinitarian Persons rather than entities so distinct in the created world. Here we shall consider only the third section of Thomas’ attack, namely, against the notion of quasi-acts by the divine intellect.

Thomas gives two reasons why Henry’s view of the role played by the divine intellect is false. First, the divine intellect is not a comparative or reasoning power, as is the case in human beings, because these activities indicate imperfection, which cannot be ascribed to God. Indeed, Thomas goes so far as to argue that neither do the angels suffer from the cognitive imperfection of having to move from premise to conclusion or from the known to the unknown. Instead, the angels (and by an *a minori* inference God as

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302 *Ibid.* (ed. Schmaus, 190): “Quarto est ista positio irrationabilis in hoc, quod dicit quod, si oportet distinctionem attributorum reduci ad aliqua realiter differentia, non tamen debet reduci ad realem diversitatem extra deum, sed intra, scilicet ad distinctionem divinarum personarum.”

303 This is also the position of Thomas Aquinas in *Summa theologiae* I q. 58 a. 3 (ed. Leon. V, 83).
well) know only by a single act of intellectual vision which is analogous to simple 
apprehension. The reason why such a movement is an imperfection is that it always 
implies mutability, which Thomas, like his contemporaries, denies is present in God. In 
response to a possible evasion on behalf of Henry’s position that the two acts of the 
intellect are in God only metaphorically or only according to the mode of human 
knowing, Thomas replies that to posit both acts (simple understanding and composition 
and division) in God necessarily requires that God’s act of understanding is complex; 
therefore, it must be denied that there are two acts of divine understanding, even in a 
metaphorical sense. These acts cannot be posited in God according to the mode of human 
understanding either, for those features of human knowing that are indicative of 
imperfection should not be attributed to God.

The second argument that Thomas levels against Henry is that even if it were 
granted that the divine intellect distinguishes the attributes, it still could not happen in the 
way described by Henry, namely, by comparing the divine essence under the aspect of 
the true to the intellect, and under the aspect of the good to the will. This is so because it 
is necessary for the intellect, if it makes a comparison, first to understand distinctly the

304 Cf. Thomas of Sutton, Quodlibet II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 187): “Istud dictum dupliciter deficit. Primo quia intellectus divinus non est collativus neque ratiocinativus. Hoc enim est imperfectionis in actu intelligendi quod conferat vel ratiocinetur, in tantum quod nec angelis potest convenire tanta imperfectio, sed soli intellectui nostro, qui est infimus omnium. Et hoc est, quia non una simplici intelligientia intelligit omnia, quae sunt in re intellecta propter debilitatem luminis intellectualis in nobis. Et ideo angelus habens lumen intellectuale perfectum una simplici intelligientia intelligit omnia, quae sunt in re, non componendo nec dividendo nec conferendo nec ratiocinando et istud convenit eis propter appropinquationem maiorem ad deum. Ergo longe est a perfectione divini intellectus quod intelligat conferendo vel ratiocinando. Quod autem ratiocinari sit imperfectionis patet, quia ratiocinari nihil aliud est quam discurrere ab uno, quod est notum, in aliud quod est ignotum prius. Et ita ratiocinari importat quandam mutabilitatem et inquisitionem veritatis sicut hoc nomen cogitatio...”

305 Cf. ibid. (ed. Schmaus, 188-189).
objects that are being compared. This would happen at the first stage of divine knowing, simple apprehension. Therefore the intellect would need first to distinguish all these entities—the divine intellect, the divine will, the true, the good—in the divine essence before it could make an act of comparison.306

Aside from this criticism of Henry, however, the question remains for Thomas whether God knows distinct divine attributes. Although the distinction of attributes is due to the operation of the human intellect, Thomas does not think that God is unaware of the multiplicity of divine attributes. Rather, the divine intellect knows the distinction of the attributes as well as their rationes because it knows that the human mind forms various concepts of himself.307 This does not mean that there are distinct attributes in the divine essence, for God knows them only as they are distinct in relation to the cognition of the created intellect. Instead, God knows that the divine essence can cause multiple concepts in the mind of a creature when it cognizes the divine essence. Here Thomas of Sutton expands the Thomistic theory of the divine ideas, which is the view that God’s knowledge of creation consists of knowing that the divine essence can be imitated in

306 Cf. ibid. (ed. Schmaus, 189): “...si concederetur quod intellectus divinus distinguere attributa, tamen hoc non posset esse illo modo, scilicet conferendo essentiam suam sub ratione veri et boni ad intellectum et voluntatem, quia intellectus conferens aliquam ad invicem prius intelligit distincte ea, quae confert simplici intelligentia. Prius ergo distinguist intellectus divinus in essentia de intellectum et voluntatem, verum et bonum, quam conferat verum ad intellectum et bonum ad voluntatem. Non igitur distinguist attributa conferendo, sed simplici intelligentia, si tamen ea distinguat, ut ipsi ponunt.”

307 Quodlibet II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 168): “Sed verum est quod, quamvis distinctio attributorum fiat non per intellectum divinum, sed per operationem intellectus nostri, tamen intellectus divinus bene cognoscit ipsorum distinctionem, quia deus cognoscendo intellectum humanum et rationes perfectionem, quas format et attribuit deo, ipse deus cognoscit se diversimode cognitum ab intellectu humano secundum diversas rationes in intellectu humano existentes, et sic cognoscit distinctionem attributorum factam per intellectum humanum et cognovit ab aeterno.”
multiple ways by creatures. The divine attributes can be posited in God, but as in the case of the divine ideas, they are not in God distinctly or according to their being. In God the attributes are present only subjectively, in the sense that they exist in the divine intellect.

Like Thomas Aquinas, whom he paraphrases, Thomas of Sutton also inquires into the origin of the plurality of rationes that the human intellect attributes to God. According to Sutton, the “cause of the plurality of the attributes is the defect of our intellect, which cannot attain the divine perfection, which is one, by one conception just as he is, but sees it through many deficient likenesses derived from creatures as in a mirror.”

Thomas of Sutton is clearly an adherent of the Thomist solution to the problem of the attributes; indeed, he followed Thomas Aquinas more closely than did Godfrey of Fontaines. This is not surprising, given that Thomas of Sutton was a member of the same

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308 For Thomas Aquinas’ theory of divine ideas, see De veritate q. 3, esp. a. 2 (ed. Leon. XXII.1, 102-106).

309 Thomas of Sutton, Quodlibet II q. 2 (ed. Schmaus, 168): “Sed talis cognitione distinctiorum attributorum a deo non est proprie loquendo distinctio attributorum secundum suas rationes, quia ut dictum est, intellectus divinus distincta attributa cognoscit per respectum ad intellectum humanum attributa distinguishens, sicut cognoscit distinctas ideas in respectu ad creaturas diversimode suas essentiam imitantem. Unde non cognoscit distincta attributa, nisi in quantum cognoscit suam essentiam sub diversis rationibus intelligibilem ab intellectu creato, sicut non cognoscit ideas distinctas, nisi in quantum cognoscit suam essentiam diversimode a creaturis imitabilem; et ita rationes attributorum secundum divinam cognitionem non sunt in deo, nisi ut cognitae ut subjective, non secundum esse.”

310 Quodlibet II q. 3 (ed. Schmaus, 191): “Causa autem pluralitatis attributorum est defectus nostri intellectus, qui non potest perfectionem divinam, quae una est, una conceptione attingere sicuti est, sed videt eam per multas similitudines eius deficientes resultantes in creaturis tamquam in speculo.” See also Quodlibet III q. 1 (ed. Schmaus, 341): “Et ideo absque dubio tenendum est quod attributa non distinguuntur in deo ex ipsa natura vel essentia, sed tantum per intellectum, ut sic illa distinctio nullo modo sit realis in deo, sed tantum in intellectu creato distinguente, qui habet in se diversas rationes attributorum realiter differentes.”
religious order, which required its members to follow Aquinas.\(^{311}\) Like Godfrey, Thomas of Sutton was strongly critical of Henry of Ghent. Thomas was more consistently critical, however, in that unlike Godfrey he did not retain any elements of Henry’s position, such as the “quasi” aspects in God and the movement of the divine intellect. Both Godfrey and Thomas of Sutton maintained the basic Thomistic defense against Henry’s teaching, namely, that God knows the divine attributes by knowing the various concepts that the human mind forms concerning him.

5.3 William of Ware

William of Ware was an English Franciscan who commented on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at Oxford during the 1290’s.\(^{312}\) Based on the contemporary opinions that he cites his commentary is generally dated 1290-1305. According to the latest research, William’s commentary was originally written down as a *reportatio*, student reports of his lectures. William apparently did not revise this *reportatio*, though others did. Today the

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commentary survives in the *reportatio* and possibly two revised versions. In what follows I rely on the revised version of the text found in Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 33 dext. cod. 1.

William treats the problem of the divine attributes in d. 2 q. 3 of his commentary on Book I of the *Sentences*: “Utrum attributa divina distinguuntur re vel ratione vel qualiter.” In this question he presents a history of the problem among the Scholastics, summarizing five major opinions. We should note, however, that the arguments ascribed to these opinions often do not correspond with the texts in modern editions, possibly because William of Ware’s underlying text is a *reportatio*. He may not have had the works of all these authors at hand. The first opinion is identified in the margin as Giles of Rome, though the text could be simply a summary of Thomas Aquinas’ *Quaestio de attributis*. Interestingly, the final three arguments of this opinion are much closer to William de la Mare’s *Quodlibet* than anything in Giles of Rome’s treatment of the attributes. The second opinion is identified as Thomas, but the text is not from the *Quaestio de attributis*. Rather, it is from the opinion that Henry recites and criticizes in his *Quodlibet* V q. 1. This discussion contains the example of the difference of left and right with respect to a column, which can be found in Thomas Aquinas’ *Scriptum* and commentary on the *Physics*. However, neither of these texts of Thomas played a role in the controversy over the divine attributes. Henry’s *Quodlibet* is clearly the source of this

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314 The text of this question is edited below in the appendix.

315 See the text of Guillelmus de Ware, *In Sent.* I d. 8 q. 3 (appendix, lin. 49-57).
material. The third opinion is Henry (*Quodlibet* V q. 1), to which William devotes more space for its exposition than he does for any other opinion other than his own. He also summarizes Henry’s arguments against the opinion of Thomas. The fourth opinion is Godfrey of Fontaines (according to *marginalia* in the Florence manuscript, the opinion is that of Godfrey and “Richard,” perhaps Richard of Middleton); William also summarizes Godfrey’s arguments against Henry. The final “alia opinio” is William’s own position. The most interesting aspect of William’s history of the problem of the attributes is that the majority of the text is taken from either Henry or Godfrey. For William, these authors are far more important than are Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome or any other Scholastic author writing before Henry’s *Quodlibet* V.

Following the recitation of contemporary opinions, William relates several arguments attempting to prove that prescinding from the consideration of both the created and uncreated intellects, the divine attributes still differ by reason (*ratione*). He describes these arguments as an *alia opinio*, the same phrase he uses to describe all the other contemporary opinions. This question does not have a *divisio quaestionis*, as do other questions in his commentary, which would allow us to clearly determine what his opinion is. The scribe of the Florentine manuscript attempts to remove the ambiguity by

316 See the appendix, lin. 71-81.

317 For Henry’s opinion, see appendix lin. 144-217, for his arguments against Thomas see lin. 104-125, 221-250.

318 For Godfrey’s opinion, see appendix lin. 255-315, for his arguments against Henry see lin. 348-379.

319 See the appendix, lin. 381-487.
annotating this passage with the note *opinio propria* in both the left and right margins.\textsuperscript{320} Relying on this annotation, both Gedeon Gál and Ludwig Hödl take this to be William’s opinion.\textsuperscript{321} That several of the arguments in this section are made in the first person confirms that this section is William’s own position.

As stated, William holds that the divine attributes are rationally (*ratione*) distinct apart from the consideration of both the created and uncreated intellect. The recurring theme in William’s arguments is that the divine attributes are present in the divine essence prior to the operation of the divine intellect and will and that they naturally affect these powers. The idea that powers presuppose and are distinguished by their objects is Aristotelian in origin. One such argument (an *a maiori* inference in form) argues that just as the transcendental attributes of the true, good, and being differ from each other in reason because each has its own way of affecting a power, so in the case of the divine attributes the true and the good are present in the divine essence because they affect the divine intellect and will. This is true even apart from the operation of these powers, that is, that the attributes affect the powers is not itself the result of the operation of the powers.\textsuperscript{322}

\textsuperscript{320} See appendix, lin. 380.


\textsuperscript{322} Cf. Guillelmus de Ware, *In Sent.* I d. 8 q. 3 (lin. 397-404): “Sed tunc arguitur sic: veritas ex proprietate sua aliter habet immutare quam bonitas ex proprietate sua, sicut ergo in creaturis verum et bonum et ens differunt ratione omni intellectu circumscrippto, quia proprium modum habent immutandi aliam et aliam, similiter erit de attributis quia ibi erit vera ratio boni ex hoc quod essentia divina nata est sic movere voluntatem, et similiter ratio veri ex hoc quod nata est movere intellectum circumscrippto omni intellectu, ex hoc solum quod aliter et aliter nata est movere intellectum et voluntatem.”
William makes another argument, which anticipates Duns Scotus’ formal distinction:

God understands and wills his essence in the first presentation of the divine essence to the divine intellect and will, and these acts are distinct prior to every other operation because they precede by nature ex hypothesi; therefore the formal rationes of the objects are distinct prior to every operation [of the intellect and will]. This is proved because the intellect immediately understands its object and the will wills its own [object]; therefore a formal distinction of the good and the true is presupposed before every operation of the intellect.\(^{323}\)

This argument builds on the previous argument, which assumed the Aristotelian distinction between powers, acts, and objects, and applied it to God. Powers are distinguished by and presuppose their objects. In the case of God, then, the divine essence is prior to the operation of the divine intellect and will; when these powers apprehend and will the essence, they do so under the aspects (rationes) of the true and the good, which are also prior to the operation of the powers. Consequently, they are distinct prior to the operation of the powers and are not caused by them. This distinction is labeled a “formal distinction,” although William does not explain the meaning of the term. It is derived from the qualification that the rationes of the good and the true are “formal” and distinct; no attempt is made to justify the use of the term or to defend it against those such as Thomas of Sutton and Godfrey of Fontaines, who hold that there are only two kinds of distinctions, the real and the rational. The argument also presupposes

\(^{323}\) Cf. *ibid.* (lin. 418-425): “Item, in prima praesentatione ipsius essentiae divinae divino intellectui et voluntati Deus intelligit essentiam suam et vult ipsam, isti actus sunt distincti ante omnem aliam operationem, quia natura praecedit per positum, quare et formales rationes objectorum suorum ante omnem operationem sunt distinctae. Quod probatur, quia immediate intellectus intelligit objectum suum et voluntas vult suum, ergo praesupponitur distinctio formalis boni et veri ante omnem operationem intellectus.”

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Henry of Ghent’s claim in *Quodlibet* V q. 1 that one can distinguish the first instant at which the divine powers operate and reason accordingly.

The final argument from William’s solution that we shall examine is also based on an Aristotelian position, namely that the mover is prior to the moved. Since in God the true moves the divine intellect, thereby causing the divine act of understanding, the true must be prior to the divine intellect. The same argument can be made with respect to the good and the operation of the divine will.\(^{324}\) The results of this argument are rather modest. It does not explain how the divine essence moves the divine powers in different ways, nor does it explain what kind of distinction obtains between the true and the good. All we can conclude is that the attributes move the powers in different ways and so must be in some way distinct such that their distinction does not depend upon the operation of the powers. But surely a distinction that does not depend upon the rational faculties is a real distinction, or at least, this would be so according to the definition of a ‘real distinction’ given by Godfrey of Fontaines and Thomas of Sutton.

Following these arguments William raises three objections to his position, the responses to which further illuminate his views. Two are based on the authorities of Averroes and Maimonides, and the third is from reason. The latter is similar to what

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\(^{324}\) Cf. *ibid.* (lin. 483-487): “Item, cum verum secundum quod huiusmodi moveat intellectum et ex hoc sequitur actus intelligendi, et omne movens prius est moto secundum Philosophum IV *Metaphysicae*; etsi haec de invicem dicantur, nihilominus videtur necessario quod ratio veri praecedit actum intelligendi, similiter de bono.”
would be a common objection against Duns Scotus’ theory of the formal distinction: a
distinction *ex natura rei* must be either real or rational.325

In his reply to the first objection, William makes the striking claim that the
multiplicity of the attributes is in the divine essence. As far as the distinction of these
entities is concerned, he prefers the view that it is also in the divine essence, but allows
that it can be said to be in the divine intellect in order to avoid positing a real distinction
in God, which echoes Henry’s position.326 But he does not abandon his basic claim that
the attributes are distinct because the divine essence moves the intellect and will in
different ways.

Against the last objection he argues that the difference of the attributes is neither
real nor rational in the sense that it is caused by the operation of the divine intellect, but
rather the divine attributes differ as do the true and the good in creatures. According to
William, these attributes differ because from their nature they move the intellect and will
in different ways.327 But his reference to creatures here is puzzling, for as we have seen
above with respect to Thomas Aquinas and several others, it was common among the

325 Cf. *ibid.* (lin. 489-499): “Sed contra hoc videtur esse Commentatorem XI *Metaphysicae*
commento 39 f: ‘multiplicitas in Deo non est nisi in intellectu, non in esse.’ Item, Rabbi Moyses cap. 48 d:
essentia divina est ‘in qua non est compositio, nec aliqua multitudo quomodocumque consideres ipsum non
invenes in ea multitudinem in intellectu vel extra intellectum.’ Item, omnis differentia quae consurgit ex
natura rei sine operatione intellectus videtur esse differentia realis; si igitur differentia sit in divinis
attributis praeter operationem intellectus, illa differentia erit realis, et tunc vel absoluta vel relativa:
absoluta non propter compositionem realem, non relativa realis, quia illa solum est inter personas.”

326 Cf. *ibid.* (lin. 502-508): “…attributa non differunt secundum esse... quia habent unum esse
simplex, nec differentia eorum ita est in intellectu quod sit operata ab intellectu solum, sed ex parte
essentiae est illa differentia ex hoc quod nata est aliter movere intellectum, aliter voluntatem, sed pro tanto
potest dici quod differentia eorum est in intellectu, quia differentia eorum non est realis extra.”

327 Cf. *ibid.* (lin. 514-517): “Ad aliud dico quod differentia attributorum nec est realis nec
rationalis ita quod solum operata ab intellectu, sed differunt sicut verum et bonum in creaturis ex hoc quod
ex natura eorum habent quod possint sic vel sic movere intellectum et etiam voluntatem.”
Scholastics to claim that the perfections of creatures are really distinct. Since in this reply William denies that there is a real distinction in God, he still owes his readers an account of how his position avoids positing such a distinction in God, especially because of the numerous opinions he recites throughout this question which are unanimous in denying any distinction in God whatsoever.

William of Ware’s position is a clear response to the teaching of Henry of Ghent and an attempt to move past the debate between Henry and Godfrey of Fontaines. Since he advocates a distinction that is prior even to divine cognitive activity, William may well be the first thinker to develop the realist solution to the problem of the divine attributes. But this somewhat critical stance towards Henry and Godfrey should not obscure William’s reliance on the texts of Godfrey and Henry for the construction of his own question, nor should we forget that for William the point of departure is the debate between Henry and Godfrey, rather than the views of Thomas Aquinas.

5.4 Conclusion

As we have seen, Henry claimed that the activity of the divine intellect caused the plurality of the divine attributes. Not surprisingly, the followers of Thomas Aquinas attacked Henry. Some wrote *Correctoria* refuting his *Quodlibeta* question-by-question. Others attempted to answer Henry’s views while remaining true to Aquinas’ essential insights. Thomas of Sutton and Godfrey of Fontaines both claimed that all distinction and plurality of attributes is the result of the operation of the human intellect. In their view, the divine intellect plays no role in the explanation of the plurality of divine attributes. They accounted for divine knowledge of the attributes by claiming that God is able to
compare his essence to creatures, thus applying the Thomistic theory of the divine ideas to the problem of the attributes. Despite their criticism of Henry of Ghent, this comparative act is similar to Henry’s placement of the first two Aristotelian acts of the mind in God. Henry’s position contained an ambiguity, however, that William of Ware exposed and then drew an explicit inference and conclusion. Henry had argued that all divine attributes were ultimately reducible to either the divine intellect or will, which, however, were not reducible to each other. Even though Henry had allowed for two “instants” in God, one in which God was one in reality but potentially many in reason, and one in which there was a plurality of attributes, the difference between the intellect and will was not caused by either the intellect or the will, implying that the difference was in some way prior to their operations. This is the very position that William of Ware maintains. He labels the distinction that obtains between the true and the good “formal,” though he does not explain such a distinction in any detail. Whatever the degree of difference, it is certainly prior to and independent of any divine cognitive or volitional activity and thus real.

At the close of the thirteenth century the majority position in the universities held the Thomist solution to the problem of the divine attributes. They disagreed, however, whether the intellect that generated the attributes was the divine, uncreated intellect or the human intellect. It is in this context that the third solution arose, namely, the realist. William of Ware may have been its first defender. He posited a distinction that obtained among the attributes apart from the consideration of any intellect whatsoever, whether created or uncreated, which instead was based on the nature of the divine essence. This
solution would find its most rigorous articulation in Duns Scotus, the subject of the final chapter.
CHAPTER 6:

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

The solution of John Duns Scotus to the problem of the divine attributes represents the apex of the trend of metaphysical speculation initiated by Thomas Aquinas. After Scotus, increasingly sophisticated accounts of the distinction of reason were developed by the proponents of the Thomist solution, and there was also a conservative reaction by William of Ockham and his followers, who based their accounts on theories of language, reviving the semantic connotation theory of the twelfth century. Scotus was able to resolve the most intractable problem associated with the divine attributes, that of the foundation of the plurality of attributes, in a manner that preserved the veracity of both human and divine concepts. Unfortunately, his solution—formal non-identity or formal distinction—is perhaps more difficult to understand than the original problem; indeed, it is one of the most difficult aspects of Scotus’ thought and has generated both medieval and modern controversies regarding its interpretation.

328 For a medieval expression of this judgment, see Guillelmus de Ockham, Ordinatio I d. 2 q. 1 in Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum Ordinatio: Distinctiones II-III, ed. Stephen Brown et al. (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1970), 17-18: “...talis distinctio vel non-identitas formalis posset poni aequae faciliter inter essentiam divinam et sapientiam divinam sicut inter essentiam et relationem, quia tamen est difficillima ad ponendum ubicumque, nec credo eam esse faciliorem ad tenendum quam trinitatem personarum cum unitate essentiae, ideo non debet poni nisi ubi evidenter sequitur ex creditis traditis in Sacra Scriptura vel determinatione Ecclesiae propter cuius auctoritatem debet omnis ratio captivari.”
We should note, however, that Scotus did not develop the formal distinction solely as a solution to the problem of the divine attributes.\textsuperscript{329} Scotus also employed it to solve trinitarian problems (the distinction between Person and essence), issues in philosophical anthropology (the distinction between the soul and its powers), and problems in metaphysics, such as individuation (where it obtains between the common nature and the individuating difference).\textsuperscript{330}

It is possible to see in Scotus’ position a shift in the controversies surrounding the divine attributes away from direct considerations about the nature of the attributes themselves and how they can be predicated of God toward general metaphysical problems. After Scotus, much of the debate focuses on the status of the formal distinction and developing rival theories of the distinction of reason rather than developing a new solution to the problem of the divine attributes.

The following chapter is in four parts: (1) chronology (2) Scotus’ position at Oxford (3) his position at Paris (4) his analysis of the rival theories of divine attributes.

6.1 Chronology

Differing reconstructions of the chronology of Duns Scotus’ works are responsible for some of the disagreement among contemporary scholars regarding the formal distinction. Therefore, I suggest a plausible reconstruction of the sequence based on the most recent research. Currently, however, many of Scotus’ works (from both his

\textsuperscript{329} For this point, see Stephen D. Dumont, “John Duns Scotus,” in \textit{A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages}, 358.

\textsuperscript{330} Cf. \textit{Lectura} I d. 8 pars 1 q. 4 n. 189 (ed. Vat. XVII, 68-69); \textit{Ordinatio} I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 n. 407 (ed. Vat. II, 358).
English and French periods) await their first critical edition; consequently, my view of
the chronology must still be viewed as tentative.331

6.1.1 Oxford Works

*Lectura I*: this is Duns Scotus’ first written commentary on the *Sentences*. The
editors date it to 1296-1302 and claim that it is a genuine work based on quotations from
contemporaries (Robert Cowton and Thomas of Sutton), brash comments by Scotus that
are smoothed over or retracted in the *Ordinatio*, and the textual reliance of the *Ordinatio*
on the *Lectura* (for example, the *Ordinatio* at times contains replies to arguments found
only in the *Lectura*). The title has been supplied by the editors.332

*Ordinatio I*: This work was begun in 1300, incorporating the text of *Lectura I*. The
text of Books I-II was probably completed by 1302, when Scotus left for Paris. There
are extensive revisions to the primitive text, labeled “extra” and “extra de manu sua,” in
the manuscripts, which suggests that Scotus continued to work on the text, perhaps even
at Paris. So the *Ordinatio* is a work in progress. But it remained incomplete upon Scotus’
death in 1308; therefore I do not accept the view that this work should be treated as if it

331 On the chronology, see Antonie Vos, “Duns Scotus at Paris,” in *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002*,

were the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, a privileged source where one looks to find Scotus’ “official” position. This view appears to be based solely on the knowledge that Scotus revised the work, but the same could be said for the *Quaestiones* on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and possibly *Reportatio* I as well. Consequently, in what follows I do not treat this work as if it represents the final stage of Scotus’ views on the formal distinction, as do some scholars.\(^{333}\) Instead, I follow another view that differentiates between his Oxford and Parisian periods, maintaining that at least *Ordinatio* I belongs to the former period, revisions notwithstanding.\(^{334}\)

*Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*: it is commonly held that this is an early work from Oxford, although it has been demonstrated that books VII-IX postdate the *Ordinatio*. Book VII contains material relevant to the formal distinction, though not directly to the problem of the attributes; I make little use of the question, as the section labeled “De distinctione formali a parte rei” by the editors is clearly an “alia opinio” which, while similar to Scotus’ positions espoused elsewhere, is not clearly endorsed as his own.\(^ {335}\)


Collationes: Collatio 22/33 (22 according to Wadding’s numbering; 33 according to Balić): this question is devoted to the divine attributes and there is relevant material in several other Collationes as well. The Oxford set of Collationes have been dated to either 1303-4 or 1305-8. According to Balić, Wadding omitted material from Collatio 22; consequently, I utilize the text found in Oxford, Merton College Library, Ms. 65. Modern scholars have paid little attention to the doctrine of the formal distinction as contained in these disputes. This is not entirely surprising, for these texts generally lack a clear authorial resolution of the question and it is often difficult to determine which respondent is actually Duns Scotus.

6.1.2 Parisian Works

Reportatio I: Scotus arrived in Paris in 1302, and began lecturing on the first book of the Sentences. The result of these lectures is the Reporatio, a term that indicates a work surviving in student reports or notes. However, this does not mean that the version generally called “A” is a pure transcript; the colophon of Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1453, claims that the work was “examined” (examinata) by

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Scotus. Part of his “examination” may have involved revising the bare *reportatio*. The sheer length of the work also suggests a supplemented or revised work rather than student notebooks. If the colophon of Worcester, Cathedral Library, Ms. F.69, is trustworthy, the date of this work is 1302-1303.\(^{339}\)

*Quaestio de formalitatibus* (also known in the fourteenth century as the *Logica Scoti*): Stephen D. Dumont argued that this unfinished work is genuine as well as of Parisian origin.\(^{340}\) According to the colophon of the Vatican manuscript, it is devoted to the problem of the distinction of the attributes; the actual contents, however, are devoted to analyzing six propositions about the distinction between the trinitarian Persons and the divine essence. In the course of the work Scotus quotes a series of arguments from Gerard of Bologna’s first *Quodlibet*, which has been tentatively dated to 1305-1308.\(^{341}\) Since Scotus left Paris for Cologne in the summer of 1307, the *Quaestio de formalitatibus* can be dated to 1305-1307; consequently, it is one of the final works of Duns Scotus. Although the significance of the work for our discussion is obvious, I make little use of this question in what follows. This is because the contents are similar to the doctrine of *Reportatio I*, save for the presence of the term *formalitas* (a term commonly, but erroneously, believed to have been abandoned by Scotus during his Parisian period).


6.2 The Oxford Position on the Divine Attributes

Duns Scotus’ Oxford position on the divine attributes integrates the insights of William of Ware with the tradition of the rationes reales by maintaining a distinction of formalitates that obtains prior to the operation of any intellect, whether human or divine. Thus Scotus is an adherent of the realist solution. For him, it is sufficient to posit a certain kind of distinction in order to resolve the difficulties caused by reconciling divine simplicity with the plurality of divine attributes. The distinction in question is the formal.342 According to Scotus, there is a “formal distinction” between different divine attributes and between each attribute and the divine essence. This distinction obtains prior to the operation of any intellect and, therefore, must be treated as a case of the distinction ex natura rei, that is, a real distinction in the broad sense.343 This may appear to violate


343 Cf. Duns Scotus, Ordinatio I d. 35 q. un. arg. contra (Vat. VI, 246): “...sed quod est ibi ex natura rei, et non in obiecto ut cognitum est, est reale.”
divine simplicity, but nonetheless Scotus argues that a formal distinction is compatible with real identity. He preserves simplicity by recourse to his doctrine of intrinsic modes and unitive containment: the divine essence, under its intrinsic mode of infinity, is an endless sea of being that contains the attributes, which are also infinite, and which preserves real identity even though infinity does not alter the formal rationes of the attributes.

In what follows we shall examine Scotus’ notions of formal identity, the formal distinction and the degree of reality that it introduces in divinis, as well as the role of infinity and unitive containment. I shall focus on the Ordinatio, since the Lectura served as the basis of the Ordinatio and contains almost identical arguments.344

6.2.1 The Formal Distinction in the Ordinatio

According to Scotus, divine simplicity is a certain kind of unity located within a continuum of degrees of unity.345 He does not claim, however, that his list of degrees of unity is exhaustive. The first and lowest is a ‘unity of aggregation,’ commonly described in the literature as the unity of a pile, for example, a pile of sticks. The second degree is a ‘unity of order,’ order being the feature added to the first degree. The third is an accidental unity, which in addition to order and aggregation introduces informatio, or the informing of a substance by an accident. The fourth degree is the ‘unity of a composite,’ which has essential principles related as act and potency. The fifth is the ‘unity of


simplicity,’ which introduces true identity. This degree probably includes the unity of the
human soul, and certainly divine simplicity. At this degree everything is really (realiter)
the same as everything else, and the unified entity is not simply a unity by reason of its
parts, which is the case in all the previous degrees. Beyond the unity of simplicity,
however, there is yet a higher degree, that of formal identity. According to Scotus, for
two entities to be formally identical one must include the other in its formal-quidditative
ratio, such that it can be predicated of the other in the first mode of per se predication,
that is, to form a definition.346 Speaking loosely, we can understand the ratio formalis
quiditativa as signifying a definition or some sort of definitional, essential content for
those entities that do not admit of definition (such as the simple concept of ens).347 Thus,
this highest grade of unity introduces a unity of definition or, alternatively, the inclusion
of two items in a definition.348

346 The first mode of per se predication is when a definition or part of a definition is predicated of
dicendi per se est quando id quod attribuitur alicui pertinet ad formam eius, et quia diffinitio significat
formam et essentiam Rei, primus modus eius quod est ‘per se’ est quando predicatur de aliquo diffinitio uel
aliiquid in diffinitione positum.” See also Tweedale, Scotus vs. Ockham, vol. 2, 454.
caracter (ratio) of a thing which makes it what (= quid) it is.”
348 Cf. Ordinatio I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 356): “...possimus invenire in unitate multos
gradus – primo, minima est aggregationis; in secundo gradu est unitas ordinis, quae aliquid addit supra
aggregationem; in tertio est unitas per accidentes, ubi ultra ordinem est informatio, licet accidentalis, unius ab
altero eorum quae sunt sic unum; in quarto est per se unitas compositi ex principiis essentialibus per se actu
et per se potentia; in quinto est unitas simplicitatis, quae est vere identitas (quidquid enim est ibi, est realiter
idem cuilibet, et non tantum est unum illi unitate unionis, sicut in aliis modis) – ita, adhuc ultra, non omnis
identitas est formalis. Voco autem identitatem formalem, ubi illud quod dicitur sic idem, includit illud cui
sic est idem, in ratione sua formali quiditativa et per se primo modo.”

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There are two corresponding distinctions opposed to formal and real identity, namely, the real and the formal.349 Scotus did not provide a sustained treatment of the real distinction, and so his view of it must be gathered from oblique references.350 It is a distinction that obtains between things (res), and while it is probable that the res in question can be numerically distinct substances, the little discussion that Scotus devotes to the topic generally concerns the presence of the distinction in one substance, such as the human soul or God. In one passage in the Ordinatio, where Scotus attempts to distinguish the formal and real distinctions, he denies that the formal distinction is a real-actual distinction (differentia realis actualis), the meaning of which, he states, is commonly known; he describes it as a difference of things (res) in act, and it is clear from what follows that there can be a real-potential difference as well.351 Scotus defines the term realiter as referring to an entity present apart from any act of the intellect; he glosses the phrase ‘present apart from any act of the intellect’ as meaning that even if there were no intellect to consider it, the entity would still be present.352 A real distinction would then obtain independently of any operation of the intellect; this is the first condition. The

349 Note that Scotus also has a notion of self-identity, which he maintains is a relation of reason. See Antonie Vos, The Philosophy of Duns Scotus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd., 2006), 252-253.


351 Cf. Ordinatio I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 355): “Sed numquid haec distinctio dicetur realis? Respondeo: non est realis actualis, intelligendo sicut communi iter dicitur, ‘differentia realis actualis’ illa quae est differentia rerum et in actu... et sicut non est realis actualis, ita non est realis potentialis...”

352 Cf. ibid. (350): “Et intelligo sic ‘realiter’, quod nullo modo per actum intellectus considerantis, immo quod talis entitas esset ibi si nullus intellectus esset considerans; et sic esse ibi, si nullus intellectus consideraret, dico ‘esse ante omnem actum intellectus’.”
second condition of a real distinction is separability, although Scotus does not mention this condition in his various treatments of the formal distinction.\textsuperscript{353} Two items are really distinct if they can be separated, and one can exist without the other. For example, the human body and soul are really distinct because the soul can exist without the body, even though the body cannot exist without the soul. This suggests that real identity, the converse of real distinction, requires the condition of inseparability in order to obtain.

The formal distinction is opposed to formal identity. Scotus consistently throughout his works argues that the formal distinction is compatible with real identity, that is, the unity of simplicity. The formal distinction shares one of the conditions of the real distinction: it obtains prior to the operation of any intellect, human or divine.\textsuperscript{354} A second condition separates it from the real distinction, that the \textit{distinguenda} differ only by means of their definitions. Both the real distinction and the formal distinction are “real” in the sense that they obtain prior to the operation of an intellect.\textsuperscript{355} As formal

\textsuperscript{353} On the “Separability criterion,” see the literature cited in n. 345. A clear example of Scotus’ use of it, embedded in an attack on Henry of Ghent’s view of relations, can be found in \textit{Ordinatio} II d. 1 q. 4-5 (ed. Vat. VII, 101-103): “Contra istam opinionem arguo primo sic: nihil est idem realiter alicui, sine quo potest esse realiter ab absque contradictione... Hanc etiam propositionem ‘illa sunt distincta realiter quorum unum potest manere sine altero’, negaret protervus. Ista autem negata, perit tota doctrina Philosophi VII \textit{Topicorum}...” See also \textit{Ordinatio} II d. 3 pars 1 q. 2 (ed. Vat. VII, 198): “Accipio igitur quod nihil potest concludi ‘distinctum ab alio’ nisi vel propter separationem actualem, vel potentiale, vel propter proportionem istorum ad aliqua alia quorum alterum est ab altero separabile.”

\textsuperscript{354} Cf. \textit{Ordinatio} I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 261): “Est ergo ibi distinctio praecedens intellectum omni modo, et est ista, quod sapientia est in re ex natura rei, et bonitas in re ex natura rei, - sapientia autem in re, formaliter non est bonitas in re.”

\textsuperscript{355} For further evidence that the formal distinction is a real distinction in this specific sense of ‘real’ see Scotus’ defense of Avicenna in \textit{Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis} IV q. 2 n. 143 (OPh IV, 354-355): “...sicut essentia divina infinitas perfectiones continet et omnes unitive, sic quod non sunt alia res, sic essentia creatum potest alias perfactiones unitive continere... Ideo quaelibet potest duci pars perfectionis, non tamen realiter differens quod sit alia natura, sed alia perfectio realis – alietate, inquam, non causata ab intellectu, nec tamen tanta quantum intelligimus cum dicimus ‘diversae res’; sed differentia reali minori, si vocetur differentia realis omnis non causata ab intellectu... Exemplum huius aliquale in continuo, in quo sunt multae partes; ista multitudo est realis, sic quod non causata a ratione. Non
identity requires that one entity be included in the formal-quidditative ratio of the other, so formal distinction requires that they be the same in every way save for this inclusion. Unfortunately, Scotus does not offer his readers an explanation of the formal distinction apart from its various applications; rather, in his examination of the divine attributes and trinitarian Persons he finds that the traditional real and rational distinctions are insufficient, and that the problem requires a new kind of distinction. Scotus gives two arguments for the distinction among trinitarian Persons (one from the communicability of the divine essence and the incommunicability of the personal property, the other from the intuitive knowledge of the Father), and two ways (viae) of explaining what the formal distinction is. These viae are also embedded in discussions of other topics, however, the first concluding a smaller difference from a larger using the example of the real distinction between the trinitarian Persons, the second relying on a distinction of formal objects that is prior to an act of intuitive cognition.356

The degree to which the formal distinction can be called ‘real’ was its most controversial aspect and troubled Scotus throughout his career. In the early Lectura, he brashly proclaimed that there was no doubt in his mind regarding the truth of the distinction: “Qui igitur potest capere, capiat, quia sic esse intellectus meus non dubitat.”357 When Scotus revised the passage in the Ordinatio he was more cautious: “Et dico sine

tamen tanta quantam hic intelligimus ‘diversae res’, sed minor realis, quia multitudo non simpliciter diversorum in uno tamen toto contentorum.”


357 Lectura I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat XVI, 217).
assertione et praecidicio melioris sententiae...”

Perhaps this was because even in the *Ordinatio* the formal distinction falls under the general category of the real distinction; he describes it there as “minima in suo ordine, id est inter omnes quae praeceedunt intellectionem.”

A similar passage can be found in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, although the text is part of an “alia opinio.” In both the *Ordinatio* and the *Lectura*, Scotus sought to soften the force of the distinction by noting that it could be also described as a rational or virtual distinction. Scotus was willing to grant that the distinction is one of reason, if, following a “certain doctor” (generally believed to be Bonaventure and his *distinctio attributionis*, although Henry of Ghent’s doctrine in *Quodlibet* V q. 1 also seems a likely candidate, especially since Henry claims that the divine intellect generates the *rationes* of the attributes), one understands *ratio* to mean not a difference formed by the intellect but rather the quiddity of a thing insofar as a quiddity is the object of the intellect. This does not concede much, however, for the quiddity is still prior to the operation of the intellect and so in Scotus’ sense is real. Scotus’ term “virtual difference” is more obscure, but appears to mean that the subject of such a

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358 *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 349).

359 *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 354).

360 *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* VII q. 19 (Opera Philosophica IV, 370): “Alia est opinio... Sed realis differentia ponitur habere gradus. Est enim maxima naturarum et suppositorum; media naturarum in uno supposito; minima diversarum perfectionum sive rationum perfectionalium unitive contentarum in una natura.”

361 These qualifications fall under the sub-question “Sed numquid haec distinctio dicetur realis?” to which belongs the discussion of the actual-real and potential-real distinction and grades of unity examined above.

362 *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 355): “Potest autem vocari ‘differentia rationis’, sicut dixit doctor quidam; - non quod ‘ratio’ accipiatur pro differentia formata ab intellectu, sed ut ‘ratio’ accipitur pro quiditate rei secundum quod quiditas est objectum intellectus.”
distinction does not have the *distinguenda* as two things, but only as one thing; instead, it has two realities with corresponding principles, which are present in the subject as if they were distinct things, even though they are not.\(^{363}\) This also has something of a “real” flavor, however, and it is difficult to see how either of these terminological qualifications would allay the fears of critics. In the original version of the *Ordinatio*, Scotus held that it was not necessary to use these terms (“rational” and “virtual”) for the formal distinction; however, this phrase was later cancelled, leaving the final state of the *Ordinatio* on this matter the same as that of the *Lectura*.\(^{364}\)

Scotus makes another attempt to blunt the force of the formal distinction by qualifying the sense in which the entities are so distinct. This is found in a passage in the *Ordinatio* without a parallel in the *Lectura* and is perhaps indicative of Scotus’ meeker approach to the problem. His attempt consists of the assertion that it is better to abandon the term “distinct” in favor of “non-identical”. He considers the objection that the conditional ‘\(a\) and \(b\) are not formally the same, therefore they are formally distinct’ is valid. (Scotus had prefaced this entire discussion of the formal distinction by assigning the variable \(a\) to the *ratio* of the supposit of the Father by which it is formally incommunicable and \(b\) to the *ratio* of the divine essence *qua* essence.) According to the

\(^{363}\) *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 355-356): “Vel, alio modo, potest vocari ‘differentia virtualis’, quia illud quod habet tale distinctionem in se non habet rem et rem, sed est una res, habens virtualiter sive praeminenter quasi duas realitates, quia utique realitati ut est in illa una re competit illud quod est proprium principium tali realitati, ac si ipsa esset res distincta: ita enim haec realitas distinguat et illa non distinguat, sicut si illa esset una res et ista alia.”

\(^{364}\) For the cancelled text see *ibid.* (357): “…omittendo illa verba de distinctione rationis et de distinctione virtualis; non quia sunt male dicta, sed quia non oportet eis uti…” Grajewski, writing prior to the advent of the critical edition, was unaware of this and so thought Scotus decided against the qualifications. See *The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus*, 91.
objection, then, formal non-identity and formal distinction are equivalent. Scotus denies this equivalence, however, and the validity of the inference, because the term *formaliter* is negated in the antecedent and affirmed in the consequent.\(^{365}\) Scotus does not explain in the *Ordinatio* why this is fallacious, but when he discussed this problem again at Paris in the incomplete *Quaestio de formalitatibus* he identified it as a fallacy of the consequent. The inference then commits the same error as ‘man is not necessarily white, therefore man is necessarily not white’. Despite this, however, in the later *Quaestio de formalitatibus* Scotus grants that the inference from formal non-identity to formal distinction is valid.\(^{366}\)

Based on these considerations, it would seem that a distinction *ex natura rei* is one that obtains apart from any activity of an intellect, whether human or divine, and is a general term for the real distinction in its broad sense. This class of distinction has two members, the real-actual and the formal, which are distinguished from each other according to the criterion of separability.

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\(^{365}\) *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 357): “Numquid igitur debet concedi aliqua ‘distinctio’? Melius est uti ista negativa ‘hoc non est formaliter idem’, quam, hoc est sic et sic ‘distinctum’. Sed nonne sequitur, ‘\(a\) et \(b\) non sunt idem formaliter, ergo sunt formaliter distincta’? Respondeo quod non oportet sequi, quia ‘formaliter’ [formalitas Vat. ed.] in antecedente negatur, et in consequente affirmatur.” I have modified the text following Dumont, “Duns Scotus’s Parisian Question on the Formal Distinction,” 37 n. 67.

\(^{366}\) For the identification and discussion of this fallacy see Dumont, “Duns Scotus’s Parisian Question on the Formal Distinction,” 34-38.
6.2.2 The Divine Attributes

Duns Scotus treatment of the divine attributes is contained in a single question, *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4.\(^{367}\) This question bears all the marks for which Duns Scotus is infamous: lengthy exposition and refutation of contemporary views, lengthy additions to the original text of the *Ordinatio*, obscure marginal annotations in which he discusses the views of his students (in this case, what appears to be Henry of Harclay’s verbal comments), and several *dubia* lodged against his own position.

There are three points to Scotus’ position: (1) there is a distinction preceding the operation of the intellect; (2) wisdom is in God *ex natura rei* and goodness is in God *ex natura rei*; (3) wisdom in God is not formally goodness.\(^{368}\)

Scotus proves (2) by recourse to the Anselmian *perfectiones simpliciter*, that is, entities or perfections which it is better to be than not to be.\(^{369}\) This of course was a standard, uncontroversial argument proving positive attributes in God, although Scotus inserts his own qualification that the perfections are present *ex natura rei*.\(^{370}\) He does not

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\(^{368}\) Cf. *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 261): “Est ergo ibi distinctio praecedens intellectum omni modo, et est ista, quod sapientia est in re ex natura rei, et bonitas in re ex natura rei, - sapientia autem in re, formaliter non est bonitas in re.”

\(^{369}\) Cf. Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Monologion* c. 15 in *S. Anselmi Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, ed. Francis Schmitt (Thomas Nelson and Sons: Edinburgh, 1946), 28: “...quidquid est praeter relativa, aut tale est, ut ipsum omnino melius sit quam non ipsum, aut tale ut non ipsum in aliquo melius sit quam ipsum. ‘Ipsum’ autem et ‘non ipsum’ non aliud hic intelligeo quam verum, non verum; corpus, non corpus; et his similia. Melius quidem est omnino aliud quam non ipsum, ut sapiens quam non ipsum sapiens, id est: melius est sapiens quam non sapiens.”

\(^{370}\) Cf. *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 252): “...et primo ostendo quod formaliter veritas et bonitas sint in re, et quaelibet perfectio simpliciter, ante omne opus intellectus: quia quaelibet perfectio
appear to have defined this term in the *Ordinatio*, although he rectifies this oversight in the *Reportatio*.371

Scotus proves (1) in his initial analysis of the contrary opinions, especially that of Henry of Ghent. From Scotus’ division of the question it is clear that his solution is not that divine attributes are distinct by reason. Rather, the question that Scotus addresses is whether there is any distinction prior to the operation of an intellect. He characterizes the views of Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines as the “negative” solution; these thinkers agree that the divine attributes are not distinguished prior to the operation of an intellect but are of reason; they disagree, however, on the origin of the distinction of reason. Godfrey holds that the distinction arises from a comparison between the divine essence and the perfections of creatures; Henry denies that the divine intellect has any recourse to anything *ad extra*, instead holding that the distinction of attributes arises from intellectual activity *ad intra*.372 After his analysis of the two opinions, Scotus notes that he is arguing not only for a distinction of reason but for a distinction that precedes the activity of any intellect. This is significant in that he thereby grants that there can be distinctions of reason obtaining among the attributes. He differentiates between a rational

simpliciter est formaliter in ente simpliciter perfecto ex natura rei; veritas formaliter est perfectio simpliciter, et bonitas similiiter; igitur etc.”

371 But the meaning can no doubt be extrapolated from his discussion of the term *realiter*, on which see the immediately preceding section above. For a different approach, see *Ord. IV* d. 46 q. 1 (ed. Wadding-Vivès XX, 400-401) where Scotus argues that justice is present in God based on a discussion of the definition of justice, rather than on Anselmian pure perfections.

372 Cf. *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 231): “In ista quaeestione sunt multae opiniones, quas non omnes intendo recitare. Sed duae sunt tenentes conclusionem negativam, quae tamen inter se contradicunt: utraque ponit quod cum simplicitate Dei non stat distinctio aliqua attributorum, nisi tantum rationis, sed prima ponit quod nec illa potest haberri nisi per actum intellectus ‘intelligentis ipsum Deum per respectum ad extra’, - secunda ponit istam distinctionem rationis posse haberri ‘absque respectu ad extra’.”
distinction that obtains between diverse ways of conceiving the same formal object
(which only results in a grammatical distinction, such as that between “wise” and
“wisdom”), and one that obtains between diverse formal objects in the intellect. Scotus
bases his rejection of the sufficiency of the distinction of reason on his criticism of the
position of Henry of Ghent, specifically in an argument based on intuitive cognition.373

The point of the argument from intuitive cognition is to show that diverse formal
objects require a distinction in the object prior to the act of understanding and that in the
case of rationes caused by the divine intellect (Henry’s view), this would entail causing a
relation of reason in the divine essence that would serve as the object of an act of
intuitive cognition. The argument relies on Scotus’ view of intuitive cognition, which is
cognition of an existing object as existing and present, and the claim that the divine
intellect knows the divine essence only by an act of intuitive cognition. From this Scotus
argues that when the divine intellect cognizes the divine essence, any distinction that God
knows must be already in the object; this is true of both diverse formal objects and
rationes generated by the divine intellect. The distinction is in the object as it is existing,
and so prior to the operation of the intellect, and thus prior to the diverse formal objects
of the intellect. If we consider the rationes caused by the divine intellect, we find that the
divine intellect would cause them as an intellection in the divine essence and as a relation
of reason, which Scotus thinks is absurd because it would violate divine immutability (the

373 Cf. ibid. (260): “Ad quaestionem respondeo quod inter perfectiones essentiales non est tantum
differentia rationis, hoc est diversorum modorum concipiendi idem objectum formale (tal is enim distinctio
est inter sapiens et sapientiam, et utique major est inter sapientiam et veritatem), nec est ibi tantum
distinctio objectorum formalium in intellectu, quia ut argutum est prius, illa nunquam est in cognitione
intuitiva nisi sit in objecto intuitive cognito. Ista est iam duo membra probantur per rationes factas contra
praecedentem opinionem.”

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cognitive activity of the divine intellect would cause an effect in the divine essence), and perhaps also because this notion would require a mental power to cause an extra-mental effect in its own essence. Clearly, this argument relies on certain controversial aspects of Scotus’ philosophy, such as his view of intuitive cognition; I summarize it because Scotus himself cites it as showing how both versions of the distinction of reason are insufficient, and it is the first of the three points that comprise Scotus’ position on the divine attributes. It is not the only argument he gives, and I direct the interested reader to consult the text for the remaining arguments.

Scotus defends (3), that in God wisdom is not formally goodness, with a compressed argument using two aspects of his thought defended elsewhere, namely, infinity and univocity. He argues by means of a *reductio ad absurdum* that if infinite wisdom were formally infinite goodness, then wisdom as univocally common to God and creatures would be formally goodness as univocally common to God and creatures. What this means is this: according to Scotus’ view of univocity, creatures can form concepts of created perfections and abstract from their creaturely conditions to an univocal concept that is indifferent to God and creatures and applicable to both. The univocal concept

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374 Cf. *ibid.* (257): “Praeterea, intellectus intuitivus nullam habet distinctionem in obiecto nisi secundum quod existis est, quia sicut non cognoscit aliquod objectum nisi ut existis, ita non cognoscit aliqua distincta formaliter in obiecto nisi ut existis est. Cum ergo intellectus divinus non cognoscat essentiam suam nisi intellectione intuitiva, quaecumque distinctio ponatur ibi in obiecto – sive sit distinctorium objectorum formalium, sive ut rationum causatarum per actum intellectus – sequitur quod ista distinctio erit in obiecto ut actu existis est: et ita si ista est objectorum formalium distinctorium in obiecto, erunt ista distincta formaliter (et tunc sequitur propositum, quod talis distinctio objectorum formalium praeedit actum intellectus), si autem sit rationum causatarum per actum intelligendi, ergo intellectus divinus causabit aliquam intellectionem in essentia ‘ut relationem rationis’, ut est existisens, quod videtur absurdum.”

can be contracted to God by the addition of infinity, which is the intrinsic mode of the divine essence. To argue that infinite wisdom is infinite goodness requires that one also admit that wisdom is formally goodness in creatures because wisdom and goodness are univocally common to God and creatures. The phrase “(infinite) wisdom is formally (infinite) goodness” should be interpreted as meaning that wisdom and goodness have the same definitions. The consequent of this argument is clearly unacceptable, for the common opinion held that the perfections found in creatures are really (realiter) distinct from each other; after all, creatures can be good without being wise. And to deny the consequent would force Scotus’ opponents into likewise denying the antecedent, effectively endorsing his position. Scotus supports the antecedent with the important claim that the addition of infinity to a formal ratio (definition) does not alter its content, regardless of what the grade of the perfection is (that is, whether finite or infinite). Scotus concludes the argument by noting that if wisdom does not contain goodness as univocally common, then neither does it when it has been contracted by the intrinsic mode of infinity.376

Scotus supports this argument further by explaining how something is formally included in another. By “formal inclusion” Scotus means that something includes another in its essential ratio, that is, its definition. If something is included in this way, it will be

376 Cf. Ordinatio I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 261): “Quod probatur, quia si infinita sapientia esset formaliter infinita bonitas, et sapientia in communi esset formaliter bonitas in communi. Infinitas enim non destruit formalem rationem illius cui additur, quia in quocunque gradu intelligatur esse aliqua perfectio (qui tamen 'gradus' est gradus illius perfectionis), non tollitur formalis ratio illius perfectionis propter istum gradum, et ita si non includit formaliter ‘ut in communi, in communi’, nec ‘ut infinitum, infinitum’.”
the definition or a part of the definition. Applying this to his original argument, Scotus restates the argument: if the definition of goodness as univocally common to God and creatures does not formally include the definition of wisdom as univocally common, then neither does infinite goodness include infinite wisdom (assuming the qualification that such would be the case if such entities could be defined in God). This is true because a definition is not something caused by the intellect but rather is the quiddity of the thing. From this Scotus concludes that there must be a formal non-identity on the part of the thing; in this he follows his qualification from distinction 2 of the *Ordinatio*, that it is better to refer to the distinction as formal non-identity rather than formal distinction.377 To further support the point, Scotus claims that an intellect forming the proposition ‘wisdom is not formally goodness’ does not cause the truth of the proposition by means of a comparative act (as would be the case according to the opinions of Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines; the comparative act is either the divine intellect comparing the divine essence to the perfections of creatures, or the divine act of *negotiando*). Instead, the intellect finds the extremes in the object and combines them in a true act.378

377 Note, however, that later in this question Scotus allows a formal distinction between the Father’s personal properties. See *ibid.* (269): “Similiter, ista distinctio formalis ponitur inter duas proprietates in Patre (ut inter innascibilitatem et paternitatem)...”

378 *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 261-62): “Hoc declaro, quia ‘includere formaliter’ est includere aliquid in ratione sua essentiali, ita quod si definitio includentis assignaretur, inclusum esset definitio vel pars definitionis; sicut autem definitio bonitatis in communi non habet in se sapientiam, ita nec infinita infinitam: est igitur aliqua non-identitas formalis sapientiae et bonitatis, in quantum earum essent distinctae definitiones, si essent definibiles. Definitionem autem non tantum indicat rationem causatum ab intellectu, sed quiditatem rei: est ergo non-identitas formalis ex parte rei, et intelligo sic, quod intellectus componens istam ‘sapientia non est formaliter bonitas’, non causat actu suo collativo veritatem huius compositionis, sed in obiecto invenit extrema, ex quorum compositione fit actus verus.”
Despite having shown earlier in distinction 2 that the formal distinction is compatible with real identity, the degree of unity which is required by divine simplicity, Scotus preserves the notion of divine simplicity by reference to his theories of infinity and unitive containment. Although he did not elaborate on infinity in his *reductio ad absurdum*, later in the same question he remarks that the quiddity of each divine attribute is infinite, that is, that each one has infinity as its intrinsic mode. This appears to contradict divine simplicity, however, for it gives the impression that there is a multiplicity of infinities, one for each attribute as well as one for the divine essence. Scotus does not bring up this objection in the question on the attributes in the *Ordinatio*, because he had already ruled this out in his treatment of the unity of God.\textsuperscript{379} Instead, much of the discussion concerning the distinction of divine attributes in the *Ordinatio* attempts to reconcile Scotus’ distinction between formal non-identity and real identity with authoritative statements by Augustine, Anselm, and John Damascene (there are two large additions marked as “extra” in the body of Scotus’ solution of the question concerned with these figures). In some passing and rather cryptic remarks, he indicates that infinity is actually what guarantees divine simplicity and accounts for the real identity of the attributes.\textsuperscript{380} The underlying idea is that the natures of divine attributes are

\textsuperscript{379} Cf. *Ordinatio* I d. 2 p. 1 q. 3 n. 175 (ed. Vat. II, 232). The objection also surfaces in the *Collationes*; but there Scotus does not respond to it. Cf. *Collatio* 22/33 (Oxford, Merton College Library, Ms. 65, f. 76v): “Item ad principale, licet sapientia distinguatur formaliter a bonitate in re, utraque tamen est infinita formaliter; sapientia ergo infinita est, et non solum quia eadem est essentiae sed formaliter... ergo tot sunt pelagi infiniti, quot sunt perfectiones attributales; ergo erunt pelagi infiniti distincti formaliter, quod est contra Damascenum.”

\textsuperscript{380} Cf. *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 271, 274): “...est tamen ibi sapientia in quantum est quo illud – in quo est – est sapiens, et hoc non per aliquam compositionem sapientiae ad aliquid quasi subiectum, nec quasi sapientia illa sit pars aliquid compositi, sed per veram identitatem, quia sapientia propter sui infinitatem perfecte est idem cuilibet cum quo nata est esse... Ad tertium concedo quod ratio
such that taken precisely as definitions they cannot be identified with each other (that is, wisdom as such is not identical to goodness as such) even though the divine essence contains them both. They are really identical, however, because both are infinite.\footnote{Cf. \textit{ibid.} (275): "...quia abstrahendo sapientiam a quocumque quod est extra rationem sapientiae, et bonitatem abstrahendo a quocumque quod est extra rationem eius formaliter, remanet utraque quiditas, praecise sumpta, formaliter infinita, et ex quo infinitas est ratio identitatis eorum – in tali abstractione praecisissima – remanet ratio identitatis extremorum. Non enim haec erant eadem praecise, propter identitatem eorum ad tertium a quo abstrahuntur, sed propter infinitatem formalem utriusque."} The role of infinity is then to bind the disparate, formally distinct elements of the divine nature into one really identical object.\footnote{Given the compatibility of the formal distinction with real identity in a single subject, Scotus does not need to use infinity as a tool to diminish or remove the distinction of attributes. On this see Collatio 22/33 (Oxford, Merton College Library, Ms. 65, f. 77r): "Item arguo: sapientia et bonitas in creaturis distinguitur secundum rationes formales; infinitas autem adveniens non tollit ab eis suas formalitates; ergo in Deo ubi utraque est infinita, est utraque indistincta. Dico quod formaliter in creaturis sunt formalitates et esse distincte, infinitas autem non tollit in Deo eas formalitates sed tollit earum distinctionem. In Deo enim sapientia est formaliter bonitas, tamen distinctio est ablata. Contra: superficies est una formalitas alia a linea; si utraque esset infinita, adhuc linea non esset superficies; ideo infinitas non tollit earum formalitates nec infinitas nec distinctionem; ergo infinitas attributorum nec distinctionem tollit nec formalitates."}

The second doctrine that Scotus employs in order to preserve divine simplicity is eminent containment, which at Paris he calls “unitive containment.”\footnote{The \textit{Ordinatio} does not contain the phrase \textit{continentia unitiva}, though it does have \textit{unitive continet}. See below, note 389.} Scotus treats this theory in a lengthy addition devoted to examining John of Damascus’ maxim that the divine essence is an infinite sea of substance.\footnote{The phrase “quoddam pelagus substantiae infinitum” is part of a quotation of Gregory of Nyssa. Cf. \textit{De Fide Orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio et Cerbanus}, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (The Franciscan Institute: St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1955), 49.} The idea relies on the argument from pre-eminence that originated with the pseudo-Dionysius: effects are contained in a nobler
manner in their cause than the way that they exist in their own natures as effects. Eminent containment is a feature of the divine essence rather than the attributes, although in a puzzling remark Scotus notes that in virtue of infinity, every infinite item includes every other (presumably, this is meant to be understood as referring to the real rather than the formal realm). The divine essence, however, is not only infinite, but it also virtually contains everything as effects are contained in a cause. This allows Scotus to reduce all of the elements in the divine economy (attributes, personal properties, persons) to the divine essence, which is the sea that contains them all. In this the divine essence is different from all other entities, for some of them can contain only a limited number of others; for example, the intellect can contain wisdom and understanding, while the will can contain charity and love. None can contain all, however, for this befalls only the divine essence. Because this is a commentary on an authority, however, Scotus does not develop a formal argument, though one could be constructed in response to an objection stating that since according to Scotus there is an infinity of attributes, the divine essence

385 Note that in Scotus’ later writings it is apparent that unitive containment accompanies the formal distinction in both the created and uncreated realms, in that things which are formally distinct are unively contained by their subject. See for example Reportatio II d. 16 q. un. (Oxford, Balliol College Library, Ms. 205, f. 249v), where Scotus discusses how the human soul unively contains the intellect and will.

386 Cf. Ordinatio I d. 8 pars 1 q. 4 (ed. Vat IV, 265): “Alio modo potest intelligi aliquid unum formaliter, continens omnem perfectionem modo eminentissimo, quo possibile est omnes in uno contineri: ille autem est quod non tantum contineantur identice, propter infinitatem formaliter continentis (sic enim quaelibet continet omnes), sed ultra, continantur virtualiter, quasi in causa, – et adhuc, in aliquo ut prima causa a se continente, et universalissima, quia omnes continente. Hoc modo essentia ‘haec’ est ‘pelagus’, quia in qualibet multitudine oportet stare ad aliquod omnino primum; in hac nihil est omnino primum nisi ‘haec’ essentia, ideo ipsa non est tantum formaliter infinita, sed virtualiter continens alias: nec tantum alias (sic fortet intellectus continet sapientiam et intelligere, et voluntas caritatem et diligere), sed omnes, nec ab alio virtute alterius continens, sed a se. Itaque habet infinitatem formaliter et primarim, tam scilicet a se quam respectu omnium, universaliter causalem et virtualiter contentivam, – et ita ‘pelagus’, ita continens omnes sicut possunt eminenter in uno – formaliter aliquo contineri.”
must be composed of them in some sense, which would violate divine simplicity. Scotus could respond by arguing that the plurality of formalities that is present does not compose the essence but is instead contained in, and reducible to, the divine essence.

A problem with this account is Scotus’ example of Dionysian causal pre-eminence. This is normally associated with the mode in which God contains creatures prior to their creation. For Scotus to use this example in conjunction with the divine attributes seems contrary to his position, for God does not contain the attributes as a cause contains an effect; rather they are in the divine essence ab aeterno prior to any volitional or intellectual activity. Scotus clarifies his position in the Reportatio, as we shall see below.

In addition to this analogy of causes containing effects, in Ordinatio IV d. 46 Scotus discusses how distinction is compatible with unitive containment. Here he is responding to an objection of Thomist inspiration that since the divine act of being (esse) is supremely actual, it includes every divine perfection. But if there were entities in God distinct from the divine essence, such distinct things would have their own actualities, and consequently the divine essence would not be able to contain them.

In his reply to this objection, Scotus first provides an explanation of unitive containment, which he describes in the following manner:

To the first [objection], the [divine] essence unitively contains every actuality of the divine essence. [Those entities] however are not unitively contained that are contained without any distinction.

\[387\] Cf. Ordinatio IV d. 46 q. 3 (ed. Wadding-Vivès XX, 447-448): “Contra hoc, esse divinum est actualissimum; ergo includit omnem perfectionem divinam; non includeret autem, si esset distincta perfectio a perfectione et ab essentia, quia quocumque distinctum ab eo formaliter est ibi actualiter, et per consequens ut distinctum, est ibi actu, et ita essentia ut distincta non includit omnem actum.”
because there is not a union without any distinction. Nor are [those entities] unitively contained that are contained in an unqualified, really distinct way, because such are contained as a multiplicity or separately [dispersim]. Therefore this term ‘unitive’ includes some distinction of the contained, which suffices for their union. This union, however, is not the kind that is repugnant to all composition and aggregation of distinct [things]. This could not be, unless formal non-identity is posited with real identity.388

From this text we learn that there are three possible modes of containment. There is a mode in which things are contained without any distinction at all, presumably one in which the definitions or formalities are identical. The second mode is unitive containment, which admits of distinction. The entities that are contained remain distinct from each other and from what contains them. Scotus does not say in this text whether this means that in the case of God the divine attributes retain their formalitates, though given our previous discussion of infinity it is safe to assume that this is what he means. In any case, this becomes clear in the response to the objection and in the Parisian Reportatio.389 Scotus holds in this passage that unitive containment is only possible if one posits a formal non-identity that is compatible with real identity. The third kind of containment is that of really distinct parts that are contained as a multiplicity; obviously, this mode of containment is incompatible with divine simplicity.

388 Ibid. (448): “Ad primum, essentia unitive continet omnem actualitatem divinae essentiae; unitive autem non continentur quae sine omni distinctione continentur, quia unio non est absque omni distinctione. Nec unitive continentur quae simpliciter realiter distincta continentur, quia illa multipliciter, seu dispersim continentur; ergo hoc vocabulum ‘unitive’ includit aliqualem distinctionem contentorum, quae sufficit ad unionem; non tamen talem unionem quae repugnet omni compositioni et aggregationi distinctorum, hoc non potest esse, nisi ponatur non identitas formalis cum identitate reali.”

389 See Reportatio II d. 16 q. un. (Oxford, Balliol College Library, Ms. 205, f. 249v): “Ideo [intellectus et voluntas] non sunt potentiae idem formaliter vel quidditativo, nec inter se nec etiam essentiae animae, nec tamen sunt res aliae, sed idem identice. Ideo talia habent talem distinctionem secundum rationes formales qualem haberent realem distinctionem si essent res aliae realiter distinctae.”
The response to the objection is essentially a restatement of Scotus’ claims about formal non-identity paired with this further precision regarding unitive containment. He is willing to grant that the divine essence contains every actuality and even every formality. But by containing the formalities, the divine essence does not remove or diminish their formal non-identity. If that were the case, then the divine essence would not contain them unitively, but instead in one of the other modes of containment; while this may sound circular, the idea is that unitive containment is the only way things that are formally non-identical can be contained. Scotus had already proven in Book I that they are formally non-identical.\textsuperscript{390}

Scotus’ Oxford position on the divine attributes in summary form is that they are present in the divine essence and distinct even prior to the operation of the divine intellect. This distinction is formal, by which Scotus means that in God different attributes have different definitions. The formal distinction is a kind of real distinction, in which entities are inseparably united. Scotus preserves divine simplicity by recourse to his notions of infinity and unitive containment. Although each attribute is formally infinite, there is only one infinity in reality, which guarantees real identity. Unitive containment is a special mode of containment that allows for a unified being to contain a multiplicity without damaging its unity.

\textsuperscript{390} Cf. \textit{Ordinatio} IV d. 46 q. 3 (ed. Wadding-Vivès XX, 448): “Ad argumentum ergo concedo quod essentia continet omnell actualitatem, et per consequens omnem formalitatem, sed non ut formaliter eadem, quia tunc non contineret unitive. Et si dicas, continet quantum potest contineri, verum est quantum unum unius rationis; nihil autem unius rationis potest continere plura non formaliter eadem, perfectius quam unitive vel identice.”
6.3 The Parisian Position on the Divine Attributes

Duns Scotus’ position at Paris on the attributes is the same as at Oxford, at least as far as the distinction of attributes is concerned. The attributes are formally distinct and formally infinite prior to the operation of the divine intellect. The difference between the two positions is in the presentation of the formal distinction itself, and on this subject there has been controversy in the secondary literature about whether or not Scotus changed his mind at Paris and softened his view concerning the reality of the formal distinction.391

However, Scotus’ Parisian account of the divine attributes involves more than the formal distinction. Building on his position at Oxford that the divine essence is absolutely primary, at Paris he develops his propositio famosa, which gives a more rigorous foundation to his Oxford position and allows him to anticipate counter-arguments attempting to disprove the formal distinction by reducing the attributes to the divine essence. As was the case in treating the Oxford material, in the following section we will first examine the formal distinction, followed by its application to the problem of the divine attributes.

6.3.1 The Formal Distinction at Paris

The various opinions whether or not Scotus changed his mind at Paris are wedded to different views of the chronology of his works; in the absence of critical editions of

these works we shall not attempt to resolve these disputes here, though the basic structure of this chapter, divided between Scotus’ presence at Oxford and Paris, indicates agreement on our part with certain participants in the debate.\textsuperscript{392}

Scotus certainly formulated the formal distinction in different terms at Paris than he had in the earlier Lectura and Ordinatio. In the Parisian Reportatio and the Quaestio de formalitatibus, Scotus contrasts a distinction \textit{simpliciter} with a distinction \textit{secundum quid}, that is, between an unqualified and a qualified distinction.\textsuperscript{393} This is not to say, however, that he abandoned the notion of a distinction \textit{ex natura rei}; we shall return to this topic below. Scotus differentiates a distinction \textit{simpliciter} from one \textit{secundum quid} by developing four conditions necessary for a perfect, unqualified, distinction. The first is that it is of entities in act; the second is that it is of things that have formal being; the third is that it is of things with distinct, as opposed to confused, being; the fourth condition is non-identity, which Scotus describes as that which “sola est completiva distinctionis perfectae,” that is, the only condition that can complete a perfect distinction.\textsuperscript{394} An


\textsuperscript{394} Cf. Reportatio I d. 33 q. 2 (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 328): “…ad hoc quod aliquo simpliciter distinguantur, quattuor requiruntur condiciones. Prima est quod sit aliqua in actu et non in potentia tantum, — quomodo distinguuntur ea quae sunt in potentia in materia et non simpliciter, quia non sunt in actu. Secunda est quod est eorum quae habent esse formale et non tantum virtuale, — ut effectus sunt in sua causa virtualiter et non formaliter. Tertia condicio est quod est eorum quae non habent esse confusum (ut extrema in medio et miscibilia in mixto), sed eorum quae habent esse distinctum propris actualibus. Quarta condicio, quae sola est completiva distinctionis perfectae, est non-identitas...” For discussion of these conditions, see Maurice Grajewski, \textit{The Formal Distinction of Duns Scotus}, 60-61; Adams, “Ockham on Identity and Distinction,” 37-40; Michael Jordan, \textit{Duns Scotus on the Formal Distinction}, 82-86; Tweedale,
unqualified distinction (*distinctio simpliciter*), then, is one in which the entities distinguished meet all four conditions, while a qualified or *secundum quid* distinction is one in which the first three conditions are met but the fourth is lacking, or more accurately, the non-identity of the fourth is qualified.395

The distinction *secundum quid* admits of various interpretations, requiring Scotus to explain the sense in which he uses it. He thinks that there are two ways to use the term. First he examines a rival account that he attributes to Bonaventure (he has rephrased Bonaventure’s distinction between *modos se habendi* into his own terminology396). Basically, he sees Bonaventure’s position as that the term *secundum quid* is a determination or qualifier added to distinct realities that diminishes them. Scotus rejects this usage because, when applied to the Trinity, the realities that are distinguished are the personal relations and the divine essence; the reality of the divine essence, obviously, cannot be diminished.397 The usage that Scotus allows is that the term *secundum quid* qualifies the distinction between the distinguished entities. In the case of the relations and

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396 For this distinction, see Sandra Edwards, “St. Bonaventure on Distinctions,” 202: “The last type of distinction Bonaventure discusses is also a distinction within one thing, a distinction according to ways of being disposed or related (*modi se habendi*). The extremes, he says, may be united by a true predication (either through inherence or identity) although some predicate may be truly affirmed of one and truly denied of the other. Thus the attributional distinction stands midway between the real and the rational sharing characteristics with both.”

397 Cf. *Reportatio* I d. 33 q. 2 *ibid.* (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 327-328).
the divine essence, then, this means that rather than diminishing the relations or the
divine essence, the distinction between them is diminished or qualified by a distinction
*secundum quid*.398

Additionally, there are two kinds of distinctions *secundum quid* or non-identities
*secundum quid*: formal non-identity and adequate non-identity. Formal non-identity, as
was the case in the *Ordinatio*, is determined by definitions; if two entities do not share
the same definition or part of the same definition, then they are formally non-identical
(though they are still really the same).399 Adequate (by which he means “commensurate”) non-identity introduces the notion of excess, according to which things that are really
identical but adequately non-identical are such that the unity of one exceeds the unity of
the other. For example, the divine essence exceeds the personal properties because the
essence is infinite but the properties are not. This non-identity is further subdivided in
two, but as Scotus does not apply this kind of non-identity to the divine attributes, we
conclude our discussion of it here.400

The main point of divergence between Scotus’ Oxford and Parisian views of the
formal distinction is that at Paris he moved away from the idea that degrees of distinction
correspond to degrees of being, a notion that he presupposed in the *Ordinatio* and which

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398 *Cf. ibid.* (328): “Alio modo potest haec determinatio secundum quid referri ad distinctionem, ut sit sensus quod essentia et relatio ex natura rei distinguuntur secundum quid. Et sic est verum, quia distinctio essentiae et relationis est rei et rei simpliciter, — sed distinctio est secundum quid.”

399 *Cf. ibid.* (330): “Dicuntur autem aliqua non habere identitatem formaliter quando unum non est de per se et primo intellectu alterius (ut definitio vel partes definitionis sunt de intellectu definiti), sed quando neutrum includitur in ratione formalis alterius, licet tamen sint eadem realiter...”

400 *Cf. ibid.*: “Sed non-adaequata in identitate dicuntur illa, quorum unum excedit aliud, vel unitas unius excedit unitatem alterius, sicut se habet animal ad hominem.”
he inherited from the common Scholastic tradition. According to this common view, different types of distinction correspond to different levels of being. Generally, there were two such levels: the real and the rational. A real distinction obtained on the level of the real, that is between two real, extra-mental beings. A rational distinction obtained between concepts and was the result of the activity of the intellect. The formal distinction, as we have seen, was originally classified as a real distinction, in Scotus’ special sense of the term ‘real’. In his Parisian works, however, he abandoned this common view, holding instead that it is the distinction itself that is diminished or not as determined by the presence of the four conditions necessary for distinction. Distinction is thereby rendered independent of the degree of being that the *distinguenda* happen to possess.

6.3.2 The Divine Attributes

Duns Scotus’ *ex professo* treatment of the divine attributes in the *Reportatio* is found in the discussion of the divine will in distinction 45 rather than in its traditional location in distinction 8, as it is in the *Ordinatio*. Similarly, as we shall see, the discussion of the formal distinction with respect to the trinitarian Persons migrated from distinction 2 in the *Ordinatio* to distinction 33 in the Parisian *Reportatio*. Such relocation, though it may be significant, is insufficient grounds to conclude a development or change of view on Scotus’ part.

In his discussion of the divine will in distinction 45, Scotus examines two questions: *Utrum in Deo sit voluntas formaliter ex natura rei* and *Utrum voluntas Dei,*
As in the discussion in the *Ordinatio*, in the *Reportatio* Scotus begins by noting the two negative opinions; but in the *Reportatio* he had already refuted them in the prologue, and so he refers the reader to the earlier passages. Following this he offers explanations of two of the phrases contained in the title to the first question: “ex natura rei” and to be “present formaliter in” something.

Scotus defines *ex natura rei* as “to be in something not because of the comparative act of a power, whether this power should be the intellect or the will.” This is fully in keeping with his prior comments in the second distinction of the *Ordinatio*. The term “real” for Scotus means to exist prior to the operation of a comparative (collativa) power, namely, the intellect or the will, rather than to be dependent upon it. This condition is probably directed at Godfrey of Fontaines and Henry of Ghent, the former who claimed that the divine attributes are distinguished by means of the comparative act of the divine intellect, while the latter claimed that the attributes are moved from potency to act by the cognition of the divine intellect.

Scotus’ explanation of ‘being formally in something’ or to ‘be formally such’ introduces new ideas absent in the *Ordinatio*. Here in the Parisian *Reportatio* Scotus denies that something formally in something else is there potentially, virtually, or confusedly; rather, it is something that is present actually, determinately and distinctly,

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403 Cf. *ibid.*: “Quantum ad primum dico quod illud est in alio ex natura rei quod est in re, non per aliquem actum comparativum cuiuscumque potentiae: nec per actum intellectus negotiantis nec voluntatis comparantis.”
according to its quidditative definition \((\textit{ratio})\), apart from every act of a comparative power. Scotus concludes this list of conditions by noting that such is the meaning when he says that the divine will is in the divine essence \textit{formaliter} and \textit{ex natura rei}; we can of course substitute any divine attribute here for the will, as Scotus still denies that the attributes are formally predicatable of each other or that they are contained in each other’s formal definitions.\(^4\) This definition employs the first three of the four conditions of an absolute distinction examined in d. 33, giving us a hint as to the nature of Scotus’ ultimate solution.

It is interesting that Scotus here denies the equivalence of formal and virtual presence. One of the examples he gives for virtual presence is of an effect that is found in its cause. This is an allusion to pseudo-Dionysius’ notion of virtual containment or causal pre-eminence. Usually this refers to the mode in which creatures are contained in God \textit{ab aeterno} prior to their creation. The reason why Scotus denies that formal presence is the same as virtual presence is to avoid absurd results. According to formal presence we can make statements such as ‘God is formally wise’; but if to be formally such was the same as to be virtually such, then we could also say ‘God is formally an ass’, since asses are virtually contained in God. So the purpose of the distinction between being ‘formally’ and ‘virtually’ such is to prevent such statements. This resolves the ambiguity that we

\(^4\) Cf. \textit{ibid.} : “Secundo dico quod illud est in alio formaliter, sive est in aliquo formaliter tale, quod non est in altero potentialiter (ut album est in subiecto nigri potentialiter), nec virtualiter (ut effectus in causa et passio in subiecto), nec confuse (ut extrema in medio et miscibilia in mixto) – sed dico hoc esse ‘tale formaliter’ et esse ‘formaliter’ in alio, quod est in eo actualiter, determinate et distincte, et secundum suam rationem quiditativam, circumscripito omni actu cuiuslibet potentialae comparativae, – et isto modo dico voluntatem Dei esse in sua essentia formaliter et ex natura rei.”
encountered in the *Ordinatio*, where Scotus claimed that the attributes are eminently contained in God.

Scotus continues that to be formally such, or to be in another formally, or to be formally the same as something, is to be part of an entity’s *per se* definition or part of a definition, as animal is part of the *per se* definition of man. In the case of the will (and all other divine attributes), however, neither it nor the divine essence are present in the definition of the other. Consequently, the attributes and essence are not formally the same. This condition for formal identity is the same as that in the *Ordinatio*.405

Scotus follows this argument with one demonstrating the presence of the will in God *ex natura rei*; but since it is based on the nature of volition and so does not apply to the divine attributes in general, we can omit discussion of it here.

In his response to the second question of distinction 45, Scotus argues that the divine will is really (*realiter*), perfectly (*perfecte*) and identically (*identice*) the same as the divine essence. He gives one argument in support of this claim: whatever is compatible with something intrinsically infinite is really and perfectly the same as the intrinsically infinite, and consequently is the infinite itself. If this is denied, and the opposite affirmed instead (that is, that the will is not really the same as the divine essence), then something is really other than the intrinsically infinite and must be present “in” the infinite, coming into composition with it. From this Scotus obscurely argues that

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405 *Ibid.* (544-545): “Voluntas tamen formaliter non est ipsa essentia, quia esse formaliter tale, vel esse in alio formaliter, vel esse idem alicui formaliter, est ipsum esse de per se et primo intellectu eius, ut animal est de per se et primo intellectu hominis. Sed sic non est voluntas eadem essentiae: patet, quia si utrumque definiretur, neutrum caderet in definitione alterius, et per consequens neutrum est idem alteri formaliter.”
the infinite would then no longer be the infinite, because nothing is greater than the infinite. The editors suggest that Scotus means that the combination of the two infinities would be larger than the infinity taken in the first situation (that is, where the infinities are really the same).\textsuperscript{406} Scotus continues the argument by noting that the divine essence is formally infinite, and argues that therefore each extreme (the divine essence and the divine will) must have perfect, real identity.\textsuperscript{407} The argument as it stands neglects to state explicitly that the divine will is formally infinite. This is not as serious an oversight as it may appear, however, for in his proof in the preceding question that the will is present in God \textit{ex natura rei}, he concludes his argument with just this claim.\textsuperscript{408}

Following this discussion, designed to show to show that the divine attributes are present in God \textit{ex natura rei} as well as really identical with the divine essence, Scotus moves to consider the degree of distinction that can be allowed to obtain among them. As was the case in the \textit{Ordinatio}, he does not deny that the attributes are distinguished by an act of the intellect or by reason, only that such a distinction presupposes that there is a distinction \textit{ex natura rei}.

\textsuperscript{406} Cf. \textit{ibid.} (546 n. 4): “This hypothetical composite will be greater than the initial infinite.”

\textsuperscript{407} \textit{Ibid.} (545-546): “Ad secundum quaestionem dico quod voluntas est in Deo eadem cum essentia sua realiter perfecte et identice. Quod probo per rationem sic: quidquid est compossibile infinito intrinsec et istem realiter ipsi infinito intrinsec et perfecte, et per consequens sic est ipsum infinitum, — quia si non, da oppositum: ergo est aliud realiter ab ipso infinito, et constat quod est in ipso infinito, ergo facit compositionem cum eo; ergo infinitum non est infinitum, quia infinito nihil est maius. Sed essentia divina est formaliter infinita: sequitur ergo quod ex parte utriusque extremi sit perfecta realis identitas.”

\textsuperscript{408} Cf. \textit{ibid.} (545): “Sed voluntas est perfectio in Deo formaliter infinita... ergo sua voluntas, qua est volitivus, est infinita formaliter.”

\textsuperscript{409} \textit{Ibid.} (547-548): “Dico ergo quod cum ista perfecta et reali identitate perfectionum essentialium — et inter se et ad essentiam — stat distinctio secundum quid: sola enim differentia rationis fabricata per actum intellectus non salvat opposita eis convenire... et ideo distinguuntur ex natura rei, tamen secundum quid.”

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attributes is a distinction *secundum quid*, taken according to formal non-identity, not adequate non-identity.\footnote{\textit{Reportatio} I d. 45 q. 1-2 (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 553): “…respondeo quod multiplex est non-identitas: quaedam ex natura rei et secundum quid, quae est non-identitas formalis; quaedam non-identitas aadequationis, — et haec ultima triplex, secundum quod tripliciter possunt aliqua adaequari: vel secundum praedicationem, vel secundum virtutem et perfectionem, vel secundum mutuam identitatem inter se. Istis tribus modis est perfectio essentialis eadem essentiae, et non proprietas relativa...”}

The distinction that obtains between the divine attributes and between the attributes and the divine essence is *secundum quid*. Given the conditions for the two kinds of distinctions, this means that the attributes differ actually, determinately, and distinctly, but are lacking the fourth condition, real non-identity.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.} (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 548): “Dicetur autem distinctio attributorum inter se et ad essentiam ‘secundum quid’, quia deficit eis ratio completiva distinctionis simpliciter: licet enim perfectiones essentiales sint ibi differentes actualiter, determinatae et distinctae formaliter... deficit tamen ratio completiva distinctionis simpliciter, scilicet non-identitas realis vel non-identitas.”} That is, the distinction is diminished. As was the case in the \textit{Ordinatio}, here in the Parisian \textit{Reportatio} the final element of the picture that ensures that the attributes are really the same with respect to each other and the divine essence is their intrinsic mode of infinity. Infinity does not alter the formal \textit{rationes} of the divine attributes, which remain formally distinct even when considered as infinite. Scotus repeats his basic argument from the \textit{Ordinatio} that just as goodness in common does not include wisdom in the first mode of \textit{per se} predication, so neither does infinite goodness contain infinite wisdom. Here formal non-identity is defined in the same way as it was in the \textit{Ordinatio}, as that which is not predicated \textit{per se} in the first mode of \textit{per se} predication. In a passage significant for its relevance to the contemporary debate on whether Scotus changed his mind on the formal distinction, he goes so far as to equate non-identity *secundum quid* with formal non-identity, as well as...
equating a distinction *secundum quid* with non-identity *secundum quid*, a point he denied in the *Ordinatio*. (And as we noted above, the Parisian *Quaestio de formalitatibus* also allows the equation of formal non-identity with formal distinction, as long as the appropriate qualifications are made to diminish the distinction.)

Scotus follows this attempt to clarify his position on the nature of distinction with a series of three arguments with accompanying authorities. Here we shall examine only his arguments. The first is similar to the basic argument in *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4. He begins by noting that there are two kinds of intrinsic modes, infinity and finitude. Each intrinsic mode indicates a certain grade of being that can befall a quiddity. The intrinsic mode does not alter the definition (*ratio*) of the quiddity, but “preserves” and “portrays” (or “expresses”) it. Therefore, infinity, when it is present as the intrinsic mode of the will, does not alter the formal definition of the will, but rather expresses the grade of power intrinsic to it. Just as the notion of the will as univocally common and absolute is not that of intellect or essence, so neither are these notions part of its definition when it is found in its infinite grade. Therefore, whereas in creatures essential perfections are

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412 *Ibid.*: “Istae autem perfectiones sunt eadem realiter inter se et ad essentiam, propter infinitatem essentiae et utriusque perfectionis in se; et sicut habent distinctionem secundum quid, ita habent non-identitatem secundum quid, id est non-identitatem formalem. Et intelliga illa non esse eadem formaliter, quorum unum non est de intellectu alterius per se et primo, et ita sapientia non est de per se intellectu essentiae nec voluntatis. Nec obstat infinitas formalis istarum perfectionum quin quaelibet distinguat formaliter ab alia, quia sicut bonitas in communi non includit sapientiam primo modo dicendi per se, sic nec bonitas includit formaliter sapientiam infinitam, nec e converso.” See also *Ordinatio* I d. 2 pars 2 q. 1-4 (ed. Vat. II, 357): “Numquid igitur debet concedi aliqua ‘distinctio’? Melius est uti ista negativa ‘hoc non est formaliter idem’, quam, hoc est sic et sic ‘distinctum’. Sed nonne sequitur, ‘a et b non sunt idem formaliter, ergo sunt formaliter distincta’? Respondo quod non oportet sequi, quia ‘formaliter’ in antecedente negatur, et in consequente affirmatur.”; *Quaestio de formalitatibus*, lin. 302-309 (ed. Kent Emery, jr. and G. R. Smith, forthcoming): “Recolligendo igitur a primo istius articuli qui hucusque consistit in hoc quod est ponere vel distinctionem cum hoc quod est ‘formaliter’ vel ‘formalitas’, primo concedenda est ista, scilicet ‘a non est formaliter idem b’. Secundo, ista ‘a est formaliter distinctum ab ipso b’ intelligendo sane, scilicet negando modum importatum per hoc quod est ‘formaliter’ vel intelligendo distinctionem diminui per istum modum additum, sicut dictum est prius.”

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distinguished formally and really, in God they are distinguished formally but are really
the same.413

The second argument is also similar to one in *Ordinatio* I d. 8 q. 4, namely, the
argument based on the divine intuitive knowledge of the attributes. Scotus begins by
distinguishing two kinds of distinction of reason: there is either a distinction of diverse
concepts the objects of which are formally distinct, or a distinction within the same
concept of diverse modes of conceiving. The divine attributes are distinct not only by a
distinction of reason distinguishing them as diverse objects modes of conceiving the same
object, for this distinction does not posit a high enough degree of distinction between the
distinguenda, because it is generally used to distinguish between different grammatical
cases. Nor is the distinction one between diverse formal objects in the intellect, for such a
distinction would never arise in intuitive cognition, where any distinction would be
present in the object intuitively known prior to the act of the intellect. God, however, only
exercises intuitive cognition in knowing himself, hence the two kinds of the distinction of
reason are insufficient.414

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413 Reportatio I d. 45 q. 1-2 (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 548-549): “...infinitas dicit modum
intrinsecum illius entitatis cuius est, — sicut finitum, quod est suum oppositum, dicit certum gradum illius
quiditatis cui convenit. Sed certus modus vel gradus cuiuscumque entitatis vel quiditatis non destruct
rationem illius entitatis, sed salvat et exprimit eam. Ergo infinitas adveniens voluntati non destruct
formalem rationem eius, sed exprimit certum gradum virtutis eius intrinsecum sibi. Sicut ergo de ratione
voluntatis in communi et absolute non est intellectus nec essentia, sic nec de ratione eius ut infinita. Sicut
ergo alibi distinguuntur formaliter et realiter, ita hic sunt eadem realiter et distincta formaliter.”

414 Cf. *ibid.*: “Item, secundo sic: distinctio potest esse aliquorum vel ut diversorum obiectorum
conceptorum distinctorurum formaliter, vel eiusdem obiecti secundum diversos modos concepiendi. Sed inter
perfectiones essentiales non est tantum differentia rationis, id est diversorum modorum concipiendi idem
obiectum formale: talis enim distinctio est inter abstractum et concretum, inter sapientem et sapientiam
(loquendo de modis logicalibus), vel quia secundum genitivum et nominativum (secundum modos
grammaticales), et utique est maior distinctio inter sapientiam et bonitatem. Nec est ista distinctio bonitatis
et sapientiae ut obiectorum formalium in intellectu, quia illa numquam est in cognitione intuitiva nisi etiam
sit in obiecto cognito intuitiva. Deus habet tantum talem cognitionem de se, scilicet intuitivam; ergo etc.”
The third argument is without parallel in the *Ordinatio* and is an *a maiori* theological argument. Scotus argues that in each of the trinitarian Persons there are multiple relative properties, such as paternity and active spiration in the Father; these properties are distinguished by a distinction greater than a mere distinction of reason, and despite this they are really identical with each other and so do not abrogate the simplicity of the divine Person. This is not because one property “passes” into the other (none of the personal properties are formally infinite), but because both properties “pass” into a third, the divine essence, which is formally infinite and ensures that each property is really the same as the other. Therefore the distinction of attributes is consonant with divine simplicity, for each attribute is formally infinite and so is able to pass into the other in reality.415

This notion of attributes “passing” into each other and the divine essence is a strategy designed to avoid the appearance of composition in God occasioned by the plurality of divine attributes. It is basically the same as stating that all things in God are really identical. Despite this, however, Scotus still maintains that the formal *rationes* remain distinct (infinity does not change their quidditative contents); so the value of this move is not entirely clear. But it does leave room for an interesting objection. One might counter that since the intellect and will have “passed away” into the divine essence, there

415 *Cf. ibid.* (550): “Item, tertio: in eadem persona sunt plures proprietates relative distinctae, non sola ratione sed re relativa, ut paternitas et spiratio-activa in Patre, — et stant cum simplicitate illius personae et identitate reali inter se: non quia una proprietates transeat in aliam (quia neutra est formaliter infinita), sed quia ambae transeunt in tertium, ut in essentiam quae est formaliter infinita, et ita sunt eadem perfecte et realiter illi. Ergo multo magis stabit cum simplicitate divina et identitate distinctio proprietatum essentialium formalis ut voluntas et deitas, quorum quaelibet est formaliter infinita et ideo perfecte transiens in aliam secundum rem et perfectam identitatem realem.”
is then no reason why we should admit that the act of understanding is an operation of the
divine intellect rather than of the divine will; the same could be said for the operation of
the will. Scotus lodges this objection against his view in both his discussion of the divine
intellect in Reportatio I d. 35 and the divine will in I d. 45.416

Scotus’ solution is to call upon his propositio famosa.417 This proposition is
primarily known from its numerous applications in the Parisian Reportatio, but it can also
be found in the Quodlibet.418 The basic statement of the proposition is that “whatever
order or distinction things have where they are really distinct, they have the same order
where they are distinct by reason or however they are distinct.”419 The order in question,
which can be either real or rational, is that by which all the elements in the divine
economy are ordered to the divine essence. The foundation of the order is the divine
essence, and the sequence of the other divine elements is this: divine essence—essential
properties (attributes)—personal properties (not formally infinite)—ideas of creatures

416 Cf. Reportatio I d. 35 q. 1 a. 3 n. 53-54 (ed. Wolter-Bychkov II, 366-367); d. 45 q. 1-2 n. 54-

417 Stephen D. Dumont was the first to draw attention to the propositio famosa. See Stephen D.
Dumont, “The Propositio famosa scoti: Duns Scotus and Ockham on the Possibility of a Science of
Theology,” Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review 31 (1992), 415-429. See also Christopher J. Martin,
“Impossible Positio as the Foundation of Metaphysics or, Logic on the Scotist Plan?” in Vestigia, Imagines,
Verba: Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts (XIIth–XIVth Century), ed. Costantino Marmo
(Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 268-269.

418 Strangely, the early fourteenth-century Scotist Tractatus formalitatum attributes the propositio
to Thomas Aquinas. See pseudo-Franciscus de Mayronis, Tractatus formalitatum a. 1 (ed. Venezia 1520, f.
264vb): “Nam regula vulgata est Sancti Thomae quam doctores nostri acceptant, et praesertim Franciscus:
‘qualem ordinem habent aliqua ubi distinguuntur secundum rationem, talen habent ubi distinguuntur
realiter’ per hanc regulam tantum vel dicere ‘qualis est ordo rerum in Deo, consimiles res si reperiantur in
creaturis habent ordinem’.”

419 Reportatio I prol. q. 1 (ed. Wolter-Bychkov I, 42): “Qualis ordo realis esset inter aliqua si
essent distincta realiter, talis est ordo eorum secundum rationem, ubi sunt distincta secundum rationem.”
produced by the divine intellect (finite). While the formulation of the *propositio* as such belongs to Scotus’ Parisian period, the underlying aim of the proposition, that all divine features are reducible to the divine essence, was also a concern in the *Ordinatio*.

This *propositio* allows Scotus to develop a response to the objection. In the case of creatures, where the intellect and will and their respective operations are really distinct, the will has a more immediate order to its own act than it does to the intellect; in fact, each power is more immediately related to its own act than it is to the other power. Each power has no order to the act of the other power except perhaps an accidental one. Therefore, if one grants the *propositio famosa*, the same will be true of the relations between the powers and their acts in the divine case wherein none of the entities in question is distinguished by a real distinction. So the objection fails because even if the intellect and will are one in virtue of infinity and are unitively contained in the divine essence, there is an order between a power and its operation that holds no matter what intrinsic mode characterizes the power.

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421 See the addition in *Ordinatio* I d. 8 pt. 1 q. 4 (ed. Vat. IV, 265-266): “Hoc modo essentia ‘haec’ est ‘pelagus’, quia in qualibet multitudine oportet stare ad aliquod omnino primum; in hac nihil est omnino primum nisi ‘haec’ essentia, ideo ipsa non est tantum formaliter infinita, sed virtualiter continens alias ... Est ergo haec magis per se ‘Deus est sapiens’ quam ista ‘sapiens est bonus’. Aliae habent infinitatatem formalem, et si causalem vel virtuallem (propter ordinem propinquiorem ad essentiam, et remotiorem, salvandum), sed non respectu omnium habent causalem, nec respectu aliquorum habent a se, sed ab essentia.”

6.4 Duns Scotus and the Rival Solutions

Duns Scotus critically engages with the two opposing Latin traditions of reconciling the divine attributes with divine simplicity, namely the semantic (connotatio or consignificatio) theory, and the Thomist, which, as we have seen, admits of two main subdivisions. We shall examine the third solution, which is that of Scotus himself, in relation to the Franciscan tradition of the rationes reales.

6.4.1 The Semantic Solution

As we saw in the introduction of this study, the semantic theory was dominant among twelfth-century thinkers and also claimed such major figures of the Franciscan tradition during the thirteenth century as Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, William de la Mare, and Odo Rigaldi. Despite the authority of these figures, however, Scotus did not spare his criticisms of this theory.

He examines the theory in Ordinatio IV d. 46 q. 3.423 The reason why he addressed the theory here rather than what might seem to be a more natural place in Ordinatio I d. 8 q. 4 is that Peter Lombard revisits the question here.424 The general context in the Lombard’s text is eschatology, specifically the punishments and rewards that human beings receive after death. Part of this discussion is an analysis of justice and mercy, which were the paradigmatic divine attributes for twelfth-century thinkers; it is here that the Lombard reiterates his claim from Book I of the Sentences that justice and

423 Cf. Duns Scotus, Ordinatio IV d. 46 q. 3 (ed. Wadding-Vivès XX, 446-448).

424 Cf. Petrus Lombardus, Sententiae IV d. 46 cap. 3 (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum V, 532-537).
mercy differ insofar as their effects in the created order differ, but both signify the divine essence without any violation of divine simplicity.

Scotus discusses the semantic theory in a reply to the second principal argument of the question. This argument states that ‘if justice and mercy were the same, then they would have the same effect’. The consequence is valid because of the rule that the same formal principle can have only one effect. But the consequent is false, because in fact justice and mercy do not have the same effect: the effect of justice is to condemn or save according to merit, while the effect of mercy is to save without merit.\footnote{Cf. Duns Scotus, \textit{Ordinatio} IV d. 46 q. 3 (ed. Wadding-Vivès XX, 446): “Praeterea, si non distinguenterunt, sed essent idem, ergo utriusque esset idem effectus. Consequentia patet, quia idem principium formale non habet nisi eundem effectum; sed consequens est falso, quia effectus misericordiae est liberare sine meritis; effectus iustitiae est condemnare ubi non sunt merita, vel salvare pro meritis.”} The implied conclusion of the argument, then, is that mercy and justice are distinct formal principles in God.

In his response to this argument, Scotus first summarizes the semantic theory: justice and mercy are the same in God but they signify diverse effects in the created order. Scotus does not think that this theory can defeat the argument, however. This is because connotation or co-signification does not require a distinction of these two attributes in God, but only a distinction of reason in the intellect of someone conceiving mercy and justice. The argument, however, proves that there is a distinction, because the effects are distinct. Although this is not stated expressly, we might presume that the principal argument that Scotus addresses here establishes a real distinction between mercy and justice. Having reduced the \textit{connotatio} theory to a distinction of reason,
Scotus then shows why the distinction of reason does not suffice. This is because no real effect can originate in, or depend upon, a being of reason (res rationis); Scotus takes it as a general rule (because he had already proven it in Book I d. 13) that no being or relation of reason in a cause can give rise to really distinct products in an effect. Consequently, in the case of divine mercy and justice, which have distinct effects, the distinction between the effects must correspond to a distinction in the cause. The distinction of reason, then, provides an insufficient degree of reality to account for that required by the second principal argument.

Scotus’ solution is to grant the truth of the argument. He does this with the qualification that justice is not formally or quidditatively the same as mercy and contrariwise. As we have seen, elsewhere he establishes that formal non-identity is consonant with divine simplicity. Consequently, in the case at hand, the formal non-identity of mercy and justice is sufficient to establish them as proximate principles of divine actions ad extra (the immediate principle would be the divine will), as if they were two things (res).

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426 Cf. ibid. (447): “Ad secundum dicitur quod misericordia connotat aliud quam iustitia, licet ista duo sint inter se simpliciter eadem; sed contra hoc, connotatio illa non requirit aliquam distinctionem huius ab illo, ut est in se, sed tantummodo ut concipitur et signatur, quia ad hoc requiritur connotatio; argumentum autem requirit quod illorum inter se, ut sunt causae distinctorurn effectuum, sit aliqua distinctio. Nec sufficit, ut videtur, ad hoc differentia rationis, quia res rationis non est illud quo aliquis effectus realiter efficitur, immo generaliter nulla distinctio realis in effectu dependet a relatione rationis in causa, ut probatum est distinctione 13 Primi, ista autem distinctio effectuum essentialiter dependet ex distinctione in causa; ergo non est solius rationis.”

427 Cf. ibid.: Concedo ergo istam rationem, quod sicut in Deo intellectus non est formaliter voluntas, nec e converso, licet unum verissima identitate sit idem alteri, ita iustitia non est formaliter, vel quidditative idem misericoriae, vel e converso, et propter hanc non identitatem formalem, potest istud esse principium proximum alius effectus extra, cuius reliquum non est principium formale; eodem modo sicut si hoc et illud essent duae res, quia esse principium formale competit aliqui, ut est tale formaliter.”
6.4.2 The Thomist Solution

This solution in the Scholastic debate concerning the divine attributes had two chief versions: one of which held that the created intellect caused the distinction and plurality of attributes (Thomas Aquinas, Thomas of Sutton), the second of which held that the divine intellect itself caused the attributes, either by a direct act (Henry of Ghent) or by a comparative one (Godfrey of Fontaines). We have already examined Scotus’ criticism of this theory above in his argument regarding the intuitive cognition of the first Person of the Trinity, and so we pass over it here.

6.4.3 The Realist Solution

From the forgoing, it is clear that Scotus is a proponent of the realist solution. He did not operate in a vacuum, however. His notion of a *formalitas* or a quidditative *ratio* no doubt comes from the tradition of rationes reales inspired by Bonaventure and probably the first draft of Thomas Aquinas’ treatment of the attributes in his *Scriptum*. 428 One follower of this tradition was Peter de Trabibus, who claimed that rationes reales “are truly existing in the divine essence itself, circumscribing every created intellect.”429 Another thinker, Peter de Falco, defines a *ratio realis* as a quiddity and cites the same


passage in Aristotle that Thomas Aquinas cites to define ratio.\textsuperscript{430} Scotus’ most distinctive contribution to the problem of the attributes, namely, that they are distinct prior to the operation of the divine intellect, was also anticipated in the earlier tradition, most notably by William of Ware.\textsuperscript{431} Scotus’ contribution lies in his transformation of the previous material, for he gave the most rigorous presentation and defense of it.

6.5 Conclusion

Duns Scotus’ realist solution to the problem of the divine attributes is that the divine attributes are distinct \textit{ex natura rei} prior to the operation of even the divine intellect. The type of distinction that Scotus holds is between the attributes themselves, and between the attributes and the divine essence, is the formal distinction. We have spent so much of our discussion on this distinction because it is one of the most difficult aspects of Scotus’ thought, which he formulated differently at Paris than he did at Oxford. But this should not overshadow the most important element of Scotus’ solution as it relates to the prior debate, which is that the distinction obtains \textit{ex natura rei}. As we saw, this means that it obtains apart from the consideration of any mind. This is Scotus’ true point of departure from the previous Scholastic tradition on the divine attributes.

\textsuperscript{430} Cf. Petrus de Falco, \textit{Quaestiones ordinariae} q. 14, in \textit{Questions Disputées Ordinaires}, ed. A.-J. Gondras, vol. 2 (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1968), 511-512: ‘Ulterius, est ratio realis. Sicut dicit Philosophus IV \textit{Metaphysicae}: ‘Ratio, quam significat nomen, est definitio.’ Ad cuius intellectum advertendum est quod alio modo percipit sensus res, alio modo intellectus... Intellectus vero scit quidditatem, ut quidditas... Quia ergo definitio rei, ut definitio, et quidditas, ut quidditas, a solo intellectu percipiuntur, hinc est quod nomen rationis sortiuntur. Et sic res, ut intellectu vel ut intelligibilis, ratio dicitur; unde bene dicit Philosophus quod ‘ratio, quam signat nomen, est definitio’.”

Thomas Aquinas argued that the human mind generates the divine attributes because it cannot grasp the infinite divine essence. Henry of Ghent disagreed, arguing instead that the divine intellect generates the attributes *ab aeterno*. Godfrey of Fontaines criticized Henry’s view, and revised Thomas’ position by claiming that the divine intellect knows the attributes by comparing the divine essence to the concepts of the human mind and the perfections in the created world. All these positions have in common the idea that some mind, whether the created or the divine, generates the divine attributes. A consequence of this is that the attributes are all relational: they are relations of reason between the human or divine mind and the divine essence. For Duns Scotus, however, the attributes are distinct and are a plurality prior to the operation of any mind, even the divine mind. Even God discovers the attributes in the divine essence by his eternal act of intuitive cognition. Consequently, the attributes are absolute, rather than relative.

Scotus’ position effectively resolves one of the most intractable difficulties of the divine attributes, that of the correspondence of human concepts. The thinkers prior to Scotus attempted to balance the requirement of divine simplicity with the veracity of human concepts. On the one hand, divine simplicity forbids all plurality in God. On the other, human beings require a plurality of concepts in their cognition of God. Thomas dealt with this issue by claiming that the plurality of human concepts was the result of the weakness of the human intellect, which could not grasp the infinite plenitude of the divine essence. Though Thomas argued otherwise, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that human cognition of God is false. Henry changed the intellect under discussion to the divine mind and claimed that it is the divine intellect that generates the divine attributes. This solved the problem for the human mind, for on Henry’s view the attributes were
distinct from eternity. But a similar problem recurs for Henry, because he must still reconcile the plurality of divine concepts with divine simplicity. Godfrey of Fontaines, for example, denied that there was such a conceptual plurality in God. Furthermore, since the attributes are generated by the divine mind and do not characterize the divine essence in extramental reality, they would seem to be second intentions, and so in danger of implying falsity in the divine cognition. Scotus resolves these difficulties with his claim that no intellect generates the divine attributes, that even the divine intellect eternally discovers them by its act of intuitive cognition. This solves the problem for human concepts because, once Scotus’ position is combined with his views on the univocity of being, there is a correspondence between a human concept of a divine attribute and the attribute as it is present in God. It also obviously solves the problem for divine concepts, for there is a plurality of attributes prior to divine cognition of them. Interestingly, Scotus is at the opposite extreme from Thomas Aquinas. Where Thomas has a strong view of simplicity but struggles to preserve the veracity of human cognition, Scotus struggles to preserve divine simplicity but has a strong view of the truth of human concepts.

Duns Scotus’ views are the final stage of the development of the medieval debate concerning the divine attributes, in that no new solutions to the problem arose after his death. However, his attempt to reconcile the divine attributes with divine simplicity proved to be highly controversial and did not win widespread adherence. In the early decades of the fourteenth century the semantic theory was revived by able defenders such as William of Ockham, Peter Auriol and Gregory of Rimini. There also continued to be proponents of the Thomistic solution. Scotus did attract followers from within his own order; thinkers such as Francis of Meyronnes and Petrus Thomae who attempted to
answer the first wave of criticism by supplementing Scotus’ theory of distinctions. After Scotus, the scholastic debate is less about the divine attributes than it is about the formal distinction. In the ensuing centuries, some of the parties to the debate developed increasingly sophisticated theories of the distinction of reason, while others reformulated the formal distinction in response, a situation that lasted into the early modern period.432

APPENDIX:

EDITION OF WILLIAM OF WARE’S QUESTION ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The first book of William of Ware’s commentary on the *Sentences* survives in over thirty manuscripts.\(^{433}\) There is, however, no widespread agreement among scholars concerning the text that these manuscripts transmit.\(^{434}\) Some posit multiple redactions, such as a *Reportatio* from Oxford, an *Ordinatio* from Oxford, and an *Ordinatio* from Paris, while others claim that there is only a *Reportatio* that was later edited by various


individuals other than William of Ware. Consequently, a full critical edition would require that all the surviving manuscripts be investigated, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I offer here a provisional edition which consists of a transcription of an important Florentine manuscript, corrected by recourse to two other manuscripts. The manuscripts that I employ are as follows:

1. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 33 dext. cod. 1, ff. 14v-17r [=F]


3. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1424, ff. 14va-17rb [=W]

MS F is the manuscript that served as the basis of transcription and is edited below. This manuscript, written in an English hand, is from an important Franciscan convent, Santa

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435 On this controversy see the literature cited in n. 438, especially the contributions of Lechner, Hödl, and Magrini.

436 For descriptions of this manuscript, see Angelo Bandini, *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae*, vol. 4 (Florence 1777), 709-710; Petrus Muscat, “Guillelmi de Ware Quaestio inedita de unitate Dei,” 339-340. See also Josef Lechner, “Beiträge zum mittelalterl. Franziskanschriftum, vornehmlich der Oxforder Schule des 13./14. Jarh., auf Grund einer Florentinier Wilhelm von Ware-Hs.,” *Franziskanische Studien* 19 (1932), 99-127. Initially, I worked from a black and white photograph supplied by Timothy B. Noone. The library has now digitized the manuscript and made it available online at www.bml.firenze.sbn.it/plutei.

437 For a description, see the handwritten inventory reproduced in *Inventario Ceruti: Dei Manoscritti della Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, vol. 1 (Editrice Etimar S.p.A.: Trezzano s/N., 1973), 238; Eileen M. Shanley-Roberts, *An Inventory of Manuscripts Containing Peter Lombard’s Sentences and Commentaries on the Sentences... at the University of Notre Dame*, University of Notre Dame, Hesburgh Library, Z6616 P47 S53 1992, p. 12. The colophon of Book I in this manuscript identifies it as a Reportatio. Cf. f. 87r: “Explicitnt reportationes super primum secundum varrum de ordine minorum deo gratias amen.”

Croce in Florence. A great deal of care was taken in its preparation: the arguments are numbered, the authorities are identified, and at the beginning of the question there is a marginal reference to some of William of Ware’s contemporaries, Baldeswell and Phillip (of Bridlington). There is also the note “correcta” in the margin by the question title.\textsuperscript{439}

I conducted a test-collation of William of Ware’s response to the question (labeled “Opinio propria” in the edition, lines 380-486) in which I collated, in addition to MSS F and W, Oxford, Merton College Library, Ms. 103, and Città del Vaticano, BAV, Cod. Borgh. 346. Of these manuscripts, MS W seemed closer to MS F than either the Vatican or Oxford manuscripts, and I chose it to collate against MS F in its entirety.\textsuperscript{440} In the process of collating MS W, I noticed that MS M read very closely with MS W, and so I collated this manuscript as well, as a further means of correcting MS F.

I stated above that my edition of William’s question on the attributes is a transcription of MS F, and though this is true with respect to the readings chosen, it is not strictly speaking correct. In its margins MS F bears nine paragraphs that are unique to it. Most of these paragraphs do not have any mark for insertion and so may have been intended from the beginning as marginal commentary. For example, there is a lengthy quotation from Averroes’ treatment of the divine attributes in his commentary on book

\footnote{439 This marginal note was first reported by Muscat, “Guillelmi de Ware Quaestio inedita de unitate Dei,” 339.}

\footnote{440 The affinity between MSS F and W is confirmed by an examination of Schmaus’ editions of William of Ware’s \textit{In Sent.} I d. 26 q. 2-3; 27 q. 1, 3; d. 28 q. 1-3. Schmaus rejects the common readings of W and F on almost every page of the edition. Interestingly, Merton 102 is often found with them; but this was not the case for the question edited here. Cf. Michael Schmaus, \textit{Der Liber Propugnatorius des Thomas Anglicus und die Lehrunterschiede zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Duns Scotus}, vol. 2 (Münster i.W.: Aschendorff, 1930), 229*-285*. See also Friedman and Schabel, “Trinitarian Theology and Philosophical issues IV,” 121-122, who state that MS F and Città del Vaticano, BAV, Chigi lat. B VII 114 have the best text of the manuscripts that they consulted.}
XII of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* that spans the margin of 15v-16r; at the beginning there is a penciled note that is nearly illegible (even on the digital photographs) that contains the words “in fine quaestionis,” probably indicating that the text of Averroes should come at the end of the question. The presence of this quotation of Averroes, and there are others as well, is indicative of interest in the pre-Christian debate on the attributes, which the Scholastics had largely ignored.

Not only does MS F contain marginal paragraphs that MSS M and W lack, however, but these two manuscripts have two paragraphs that F does not have. In the edition that follows I print the common text of MSS F M W, but the additional paragraphs that are not shared are not printed as part of the main text. Instead, I have printed them at the end of the question (in the spirit of MS F’s marginal note), because they are not properly variant readings and because it is not clear that all of the extra passages in MS F were intended to be in the main text, and of the two extra passages that MSS M and W transmit, one of them duplicates material that all three manuscripts have elsewhere.\textsuperscript{441} I have designated these passages “Additiones”, though the reader should note that the manuscripts do not contain this term, nor by it do I mean to indicate any relation to the *Additiones magnae* that circulate with the works of Duns Scotus and are associated with the name of William of Alnwick.

In the following provisional edition of *In I Sent.* d. 2 q. 3 (Daniels #16), the text is that of MS F, corrected when necessary by MSS M and W. All variants are recorded

\textsuperscript{441} Compare the text of “Additio 2” with that of lines 82-84 and 101-102.
whether or not they affect the sense of the passage. There are three apparatus, which appear on the page in the following order:

1. A traditional apparatus of variant readings.

2. An apparatus that contains the marginal annotations of MSS F and W (M has none), lists the paragraphs that F has in the margin but M and W have in the body of their texts, and finally, indicates where each Additio is located.

3. A traditional apparatus of sources.
<GUILLELMII DE WARE

IN SENT. I D. 2 Q. 3>

| QUÆRITUR UTRUM ATTRIBUTA DIVINA DISTINGUANTUR VEL RE VEL RATIONE VEL QUALITER |

Quod nullo modo videtur:

Anselmus, De processione Spiritus Sancti, et Boethius, De Trinitate: ‘omnia in divinis sunt unum ubi non obviat relationis oppositio’; 
sed attributa inter se non referuntur nec ad essentiam; quare non erit pluralitas attributorum in divinis.

Item, Anselmus, Monologion cap. 17: “quidquid est ibi, uno modo et una consideratione est.”

Item, ubicumque est pluralitas, ibi est recessus a simplicitate et accessus ad compositionem; ergo si in Deo esset aliqua talis pluralitas, 
esset in Deo compositio, quod est inconveniens. Probatio maioris: de ratione simplicitatis est unitas; magis autem est unum quod est unum re et ratione quam quod est solum unum re; igitur pluralitas omnis recedit ab unitate, et per consequens a simplicitate; | quare si | esset 

pluralitas attributorum in divinis, esset ibi compositio.

Item, quod facit quod non sit idem, facit quod sit alius et alius; sed si attributa in Deo distincta sint, faciunt quod non sunt idem, alias

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3 Queritur om. F M | distinguantur in marg. M | vel om. F M 4 re—ratione] 
relazione M 8—9 quae—divinis[ ergo sunt idem M W 10 ibi om. M 13 ergo] 
M W 18 compositio quia habet secundum multitudem secundum rationem add. 
M quia habet multitudem secundum rationem add. W 19 et alius om. M W 
20 sint] sunt M W | sunt] sit M W

3 Queritur] correcta in marg. adnot., et etiam Utrum in attributis sit ordo Gand<avi> Quolibet 6 quæstione 1 b. In ista quaestione vide Ph<illipi> 
distinctionem 22 in margine postillae et Bald<eswell> distinctionem 22 ubi pulcræ 
de hac materia pulcræ, et est quaternus in quo improbatur Ware. Vide ibi postillae in 
 fine illius quaestionis in margine et infra in marg. adnot. F

6—7 Cf. ANSELMUS, De processione Spiritus Sancti c. 1 (ed. SCHMITT II, 181):
Quatenus nec unitas amittat aliquando suum consequentiam, ubi non obviat aliqua 
relationis oppositio, nec relatio perdatur quod suum est, nisi ubi obsistit unitas inseparabillis.”; A. M. S. BOETHIUS, De Trinitate c. 6 (ed. MORESCHINI, 180): “Ita igitur 
substantia continet unitatem, relatio multiplicat trinitatem; atque ideo sola singilla-
tim proferuntur atque separatim quae relationis sunt.”

10—11 Cf. ANSELMUS, Monologion c. 17 (ed. SCHMITT I, 31): “Quemadmodum itaque unum est quidquid essentia lierit de summa substantia dicitur; ita ipsa uno modo, una consideratione est 
quidquid est essentialiter.”

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nomina attributorum essent idem synonyma; ergo in Deo est aliud et aliud, quod est impossibile.

Contra:

Augustinus XV De Trinitate cap. 4: “oportet ut Deum summe vivere et cuncta sentire atque intelligere, et mori, corrumpi mutarique non posse, nec corpus esse, sed spiritum omnipotentissimum, iustissimum, speciosissimum, optimum, beatissimum fateamur.”

Item, potentia distinguuntur per actus et actus per obiecta; ubi ergo sunt obiecta distincta realiter, oportet quod ibi sunt actus et potentiae distinctae; sed in divinis Verbum, quod procedit per modum intellectus et est terminus actus intellectus, et Spiritus Sanctus, qui procedit per modum voluntatis et est terminus actus voluntatis, distinguuntur | realiter; ergo intellectus et voluntas necessario distinguenterur, et ista sunt attributa; ergo etc.

<OPINIO AEGIDI>

Opinio una est quod distinctio attributorum accipitur partim ad intra propter summam perfectionem et excessum a parte divinae essentiae, et partim ab extra ab intellectu nostro propter defectum ipsius. Essentia enim divina, cum sit infinita, habet in se unitive omnes perfectiones omnium generum; sed intellectus noster propter sui defectum et divinae essentiae excessum non potest istas perfectiones, quae unitive sunt in Deo, uno conceptu intelligere, et ideo sub pluribus nominibus intellectus noster has perfectiones exprimit, quae tamen pluralitas solum est in intellectu nostro, et ista


35 Opinio Aegidii] opinio Aegidii in marg. adnot. F positio Aegidii in marg. adnot. W

24–27 AUGUSTINUS, De Trinitate XV c. 4 (CCSL 50A, 468). 36–48 Cf. AEGIDIUS ROMANUS, In Sent. 1 d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 1 ad. 2 (ed. 1517, f. 17vb); 1 d. 2 prin. 1 q. 3 a. 2 (ed. 1517, f. 18vb): “Tertio deficit quia dicunt quod tota causa est ex parte intellectus nostri, quod etiam non est verum. Nam, ut ipsi met concedunt, ista pluralitas non convenit nisi ex eo quod intellectus noster deficit a comprehensione divinae maiestatis; sed nunquam intellectus noster deficeret nisi illa superaret, quia ergo contingit ista pluralitas ex improportione intellectus ad Deum. Improportion autem includit excellentiam in uno extremo et defectum in alio; utrumque debemus dicere causam esse huiusmodi pluralitatis: divinam excellentiam et defectum intellectus nostri.”
pluralitas est solum secundum rationem. E contra est in apprehensione
natureae universalis, ibi enim est multitudo secundum rem et unitas
solum secundum rationem; hic autem in attributis est unitas secundum
rem et multitudo secundum rationem solum.

Item, si haec esset differentia attributorum, non esset differentia
 nisi secundum magis et minus, sicut apprehensio perfectionis divinae
 secundum gradum non habet differentiam nisi secundum magis et
 minus.

Item, si haec differentia solum esset in intellectu creato, cassa esset
 et vana, quia intelligere differentiam ubi nulla est vanum est.

Item, divina essentia apprehensa ab intellectu creato sub determina
 nato gradu non excedit ipsum in infinitum, ergo perfectio divina
 apprehensa sub determinato gradu non est attributum.

<CONTRA OPINIONEM AEGIDI ROMANI>

Contra istam opinionem sic arguitur: si propter excessum divinae
 essentiae faceret intellectus formando diversos conceptus distinctio
 nem attributorum, eadem ratione unius attributi essent multa attributa,
cum quodlibet excedat in perfectione intellectum nostrum in infinitum.

Item, secundum hoc non diceretur Deus bonus et sapiens ab aeterno,
cum intellectus noster faciens istam distinctionem non fuerit ab
aeterno. Hoc autem est falsum, nam attributa sunt natura, voluntas,
bonitas et huiusmodi. Haec autem ab aeterno in Deo fuerunt, alias ab

52 quia] quare W | nulla] est add. M | est1 om. F | vanum est in marg. W
55 essentia om. F 56 non om. W 57 attributum] infinitum F 59 istam] illam M
67 huiusmodi] huius M

55–57 Item–attributum in marg. F

49–52 Cf. GUILLEMS DE LA MARE, Quodlibet q. 1 (ed. LEMAIGRE, 226):
“Praeterea, si haec esset differentia attributorum non esset differentia nisi secundum
magis et minus sicut apprehensio divinae perfectionis secundum gradum et gradum
non habet differentiam nisi secundum magis et minus.” 53–54 Cf. GUILLEMS
DE LA MARE, Quodlibet q. 1 (ed. LEMAIGRE, 226): “Et propterea potest dici quod ista
diversitas non est in Deo; nec solum in intellectu creato quia hoc esset cassum et
vnnam sicut intelligere differentiam si nulla esset differentia in re...” 55–57 Cf.
GUILLEMS DE LA MARE, Quodlibet q. 1 (ed. LEMAIGRE, 226): “Praeterea, divina
essentia apprehensa ab intellectu creato sub determinato gradu non excedit ipsum in
infinitum, ergo perfectio divina apprehensa sub determinato gradu non est
attributum.”
aeterno non essent, nec different generatio, cuius principium est natura, et spiratio, cuius principium est voluntas.

<OPINIO THOMAE>

Ideo dicunt alii quod ista distinctio attributorum accipitur per comparationem ad extra et non ad intra, et ratio horum est haec: quandocumque aliqua differunt secundum rationem et alia different secundum rem, differentia illorum quae differunt secundum rationem accipienda est per comparationem ad differentiam illorum quae differunt secundum rem; verbi gratia, dextrum et sinistrum in columna, quae differunt ibi secundum rationem, accipiuntur per comparationem ad differentiam realem dextri et sinistri in animali. Cum igitur attributa differunt sola ratione in divinis, ista differentia accipitur a differentia reali illarum perfectionum in creaturis tantum; igitur differentia attributorum accipitur a creaturis.

Ista videtur intento Hugonis De Trinitate in principio, cum Deus dicitur sapiens, iustus, et bonus, | haec diversitas dicitur ex diversitate effectuum quam Deus operatur in creaturis.

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70 Opinio Thomae] opinio Thomae in marg. adnot. F ...secunda in marg. adnot. W

71–81 HENRICUS DE GANDAVO, Quodlibet V q. 1 in opp. (ed. BADIUS I, f. 150vB):
“Contra: quandocumque plura distincta secundum rationem tantum habent alia sibi correspondentia plura et distincta secundum rem, pluralitas illorum accipienda est ex respectu et comparatione ad ista. Verbi gratia: si dextrum et sinistrum differunt in columna secundum rationem tantum, quia habent alia quae diversa sunt et distincta penes dextrum et sinistrum secundum rem, ideo dextrum et sinistrum secundum rationem dicuntur esse in columna et hoc non nisi ex respectu et comparatione eius ad illa alia a se, quae sunt diversa secundum rem, et distincta secundum dextrum et sinistrum… sed omnia attributa divina, quae vere attributa sunt, habent alia sibi plura et distincta in creaturis sibi correspondentia, a quibus deo attribuuntur, ut sapientia in deo, sapientia in creatura, bonitas, bonitatem, et sic de aliis; ergo etc.”

Cf. THOMAS DE AQUINO, Scriptum super Sententias I d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 (ed. MANDON-NET I, 765): “Unde etiam inveniuntur aliaque relationes nihil realiter in re ponentes… propter hoc dixit [Porretanus] eas asserentes, vel exterius affixas. Illae enim proprie relationes dicuntur exterius affixae et asserentes, quae cum proprie non habeant fundamentum in re, tantummodo ex habitudine alterius ad rem de qua dicuntur, adventiunt; sicut dextrum in columna, quod dicuntur de ipsa per hoc quod homo eam ad sinistram habet; et huiusmodi etiam sunt relationes quibus Deus ad creaturas referitur.” ; IDEM, In Physicam V l. 3 (ed. MAGGIÒLO, 330a). 82–84 Cf. GUALTHERUS DE CASTELLIONE, De Trinitate c. 1 (PL 209, 577): “Cum tamen dicitur ‘Deus est sapiens’, ‘Deus est justus’, ‘Deus est misericors’, diversos intellectus videmur concipere, non pro diversitate proprietatum, quae nullae in Deo sunt, sed ex diversitate effectuum, quos Deus in creaturis operatur.”
Item, pro opinione Thomae videtur facere quod dicit Commentator super XI Metaphysicae commento 39, loquens de abstractis a materia, quomodo est ibi differentia et maxime de primo principio, dicit sic: “in eis autem quae sunt forma non in materia, dispositio et dispositum” – id est praedicatum et subiectum, si formetur ibi propositio categorica dicendo ‘Deus est sapiens’ vel ‘sapiens est iustus’ – “reducuntur ad unum in esse et duo in consideratione.” Et Narram intendit differentiam esse inter ea omnino nisi secundum acceptionem intellectus qui intelligit unum his duobus modis secundum similitudinem ad propositionem | categoricam in rebus compositis. Duo dicit: quod differentia quae est ibi est tantum secundum rationem concipientem, et aliud quod illa differentia accipitur per comparationem ad differentiam rei in compositis (idem videtur esse directe opinio Thomae); sed non est multum standum dicto Commentatoris in hac parte, quoniam tantam indistinctionem ponit in Deo quod in eodem commento negat Trinitatem in divinis deridendo fidem nostram et ideo responde.

Et Rabbi Moyses cap. 184 dicit quod omnia nomina in Deo sunt ex operibus nostris.

<CONTRA OPINIONEM THOMAE SECUNDUM HENRICUM DE GANDAVO>

Contra istam opinionem arguunt alii sic: ubi est invenire differentiam maiorem, ibi est invenire differentiam minorem, maxime cum

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85–100 Item–responde in marg. inf. F

differentia maior sit reducenda in differentiam minorem mediante
differentia minore; sed in divinis est invenire differentiam persona-
rum, quae est maiorem quia realis per respectum ad intra; quare et
differentiam attributorum, quae est minor per respectum ad intra.

Item, licet differentia imperfecti et obliqui possit accipi ex diffe-
renti recti et perfecti, quia rectum est iudex sui et obliqui, non tamen e
converso; sed bonitas in Deo est perfecta et veritas recta, in creaturis
obliqua et imperfecta; ergo bonitas et veritas, ut sunt attributa divina,
non accipientur a bonitate et veritate in creaturis.

Item, circumscripta omni ratione ideali ad extra ab aeterno, Deus
intellexit essentiam suam sub ratione veri et voluit sub ratione boni;
quare etc.

Item, circumscripta omni actione intellectus creati, adhuc aliter
emanaret Filii a Patre per modum intellectus, aliter Spiritus Sanctus,
quia per modum voluntatis; differentia ergo voluntatis et intellectus
non accipitur ab extra.

Item, ex hoc sequeretur quod Deus non diceretur bonus nec sapiens
 nisi quia causat bonitatem et sapientiam, et ita non diceretur bonus
formaliter sed effective solum, quod videtur inconveniens, quia eadem
ratione posset dici lapis quia lapidem causat.

Item, si oporteret semper differentiam secundum rationem accipi a
differentia secundum rem, sequeretur quod illa quae different ratione
non different ratione, quia non haberent correspondentia differentia in
re. Verbi gratia, bonum et verum in creaturis differunt secundum
rationem, secundum Commentatorem et Philosophum IV Metaphysi-
cae, et non habent differentiam realem ad quam reducuntur, quia ista
differentia entis et unius, boni et veri, est prima differentia, nec habent
aliam priorem se ad quam reducuntur.

106 differentiam om. M  |  differentiam minorem| unitatem W 107 differentiam]
minore add. F 108 maiorem| maior M W 110 possit| possunt W 110–111 diffe-
renti| differentia M 111 quia—obliqui in marg. F om. M W 112 bonitas| et veritas
F | bonus om. W 126 secundum—acci| accipi secundum rationem M W
127 seque| sequitur F | ratione| rationem tantum M 128 differentia om. M
in in marg. F om. W 129 bonum—verum| verum et bonum M W
130 Commentatorem—Philosophum| Philosophum et Commentatorem M W
131 reducuntur| reducantur M W | ista| illa M W 132 entis—boni| boni et entis et
unius M W | habent sed in marg. corr. F habet M W 133 aliam| illam M
reducuntur| reducatur M W

129–131 Non inveni, sed cf. ARISTOTELES, Metaphysica IV c. 2 (AL XXV.2, 61;
1003b23-25).
Item, quandocumque aliquid est causa alicuius effectus in hoc quod est causa efficiens alterius, praecedit illud cuius est causa, et hoc Philosophus vult IV Metaphysicæ; diversitas igitur realis in creaturis, cum sit causa diversitatis rationis in Deo, praecedit omnem diversitatem rationis in Deo; ergo Deus idem in quantum idem est causa diversitatis realis non praesupposita aliqua diversitatis rationis a parte sui; immo sequitur maior inconveniens quod prius esset bonitas in creaturis quam in Deo, si ponitur quod bonitas et veritas in creaturis causant distinctionem veritatis et bonitatis in Deo.

<OPINIO HENRICI DE GANDAVO>

Idem dicunt alii sic quod essentia divina potest dupliciter considerari: uno modo ut essentia est simpliciter et absolute velut res et natura aliqua est, alio modo ut est veritas cognita cadens in ipsa intelligentia. Essentia divina primo modo consideratanullam omnino habet differentiam etiam rationis nisi quasi in potentia tantum et hoc remota, et sic intelligitur sub ratione omnimoda simplicitatis sine omni pluralitate etiam rationum, et sic nullus intellectus creatus ex puris naturalibus potest eam intelligere sine adminiculo creaturarum, et quia pelagus suae simplicitatis omnino capere non potest simul in se, concipitur ipsum particulatim in attributis conceptibus de ipsa in respectu ad correspondentia eis in creaturis. Si secundo modo consideratur essentia, hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut in quantum cadit sub simplici intelligentia, et sic adhuc intelligitur sub ratione suae simplicitatis, nec habet ut sic in se rationem attributorum nisi quasi in potentia propinquior quam prius, et sic capi eam omnis intellectus beatus quasi passiva et simplici actione intellectuali; aut in quantum intellectus quasi post apprehensionem simplicem negotiatur circa huiusmodi simplex apprehensum per actum intellectus dictam pluralitatem attributorum quasi de potentia ad actum reducendo, hoc modo apprehenditur in sua sim-


plicitate reali sine omni respectu ad creaturas, et tamen bene concipi- 
tur pluralitas et distinctio attributorum in ipsa essentia.

Est ergo in Deo omnimoda unitas sine omni ratione pluralitatis in 
essentia divina absolute considerata, et similiter ut cadit in actu sim-
plicis intelligentiae secundum modum quo habet esse in se, sed tamen 
in eo est multitudo attributorum in quantum intellectus circa ipsam 
essentiam negotiatur distinguendo penes se quae | sunt in essentia 
adunata. Haec enim est de perfectione | essentiae quod in simplici 
secundum esse pluraliter inveniantur distinguibilia per intellectum 
sine omni respectu ad extra, non per intellectum simplicis intelligent-
tiae sed quasi per intellectum componentem et dividentem, sed tamen 
intellectus divinus hoc facit uno intuitu.

Istae ergo rationes attributales secundum quas intellectus diversos 
conceptus format de simplici essentia non sunt nisi respectus fundati 
in ipsa essentia. Sunt autem conceptus plures ne synonymi sint; con-
ceptus sunt etiam ipsa essentia divina ne vani sint. Sunt igitur ibi 
relationes quaedam secundum rem sive reales, quaedam vero 
secundum rationem sive rationales; per relationem sive respectum 
realem differunt divinae personae et personales proprietates. Relatio-
nes vero secundum rationem important omnia attributa, omnia enim in 
primo significato includunt divinam essentiam ne sint vana et sub 
ratione alicuius respectus ne sint synonyma. Non dico ‘ad extra’ ut ad 
creaturas, talis enim respectus non est nisi secundum rationem alicuius 
suralitatis, sed summuntur omnes rationes | attributorum verissime ad 
infra in quantum intellectus divinus concipiens divinam essentiam 
concipit se ipsam et omnia concipienda circa eam, ita quod qualis est 
in Deo compositio respectuum et relationum realium ad sua corre-
respondentia non nisi ad infra, talis est compositio respectuum et relatio-
um realium ad sua correspondentia non nisi ad infra, ut sicut perso-
nae divinae Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus distinguuntur in essentia 
per respectus mutuos absque respectu ad extra, sic et attributa bonitas, 
sapientia et huiusmodi per suos respectus rationales quibus cuncta

\[164\] pluralitas et in marg. F | ipsa] illa M \[166\]–\[167\] simplicis] simplicitatis W \[168\] ipsam\] illam M \[170\] enim\] autem W \[171\] pluraliter\] plura M W \[172\]–\[173\] sine–intellectum om. (hom.) W \[172\] simplicis\] simplici M \[173\] et \[175\] ergo\] F igitur M \[177\] ipsa] illa M \[178\] etiam\] in add. M | igitur ibi\] etiam in Deo M W \[179\] quaedam\[1\]–\[2\]–reales om. (hom.) sed in marg. suppl. W | sive\] relationes add. sed del. et scilicet relationes… in marg. add. sed eras. F | vero\] non M \[180\]–\[182\] sive\[2\]–Relationes om. (hom.) sed sive rationem \[182\] secundum \[1\]–\[2\]–realium om. W | F \[183\] primo\] suo M W \[185\] non est in marg. W | est om. M \[186\] rationes\] omnium add. M W \[189\]–\[190\] correspondentia\] et add. M W \[190\] respectuum om. W \[191\] realium\] rationalium W \[194\] huiusmodi\] huius F M quibus cuncta] unde omnia M W

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quae in Deo pertinent ad intellectum mutuo sese respiciunt ex uno latere, et similiter quae pertinent ad voluntatem ex alio latere, et hoc in quantum omnia quae pertinent ad voluntatem et quae pertinent ad intellectum et ipsam intellectus cadunt sub apprehensione intellectus. Ut sic ex parte unius coordinationis accipijuntur attributa ad intellectum pertinentia, per istum modum essentia divina secundum quod induit modum declaratibi sic est veritas, secundum quod induit modum illius cui fit declaratio sic est intellectus, secundum vero quod induit modum illius quo quasi instrumentaliter potentia attingit obiectum, sic habet rationem actus, secundum vero quod induit modum illius quo potentia intellectiva habilis est ut sibi fiat, talis declaratio seu manifestatio dicitur sapientia. Ex parte alterius coordinationis accipiuntur attributa pertinentia ad voluntatem; secundum enim quod essentia divina induit rationem illius quod habet allicere et inclinare voluntatem, sic habet rationem boni; secundum vero quod habet rationem illius quod habet inclinari in bonum, sic est voluntas. Secundum autem quod habet rationem illius quo attingitur obiectum, scilicet bonum, sic est actus voluntatis.

Dicunt ergo isti quod quantum ad existentiam attributorum distinctio eorum accipienda est per comparationem ad intra, et sunt ibi sine omni consideratione nostra. Quantum tamen ad nostram innotescen-tiam, sic, cum intellectus noster non intelligat Deum nisi ex creaturis, attribuit ista Deo per ea quae videt in creaturis.

<CONTRA RATIONEM THOMAE SECUNDUM HENRICUM DE GANDAVO>

Ad rationem illam quod ‘differentia secundum rationem accipitur a differentia secundum rem’ responditur tripliciter:


218 Contra–Gandavo] ad rationem pro opinione Thomae in marg. adnot. F
Uno modo quod differre sola ratione hoc potest esse dupliciter: vel ex consideratione intellectus cum aliqua coadiacentia rei corporalis vel spiritualis, vel ex mera consideratione intellectus et sola. Si primo modo fiat, scilicet cum aliqua coadiacentia rei corporalis et non solum ab intellectu, sic est maior vera, ut punctus habet rationem principii et finis ex comparatione ad diversas lineas circumstantes vel comparando punctum ad diversas partes lineae; similiter, dextrum et sinister in columna accipitur ex comparatione ad dextrum et sinister in animali. Si autem ista differentia accipitur per comparationem ad aliquid spiritual adiacens, sic maior non est vera, ut verum et bonum in creaturis different secundum rationem, et tamen ista differentia non accipitur nisi ex differentia veri et boni in creatore quae non differunt secundum rem. Si autem ista differentia fiat ex mera consideratione intellectus, sicut est in proposito, sine omni comparatione ad extra, falsa est simpliciter illa propositio maior.

Item, si concedatur illa propositio, adhuc responditur quod differentia rationis attributorum accipitur per comparationem ad differentiam realem personalem intra, non per comparationem ad aliam differentiam realem extra, vel se tenent a parte intellectus vel a parte voluntatis, quare differentia eorum accipitur per comparationem ad Verbum et Spiritus Sanctus, quae procedunt per modum intellectus et voluntatis et distinguuntur realiter re relativa.

Tertio responditur sic quod haec propositio ‘differentia rationis accipitur ex differentia reali’ verum est ubi differentia realis causat differentiam secundum rationem, sicut est in duobus exemplis in argumento adductus; sed quando differentia rationis est causa differentiae realis, tunc non est verum, sicut patet de ideis, quia ideata differentia quia ideae differunt et non e converso, quia ideae sunt factivae ideatorum. Similiter in proposito quod differentia rationis in attributis est causa differentiae realis in consimilibus perfectionibus in creaturis.


Ad auctorisatem Hugonis et ad omnes tales dicendum quod habent intelligi quantum ad nostram innotescantiam, non quantum ad eorum existentiam in Deo, de qua est quaeestio.

**<OPINIO GODÆFRIDI DE FONTIBUS>**

Alia est opinio quod differentia attributorum accipitur per comparationem ad extra. In hoc tamen differt a praecedentibus quod ista ponit quod ista differentia fiat per actum intellectus divini distinguendo istas perfectiones attributales in se ipso per comparationem tamen ad consimilia extra in creaturis quae differunt ibi, et ad hoc ostendit quattuor sunt declaranda. Primum est quid sit attributum secundum rem, secundo quid secundum nominis interpretationem, tertia ostendenda est differentia inter attributum et ideam, et quarto quomodo differentia attributorum sit accipienda.

De primo, scindendum quod attributum secundum rem est perfectio simpliciter illimitata in Deo, idea e converso secundum se dicit perfectionem limitatam, quia haec idea determinatur ad hanc creaturam et alia ad aliam, et sicut creatura est quid limitatum secundum se, ita idea eius in Deo habet quasi-modum alicuius limitatim; quidquid tamen in Deo est, infinitum est.

De secundo, scindendum quod attributum secundum nominis interpretationem est perfectio aliqua ab alio Deo tributa. Vel attributum idem est quod alii tributum, iuxta quem modum omnes proprietates accidentaliter possunt dici attributa quasi alii, scilicet subiecto tributa, et secundum hunc modum attributa in Deo sunt quasi-proprietates accidentaliter circumstantes essentiam, propter quod dicit Augustinus XV De trinitate cap. 4 quod ista a-tributa in Deo videntur dici secundum qualitatem. Secundum enim quod attributum dicitur ab alio tributum, sic ista dicuntur attributa quia nos attribuimus huiusmodi perfectiones Deo.
De differentia inter attributum et ideam, sciendum quod una est, ut dictum est, quod attributum dicit perfectionem simpliciter illimitatam, idea perfectionem limitatam, quia perfectionem hominis vel asini et sic de alis. Secunda differentia est quod attributa dicunt qualificatio-
nes et modificationes et alia pertinientia ad bene esse rei, ut patet de sapientia, bonitate et veritate, sed ideae respiciunt rerum quidditates, puta humanitatem, asinatatem et sic de alis. Tertia differentia est quod ideae sunt rationes cognitivae et factivae rerum sed attributa non.

Quarto sciendum est quomodo accipitur differentia attributorum. Si enim loquimur de attributo secundum nominis interpretationem, sic differentia attributorum accipitur per comparationem ad extra, quod ex hoc patet quia de Deo nihil possimus intelligere nisi per creaturas. Sed si quærítur quomodo accipienda est eorum differentia ut sunt simpliciter perfectiones, quia ex quo Deus in se cognoscit quod alia est ratio bonitatis et alia ratio veritatis et ista sunt perfectiones simpliciter et secundum Anselmum Monologion cap. 15 ‘in Deo ponendum | est quidquid est melius simpliciter’, dicitur quod ista differentia accipitur per comparationem ad extra, tamen hic fit per intellectum divinum intelligentem istas rationes attributales differre per comparisonem ad extra. Quod sic | probatur: omnis res una secundum se re et ratione, cuiusmodi est essentia divina, si debeat habere plura in se distincta, oportet quod ista pluralitas sit aut ex se ipsis et secundum se aut per relationem eorum ad invicem aut per comparisonem eorum ad diversa extra. Primo modo non distinguuntur attributa ex se et secundum se, quia si sic, tunc circumscripto intellectu quocumque creato vel increato adhuc differrent. Item sequitur quod different realiter, cum omnis differentia non operata ab intellectu sit realis; sed hoc est impossibile. Nec secundo modo, scilicet ex relatione eorum ad invicem, quia omnis intellectus comparativus aliquorum distinctorum ad invicem

282 perfectionem\(^2\)](hurci vel cocodrillí vel mulierís vel add. M W 282–283 vel–

286 humanitatem–alíis] asínitatem(finitatem M) draconitatem canítatem etc. M W


praesupponit extrema distincta, ut si homo et asinus inter se comparati different circumscripito omni intellectu comparante, adhuc differrent; quare si ista attributa ad invicem different, prius oportet ea esse distincta et sic non distinguuntur per operationem solam intellectus divini, quod tamen ipsi alii dicunt. Reliquitur ergo quod distinguuntur per comparisonem ad extra.

<CONTRA OPINIONEM HENRICI DE GANDAVO
SECUNDUM GODEFRIDUM DE FONTIBUS>

Item, contra hoc quod dicunt alii quod divina essentia, ut intellecta est simplici intelligentia, nullam habet in se pluralitatem attributorum, arguitur sic: sicut verum perfectum est objectum speculationis perfectae negotiantis et distinguientis, sic verum imperfectum est objectum intellectus imperfectae, scilicet simplicis intelligentiae, quare de necessitate in intellectione simplici intellectus divinus intellectit rationem veri et sic in illa intellectione hæbèmus objectum et actum intelligendi et ipsum intelligens, licet imperfectius quam in intellectione ulteriori, et ista sunt attributa; quare in prima intellectione simplici | apprehendit intellectus divinus distinctas rationes attributales, quod ipsi negat.

Item, arguitur contra ipsum ex dictis ipsius alibi, in quaestione enim de essentia et esse facit talem argumentum quod esse existentiae differenter intentione ab essentia, est enim differentia secundum rem, sicut inter accidens et subjectum suum, et est differentia secundum rationem, sicut inter definitionem et definitum, est et differentia maior quam secundum rationem et minor quam secundum rem, puta differentia inter genus et differentiam; ergo oportet quod ista differentia maior differentia rationis et minor differentia secundum rem sit differentia secundum intentionem. Sic arguam: in divinis est invenire ibi differentiam secundum rem, puta distinctionem personarum realem, et


329–337 Cf. HENRICUS DE GANDAVO, Quodlibet X q. 7 (ed. MACKEN, 165-166).
differentiam secundum rationem, puta illam quae est inter abstractum et concretum, scilicet inter bonum et bonitatem, et est ibi invenire differentiam minorem differentia personarum, puta illam quae est attributorum, quae non est secundum rem, et maiorem quam sit illa quae est inter abstractum et concretum, plus enim differunt bonitas et sapientia quam bonitas et bonum, quare differentia attributorum erit differentia intentionis et non rationis solum, quod est contra eum.

<CONTRA RATIONES HENRICI DE Gandavo SECUNDUM GODEFRIDUM DE Fontibus>

Isti respondent ad argumenta alterius opinionis:

Ad primum, cum dicitur quod ‘ubi est invenire differentiam maiorem, ibi est invenire et minorem’ et quod ‘maior reductur ad minorem mediantes minores’, dico quod argumentum bene concluderet si iste duae differentiae essent eiusdem rationis, cuius non sunt differentia personarum et attributorum, quia una est realis et altera rationis, et quod dicitur ulterius quod ‘differentia personarum reductur in unitatem essentialiam mediantes differentia attributorum, quia hoc pertineat ad perfectionem’, dico similiter quod differentia attributorum non accipiatur per comparationem ad intra, hoc est nobilitatis et simplicitatis quia maior est unitas in Deo quam natura divina, ita sit una quod non habeat aliam differentiam ante illam differentiam personarum quam si haberet.

Ad secundum, cum dicitur quod ‘differentia perfecti non accipitur ex differentia imperfecta’, dicendum quod cum dico ‘attributa differentia’, dico duo, scilicet ipsam perfectionem attributalem et differentiam; modo est ita quod ipsum quod est attributum dicit perfectionem et ideo ratio attributi quantum ad hoc non accipitur per comparationem ad creaturam sed differentia, quia dicit imperfectionem, ideo accipitur ex differentia in creaturis.

Ad tertium dicitur quod Deus nullo modo intelligeter essentiam ut verum nec velleret eam ut bonum, nec differentiam circumscripsit diffe-

339 differentiam| differentia F | illam| illa F | abstractum| abstractam M  
360 si| si W 362 quod om. F 363 dico duo| inv. W 365 attributi| attributum M 369 velleret| vellet M W | different] differret W

349–379 Cf. GODEFRIDUS DE Fontibus, Quodlibet VII q. 1 (PhB III, 273-278).
rentia ad extra, sicut nec Deus intelligeret differentiam in ideis sine respectu aptitudinali ad extra.

Ad aliiud dico quod supponit unum falsum, scilicet quod intellectus et voluntas sint principia elicitativa duarum emanationum, immo ipsa essentia prout est sub tali proprietate et tali est principium illarum emanationum.

Ad aliiud dicendum quod non vult ista opinio quod bonum dicatur de Deo | secundum causam efficientem solum, ex quo dicit perfectionem simpliciter, sed quod differentia eius ad sapientiam non est sine respectu ad extra.

<OPINIO PROPRIA>

Alia est opinio quod circumscripto omni intellectu creato et in-creato adhuc ista attributa different ratione, et hoc ostenditur sic, quia istae perfectiones attributales ibi | sunt unitissime et verissime, unde dicit Dyonisius cap. 5 De divinis nominibus quod causa prima habet in se et circumvoluit rationes omnium creatorum. Ex primo, scilicet ex hoc quod sunt ibi unitive, tollitur omnis compositio quae arguit imperfectionem, et est ibi maxima simplicitas. Ex secundo, scilicet quod sunt ibi verissime, sequitur quod sunt ibi verissime perfectiones talium attributorum et proprietates, ita quod essentia divina omni intellectu circumscripto habet rationem movendi ex proprietate sua voluntatem, similitur et intellectum, et per consequens est ibi verum et bonum in quantum essentia divina sic est nata movere voluntatem et intellectum, sicut in creaturis est ratio boni prout sic vel sic potest movere omni intellectu circumscripto. De ista unitate et simplicitate dicit Richardus


380 Opinio propr] opinio propr in marg. dex. et sin. adnot. F

II De trinitate cap. 20: ‘in illo summo bono est vere unitas, vere simplicitas et veritas et identitas.’

Sed tunc arguitur sic: veritas ex proprietate sua aliter habet immutare quam bonitas ex proprietate sua, sicut ergo in creaturis verum et bonum et ens differunt ratione omni intellectu circumscripto, quia proprium modum immutandi habent aliam et aliam, similiter erit de attributis, quia ibi erit vera ratio boni ex hoc quod essentia divina nata est sic movere voluntatem, et similiter ratio veri ex hoc quod nata est movere intellectum circumscripto omni intellectu, ex hoc solum quod aliter et aliter nata est movere intellectum et voluntatem.

Item, ad hoc est ratio Augustini in simili V De Trinitate cap. 6, vult enim probare quod alia est notio inassibilitatis et alia paternitatis, “quia si Filium non genuisset, nihil prohiberet dicere eum ingenitum” – et loquitur de supposito Patris – “quia et si sognat quis Filium non ex eo ipse est ingenitus, quia geniti homines gignunt alios,” et ex hoc concludit Augustinus quod alia notio est inassibilitatis et alia paternitas.

Idem argumentum facio in proposito, quia si Pater non esset sapiens, adhuc nihil prohiberet ipsum habere potentiam, quia non ex hoc quod aliquis est potens sequitur quod sit sapiens, est enim invenire potentiam sine sapientia; ergo in Deo alia est ratio sapientiae et alia potentiae omni intellectu circumscripto, sicut omni intellectu circumscripto alia est inassibilitatis et paternitatis notio.

Item, in prima praesentatione ipsius essentiae divinae divino intellectu et voluntati Deus intelligit essentiam suam et vult ipsum, et isti actus sunt distincti ante omnem aliam operationem, quia natura praecedit per positum, quare et formales rationes obiectorum suorum ante omnem operationem sunt distinctae. Quod probatur, quia immediate intellectus intelligit obiectum suum et voluntas vult suum, ergo praesupponitur distinctio formalis boni et veri ante omnem operationem intellectus.

Item, si fiat ista distinctio obiectorum per operationem intellectus divinae, sequitur quod ante omnem operationem intellectus esset alia
operatio. Consequens est falsum, ergo et antecedens. Probatio antecedentis, quia in prima operatione intellectus oportet habere potentiam, actum et objectum et distincta ratione, cuius probatio est quia actus praesupponit potentiam et potentia objectum; sed nihil idem re et ratione praesupponit se ipsum ut distinctum et indistinctum; ergo ante omnem operationem intellectus habemus distinctam rationem actus et potentiae. Tunc quaeritur: aut illa distinctio | est per aliquam operationem aut non. Si non, habetur propositum. Si per aliam operationem, tunc ante primam operationem erit alia prior; tunc quaeritur de illa sicut prius, et erit procedere in infinitum, vel erit status, et tunc habe- bimus distincta attributa, videlicet potentiam, actum et objectum | sine omni operatione intellectus.

Item, iste actus quo fit ista distinctio attributorum est actus liber et conversivus; circumscripto ergo per intellectum isto actu quo formatur distinctio attributorum, cum adhuc remaneat essentia divina cum omni fecunditate naturae et remaneant intellectus et voluntas tamquam principia emanationum personarum, tunc quaeritur: aut utraque per- sona procedit per modum intellectus aut utraque per modum voluntatis aut una, scilicet Filius, per modum voluntatis et Spiritus Sanctus per modum intellectus aut neutra procedit per modum voluntatis vel intellectus, aut Filius per modum naturae sive intellectus Spiritus Sanctus per modum voluntatis non sunt plures modi. Primum non est dare, quia eadem ratione possem dicere quod utraque procedit per modum voluntatis.

Item, Augustinus V De Trinitate cap. 6: Spiritus Sanctus procedit “non quomodo natus sed quomodo datus,” et praeterea si utraque procederet per modum intellectus, non essent distinctae personae. Nec secundum potest dari | propter eandem causam. Nec tertium, quia Spiritus Sanctus procedit quomodo datus. Iterum hoc dato, nihilomi- nus habetur propositum. Tertium similiter non potest dari, quia intel-

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452—453 AUGUSTINUS, De Trinitate V c. 14 (CCSL 50, 222).
lectus et voluntas principia sunt emanationum, omne enim quod fit
sive procedit vel est a natura sive intellectu vel a voluntate sive ab arte
(II Physicorum); sed personae divinae non sunt ab arte; restat ergo
quod una per modum intellectus, scilicet Filius, et alia per modum
voluntatis, scilicet Spiritus Sanctus, et sic habebimus voluntatem et
intellectum distincta circumscripto actu illo quo formatur distinctio
attributorum. Nec potest dici quod sit idem actus quo formatur distinc-
tio attributorum et quo producitur persona, cum unus sit essentialis
alius notionalis.

Item, dato quod esset idem actus, adhuc haberet alium respectum
cum faceret distinctionem attributorum et cum produceret personas.

Dico ergo quod circumscribendo omnem operationem intellectus
creati et increati distinguentem et operantem distinctionem attribut-
orum, attributa differunt in divina essentia pro eo quod ex parte sua
nata sunt diversimode immutare intellectum et voluntatem.

Item, potentia volitiva non facit obiectum suum sed praesupponit et
similiter potentia intellectiva; istud saltem verissimum est de obiecto
simpliciter primo, quia si sic, tunc potentia operetur et eliceret actum
respectu nihilii, quia respectu nullius obiecti; sine ergo omni opera-
tione distinguente vel operante distinctionem habemus potentiam,
actum et obiectum distincta secundum rationes suas, ergo ordine
naturae verum et bonum praecedunt actum intelligendi et volendi,
igitur impossibile est quod solum distinguantur per actum intellectus,
cum nihil idem et secundum eandem rationem praecedit actum intelli-
gendi et sequitur.

Item, cum verum secundum quod huiusmodi moveat intellectum, et
ex hoc sequitur actus intelligendi, et omne mo-[vens prius est moto
secundum Philosophum IV Metaphysicae, etsi haec ad invicem dicant-
tur, nihilominus videtur necessario quod ratio veri praecedit actum
intelligendi, similiter de bono.

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459 sive1 vel M W | sive3 vel W | ab om. M 460 II Physicorum om. M
divinae] divinis M in divinis W 461 per1--Filius] scilicet (quod add. M) Filius per
modum intellectus M W 463 circumscripto omni intellectu vel add. M W
attributorum in marg. M | et] a M 465--466 essentialis--notionalis] notionalis
alius essentialis M W 469 quod] circumscripto vel add. M W 470 distinguentem]
distinguente F | operantem] operante F 472 sunt] est essentialia M W 474 est om. F
M W 479 et1 om. M 480 igiur] similiter M W | solum distinguantur inv. M W
483 cum om. M | huiusmodi] huius M W 486 ratio] nihil minus F

460 Non inveni, sed cf. ARISTOTELIS, Physica II c. 4 (AL VII 1, 2, 66, 68;
196a30-32, 196b15-20). 485 ARISTOTELIS, Metaphysica IV c. 5 (AL XXV 3,2,
86-87; 1010b37-1011a1).
Sed contra hoc videtur esse Commentatorem XI *Metaphysicae* commento 39 f: “multiplicitas in Deo non est nisi in intellectu, non in esse.”

Item, Rabbi Moyses cap. 48 d: essentia divina est “in qua non est compositio nec aliquam multitudo quomodocumque consideres ipsam non invenies in ea multitudinem in intellectu vel extra intellectum.”

Item, omnis differentia quae consurgit ex natura rei sine operatione intellectus videtur esse differentia realis; si igitur differentia sit in divinis attributis praeter operationem intellectus, illa differentia erit realis, et tunc vel absoluta vel relativa: absoluta non propter compositionem realem, non relativa realis, quia illa solum est inter personas.

Ad primum dicitur quod Commentator non loquitur de attributis, scilicet de sapientia et bonitate, sed de abstracto et concreto, puta de vivente et vita. Vel aliter dicitur quod ista attributa non differunt secundum esse, ut ipse dicit, quia habent unum esse simplex, nec differentia eorum ita est in intellectu quod sit operata ab intellectu solum, sed ex parte essentiae est illa differentia ex hoc quod nata est aliter movere voluntatem et aliter intellectum, sed pro tanto potest dici quod differentia eorum est in intellectu, quia differentia eorum non est realis extra.

Ad alii de Rabbi Moysis dicitur quod in essentia divina nec in intellectu nec extra invenitur diversitas sive multitudo diversarum naturarum, sicut est in essentia hominis, nec plus vult, nec si velit alii dicere, non est credendum sibi eo quod iudeus et in multis erravit.


488 Instantiae—responsiones] Contra opinionem Ware in marg. adnot. F

Ad aliud dico quod differentia attributorum nec est realis nec rationalis ita quod solum operata ab intellectu, sed differunt sicut verum et bonum in creaturis ex hoc quod ex natura eorum habent quod possunt sic vel sic movere intellectum et etiam voluntatem.

<AD ARGUMENTA PRINCIPALIA>

Ad primum in quae tione dico quod intentio Boethii et Anselmi est quod omnia in divinis sunt unum realiter ubi non obvias oppositio relativa et praedicantur de se invicem; non autem intendunt quod nulla sit distinctio praeter distinctionem personarum.

Ad aliud de Anselmo (‘uno modo et una consideracione est quid- quid essentialiter’) dico quod intentio Anselmi non est quod Deus dicatur uno modo sive una considerazione, sed quod sub quocumque modo dicatur, puta sub ratione sapientiae, sapientia est quidquid Deus est essentialiter, sapientia enim dicit totam essentiam divinam; et e contra est in exemplo quod adducit, quia homo alia consideratione est homo et alia corpus et alia rationalis, corpus enim non est quidquid essentialiter est homo, non enim dicit totam essentiam hominis; hoc patet ex processu suo manifeste.

Ad aliud quod non esset tunc simplicitas sed compositio, dico quod quantumcumque aliquid causatur ab aliquo, non destruit illud, quia tunc destrueret se ipsum, verbi gratia, magnitudo, si causatur ex causa- litate, non destruit ipsam, quia sic destrueret se ipsam; cum ergo ista pluralitas attributorum consurgat ex simplicitate divinae essentiae et summa eius perfectione, non tollit istam simplicitatem. Quod vero dicitur ultra quod ‘magis est unum quod est unum re et ratione quam quod re solum’, dico quod differre ratione est duobus modis: uno modo sicut differunt dueae sapientiae, et ista differentia est eiusdem rationis, et hoc modo verum est quod assumitur; alio modo sicut different sapientia et bonitas, et haec est alterius rationis, et hoc modo


514–517 Ad—voluntatem] est enim dare ...(?) scilicet formalis destr- in marg. adnot. F
non est verum. Quanto enim aliquid magis est unum unitate perfectio-
nis et simplex, cum hoc tanto plures rationes habet alterius rationis.

Ad alii quod essent nomina synonyma, dico quod illa sunt no-
mina synonyma quae habet eundem conceptum non contractum nisi
per aliquam proprietatem accidentalem, sicut lapis et petra. Quando
autem nomina faciunt diversum conceptum non est verum. Sic est in
proposito, quia alius est conceptus de Deo sub ratione veritatis, alius
sub ratione bonitatis.

Ad argumentum in oppositum quod ‘potentiae distinguuntur per
actus’ etc., dico quod duplex est objectum: quoddam est perficiens et
praecedens potentiam et actum, alii subseuqens et productum per
actum, sicut patet in divinis quod bonum est objectum antecedens
voluntatem, et Spiritus Sanctus objectum subsequens et productum per
actum voluntatis modo proposito habet veritatem de objecto quod
antecedet non de illo quod constituitur per actum et etiam de objecto
quod antecedet non habet veritatem formaliter sed solum ostensive,
unumquodque enim distinguitur formaliter per illud quod est, si sit
simplex, vel per formam suam, si sit compositum; de hoc Commenta-
tor II De anima commento 32 ubi loquens de potentia nutritiva, sensi-
tiva et intellectiva dicit sic: “cognitio enim actionum istorum | virtu-
tum prior est apud nos in nostra prima cognitione quam cognitio
istorum virtutum.” Hic habes quod actus praecedet potentias, et sequi-
tur statim in codem commento: “necesse est scire cibum quid sit, qui
est passivum virtutis nutritivae, et sensatum quid est, et intellectu-
quid sit, antequam sciatur nutrire et sentire et intelligere quae sunt.”
Hic patet quod objecta praecedunt actus et actus potentias, ergo
objecta praecedunt potentias quoad nos saltem.

543 verum] quia non est eiusdem rationis add. M W 543–544 unitate perfectionis
555 quod bonum] bonum enim M | objectum om. M 555 objectum om. M
557 non] autem add. M 559 est] id est sua essentia add. M 560 sit compositum
habes] haberes M 566 sensatum| sensitivum(?) W 567 et1 om. M W 569 quoad]
quo sed ad in marg. M | nos] ad nos add. M

560–564 AVERROES, Comm. in libros De anima II com. 33 (ed. CRAWFORD, 180).
565–567 AVERROES, Comm. in libros De anima II com. 33 (ed. CRAWFORD, 180).
<ADDITIONES>

<ADDITION 1>

Idem comparatur sibi secundum rationem vel distinctionem rationis non per comparisonem ad distincta re in identitate.

<ADDITION 2>

Haec videtur esse sententia Hugonis, De Trinitate cap. 1, et Rabbi, cap. 144, ubi dicitur quod omnia in Deo sunt ex operibus suis; ex hoc videtur quod differentia attributorum accipitur ad extra.

<ADDITION 3>

Nec sunt nomina synonyma quod secundum Commentatorem super XI <Metaphysicae> commento 39 “nomina synonyma significant idem omnibus modis.”

<ADDITION 4>

Commentator super XII <Metaphysicae> commento 39: “cum dicimus esse unum et habentem vitam, idem dicimus in subjecto et duo secundum modum non quod significant idem omnibus modis,” scilicet vivus et vita in eo “sicut significant nomina synonyma neque sicut significant nomina” scilicet “neque sicut significant principale et sumptum, quia sumptum significat idem quod significat principale et magis; vita enim significat aliquid non in subjecto, vivum autem significat aliquid in subjecto, scilicet formam in materia et habitum in subjecto. Eae igitur <sunt> dispositiones significationum nominum <in> eis quae sunt forma in materia, in eis autem quae sunt forma non in materia, dispositio et dispositum, reducuntur ad unum in esse et duo in consideratione, ista enim essentia, cum fuerit accepta secundum quod est posita et fuerit disposita <in> aliqua dispositione, tunc dispositione et dispositum unum erit in praedicatione et duo in intentione, quia praedicatum differt a subjecto, sed tamen non sicut praedicatum a


subiecto differt in propositionibus categoricis substantialibus, sed dispositio idem est et dispositum, sicut in rebus abstractis, sed in potentia duo quando intellectus divisit alterum ab altero. Intellectus enim innatus est dividere adunata in esse <in ea quibus componuntur, quamvis non dividantur in esse> sicut dividit materiam a forma et formam a composito ex materia et forma. Haec igitur est dispositio intellectus in rebus compositis ex forma et materia, cum disposit <compositum per formam aut cum dispositum compositum> habentem formam per formam, intelligere enim utraque adunata aliquo modo et differentia alio modo, verbi gratia quod cum dispositum hominem per rationalitatem intelligi quod subiectum rationalitatis et rationalitas idem sunt in adunatione et intelligi quod deferens(?) aliud est a delato, quae non fuerit considerata dispositio et dispositum in eis quae non sunt in materia, tunc reducuntur ad unam intentionem omnibus <modis> et nullus modus erit quo praedicatum distinguatur a subiecto et dispositio extra intellectum in essentia rei, sed cum intellectus componit aliquam propositionem ex dispositione et disposito in talibus rebus, tunc non intelliget ex eis nomina synonyma; ita autem propositio sit secundum nomen non secundum intentionem sed intelligi ea esse differentia secundum assimilationem, scilicet quod in talibus accipit duo, quorum proportio ad invicem alterius ad alterum est sicut proportio praedicati ad subiectum, et ex eis componit propositionem categoricam et nullam intelligit differentiam inter ea esse omnino nisi secundum acceptionem, scilicet quia idem acceptum dispositum et dispositionem. Intellectus enim potest intelligere idem his duobus modis secundum similitudinem ad propositionem categoricam in rebus compositis, sicut intelligit multa secundum similitudinem, et si intellectus non accepisset dispositionem et dispositum, non posset intelligere naturas eorum neque declarare eas. Et magna differentia est inter ea quae differunt in esse et intellectu et quae differunt in intellectu tantum. Multiplicitas igitur in Deo non est nisi in intellectu differentia, non in esse.” Haec Commentator continue.

<ADDITIO 5>

Arguitur contra Gandavum sic: quero de istis rationibus prout distincte intelliguntur ab intellectu divino: aut dicunt idem quod essentia divina ut distincte apprehenduntur aut non; si sic, igitur essentia distincta; si non, et non sunt nihil, igitur erit aliiquid ab aeterno praeter divinam essentiam.

32–33 in²—esse om. (hom.) F

<ADDITIO 6>

Si dicatur quod ista distinctio operatur per operationem primam, scilicet se ipsa operatione non alia, contra: obiectum secundum se et ordine prius erit ipso actu, quia primo obiectum movet potentiam, et potentia mota elicit operationem respectu objecti; non ergo actus facit objectum sed praesupponit tamquam aliquid in quod tendat, quod maxime verum est de objecto primo, quia quamvis intellectus non praesupponat objectum secundarium sed terminet, sicut intellectus facit universalitatem in rebus, tamen primum objectum simplex praesupponit quia, si primum causaret, intelligeret actum ante quam haberet objectum.

<ADDITIO 7>

Unde in eodem commento parvum ante dicit quod “vita significat aliquid non in subjecto, vivum autem significat aliquid in subjecto, scilicet formam in materia in eis quae sunt forma in materia. In eis autem quae sunt forma non in materia, dispositio et dispositum reducuntur ad unum in esse et duo in consideratione.”

<ADDITIO 8>

Ita quod non differunt realiter nec sola ratione operata ab intellectu, si ratione apprehensibili vel conceptibili ab intellectu divino rationes fabricatae ab intellectu videntur magis pertinere ad secundas intentiones, sicut est ratio generis et ratio speciei et ratio subjectibilis et praedicabilis, quam ad primam intentionem.

<ADDITIO 9>

Ad illud argumentum ‘differentia quae multum praecedantur a multis quod omnis distinctio quae oritur ex natura rei est realis, et ita hic et per consequens realis compositio’ respondeo quod propositio non est universaliter vera, immo ex re et ex natura rei immediate oritur distinctio plurium non realis sicut ex intellectu, quae vera res est, oritur distinctio rationis plurium attributorum secundum aliquos, et potest oriri in creaturis, similiter distinctio rationis ex intellectu quae

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vera res est. Falsa ergo <est> maior si universaliter accipitur vera, nec sequitur aliqua compositio quamvis formalitates attributorum distinguantur, quia non potest inveniri nisi triplex compositio, scilicet essentialis, sicut ex diversis principis in codem genere, vel accidentalis, sicut ex subjecto et accidente, vel compositio aggregatior- nis, sicut est de multis rebus in actu simpliciter. Prima non est in divinis, quia quaelibet perfectio attributalis est formaliter infinita, et ideo nulla est determinabilis per aliam, sicut potentia per actum. Nec secunda compositio est ibi, quia nullum accidens in divinis, quia nihil ibi mutabile secundum Augustinum; similiiter, eo ipso quod subjectum perfici potest per accidens est limitatum et determinabile et perfectibile et in potentia, haec repugnat accidentis in divinis esse quod quodlibet infinitum. Nec tertia compositio est ibi, quia quae sic componunt, dividuntur per essentiam et sunt multa in actu suppositive et essentialiter et est eorum solum iuxta <com>positio<nem>; patet quod nihil est tale in divinis, unde ex simplicitate perfectionis simpliciter concluditur ibi talis distinctio qua magis unitatem faciunt, dico quod unitatem simplicis perfectionis rei in esse perfectissimo.

<ADDITIO 10>

Recte sicut relationes reales oriuntur ex essentialia naturae necessitate et differunt ratione ab essentialia sine omni intellectu operante differentiam et nullam compositionem cum essentialia faciunt, quae derogat(?) simplicitati divinae sicut istae rationes etc.

<ADDITIO 11>

Cave: nomina synonyma significant idem omnibus modis secundum Commentatorum super XI <Metaphysicae> commento 39, sicut vestis et indumentum huiusmodi non sunt sapientia et potentia, quia imponuntur eidem rei ratione diversarum proprietatum eius.

112 compositionem| pō F

117–120 Recte—etc in marg. post manifeste lin. 531 add. F 122–125 Cave—eius in marg. post bonitatis lin. 550 add. F

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